

marginalized social formations. Such contributions make this volume a welcome addition to the ever-growing literatures on both interwar Europe and history and memory.

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ANDREW WACKERFUSS, *Stormtrooper Families: Homosexuality and Community in the Early Nazi Movement*. New York: Harrington Park Press, distributed by Columbia University Press, 2015. Pp. xxiv, 384. Cloth \$90.00, paper \$35.00.

One autumn night in 1928, a group of stormtroopers, members of the Nazi Party militia (Sturmabteilung [SA]), met a group of their enemies, men from a pro-democracy militia. In the ensuing melee, one of the stormtroopers, a man named Gerhold, shot and killed one of the other militiamen. Gerhold's subsequent murder trial took what might seem like a surprising turn. As it happened, the militiaman was not the first person Gerhold had shot. The stormtrooper had also shot his male Jewish lover in the head in an unrelated earlier incident. The former lover, who survived, testified at Gerhold's murder trial. In *Stormtrooper Families: Homosexuality and Community in the Early Nazi Movement*, Andrew Wackerfuss argues that Gerhold's story ought not to be surprising. The SA harbored a destructive internal contradiction. Officially it embraced the traditional family, and yet within private, all-male SA spaces, stormtroopers sought to create a "homoerotic family" (323).

Surely the most significant thing one can note about homosexuality and Nazism is the Nazi regime's murderous effort to eradicate male homosexuality, one of history's bloodiest persecutions of gay men. Nevertheless, questions have persisted about whether there was another side to the relationship. Was there any truth to the old homophobic chestnut of the antifascist left, the claim that fascism attracted homosexuals? Wackerfuss's engrossing *Stormtrooper Families* is an innovative entry into that disputation. While deploring homophobia, Wackerfuss seeks to show that in fact the SA did quietly provide a haven for same-sex eroticism, and even made use of it.

Nazi ideology was vehemently opposed to male homosexuality. So was the SA, at least publicly. Yet, Wackerfuss argues, stormtroopers were called away from their traditional families, if they had them, to the all-male world of the barracks and pubs and to the physical struggle against enemies in the streets. The SA, as well as the Nazi Party in general, prized manly bonds between men and held up the First World War soldiering experience as a model. Wackerfuss contends that stormtroopers' bonds with one another, bonds that made SA squads into alternative families, were always homosocial and sometimes homoerotic, and that both sorts of bonds strengthened the SA.

Once in power, Adolf Hitler purged the SA. Though the purge had other motives, Hitler used the alleged homosexuality of a minority of SA men to claim that he had struck a blow against immorality. Wackerfuss's contribution here is to show that in the purge's wake, the Ham-

burg SA expelled stormtroopers who were thought to be morally objectionable, including "[m]any homosexual stormtroopers who had been accepted or lived under cover" (310).

As an original answer to an enduring question, this book pushes the debate in a new direction. Yet readers whose interest is piqued by the beautiful clarity of its thesis on homosexuality may feel somewhat let down as things progress. The SA was a homosocial group knitted together by male bonds. This book, together with the work of other historians such as Geoffrey Giles, makes a persuasive case that some men with queer desires found a home in the Nazi Party. But it is not clear how large a group they were or how openly they were tolerated. Prior to the purge, Wackerfuss seems to have found few cases of homosexuality in the Hamburg SA. Gerhold's is one, and it does not quite prove the argument. Gerhold's lover was not another stormtrooper with whom he bonded in the barracks, but rather a Jewish man he seems to have been blackmailing. Wackerfuss assumes that the lack of cases prior to the purge speaks to the SA's tolerant attitude: since no one made a fuss about male-male sexuality, it left few traces in the archive. That may be the case, but it is difficult to say for sure. After the purge, Wackerfuss shows that a number of men were booted from the SA for alleged homosexuality. In an organization of thousands, however, those cases do not seem all that numerous. The sources offered in *Stormtrooper Families* do not conclusively show that homoeroticism was as central to SA life as Wackerfuss at times claims. Readers may in addition fault the book's occasional spottiness on the broader political world in which the SA was a player, such as when the story of how coalition democracy broke down is fumbled (228–229). Wackerfuss assumes a stable, self-conscious "homosexual" identity for his SA men when some stories, such as Gerhold's, seem open to a different reading. Finally, there is the book's oddly split personality. Despite its title and introduction, the majority of *Stormtrooper Families* is a local history of the Hamburg SA that has nothing to do with sexual politics. Though that local history is a detailed and engaging one that is supported by copious research, it is not clear how it adds to existing histories of the SA.

Criticisms aside, this is a very readable book that offers a window on daily life in the SA as well as a provocative argument about homosexuality and Nazism.

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LAURIE MARHOEFER, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis*. (German and European Studies, no. 23.) Buffalo, N.Y.: University of Toronto Press, 2015. Pp. xvi, 340. \$32.95.

Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis is not the first work on homosexuality and the Weimar Republic; it is not even the first work to appear in 2015. The topic has exerted an allure for decades, with each generation con-