

Hessia is more evocative of unity and national identity. In that sense perhaps, October 3 is indeed a fitting national holiday for Germany.

Conclusion

National symbols, read within the context of their social construction and historical transformation, reveal the relative successes and failures of national identity formation. In the German case the ongoing, clamorous debates surrounding two of its most central symbols, the anthem and the national holiday, point to a deep rift within society. Most importantly, the division is not between fringe exponents of either group but reaches deep into the political mainstream. Germany has a national anthem that was—at least initially—bitterly opposed by a former president (Theodor Heuss) and is not favored by the country's current chancellor (Schröder), who, it appears, would prefer Brecht's "Children's Anthem" to the problematic legacy of Hoffmann's song. Throughout the past three decades the national anthem has repeatedly come under fire from various citizens' groups as well as from the very professional organization whose members would normally be expected to be the guardians of the national heritage: the teachers' union. Finally, as we have seen, the anthem's reception abroad has been and continues to be a public-relations nuisance for Germany. The national holiday, too, is vehemently opposed by Germany's current Foreign Secretary (Joschka Fischer) as well as, albeit with less public ardour, by some of the country's leading historians and intellectuals. The majority of the population appears simply to ignore it.

One needs to bear in mind that neither the anthem nor the holiday were selected within the framework of an attempt at national consensus building or even a simple act of parliament—in contrast, for instance, to "La Marseillaise," which was declared the official anthem of France by the republican legislature in 1792,⁷⁸ and the "Star-Spangled Banner," which became the American national anthem by an act of Congress, albeit as late as 1931. In post-World War II Germany, both the anthem and the holiday were chosen behind closed doors by conservative chancellors (Adenauer and Kohl, respectively) with the support of two federal presidents (very reluctant in Theodor Heuss's case, more enthusiastic in Richard von Weizsäcker's) and decreed by fiat. Small wonder that liberals and leftists feel excluded from the agenda of national identity formation.

Unfortunately, their response to this sense of exclusion has been to engage in less-than-constructive opposition. However beautiful as a

poem, Brecht's "Children's Anthem," championed by many liberals and leftists during the time of reunification and even today, is not a realistic alternative anthem compared with the "Deutschlandlied." And unless some inspired writer were to accomplish the near impossible—to write a new anthem acceptable to both factions—there seem to be indeed few viable alternatives.⁷⁹

The case is a little different with regard to a national holiday. Again, the counterproposal to the existing holiday, November 9, favored by Fischer and a large constituency on the left, does not represent a viable alternative to October 3, for the reasons outlined above. Tempting though it may seem to anoint this day, which reflects the horrors of twentieth-century German history as well as the triumphs of democracy and human rights, as a national day of commemoration, the sheer practical complexities of procedure and protocol seem insurmountable.

Perhaps the alternative proposal of March 18, 1848, made by Hans-Ulrich Wehler (and others), would have deserved more serious consideration on both sides. True, the 1848 revolution did eventually fail, but not before it had established a democratic tradition claimed first by the Weimar Republic and, after World War II, by both East and West Germany, a tradition to which contemporary Germany also harks back proudly, both in spirit and in name. As we have seen in the cases of Serbia and Israel, discussed in this volume, glorious failures are frequently recast as foundational legends, and legends are the stuff of which successful national symbols are made. What better foundational legend than a democratic assembly that drafted a constitution establishing equal rights for religious minorities, freedom of speech and of the press, as well as freedom of academic teaching and research, a constitution that proclaimed the inviolability of a citizen's private sphere, established the basic outline of a legal system that guaranteed all Germans equality before the law, and even abolished the death penalty? The constitution of the Weimar Republic was modeled after the pioneering document of 1848, as was the West German *Grundgesetz*, which finally established, a hundred years later, the principles and civil liberties first articulated in 1848. The legacy of 1848 lives on in institutions and symbols with which Germans of all political persuasions (except for the radical fringe) easily identify: in the black-red-and-gold of the German flag, which, although not "invented" in 1848, became at that time the emblem of German democracy, liberalism, and the striving toward national unity; in the many institutions representing

erman federalism, such as *Bundesrepublik*, *Bundestag*, or *Bundesrat*; and even in the *Paulskirche* itself, the meeting place of the 348/49 National Assembly, which has become a national symbol in its own right.⁸⁰ Most importantly, even though the eventual failure of the 1848/49 republic may have been catalytic in the demise of nineteenth-century German liberalism, the revolution itself, with its democratic ideals and republican traditions, is perhaps the only uncontested historical memory truly shared in common by both the Left and the Right in Germany.

By common consensus, the end of World War II also demarcates the end of the German *Sonderweg*. West Germany's successful postwar democracy demonstrated that Germans, as a nation, were able to follow the model of the Western democracies. Yet, ironically, German exceptionalism may have an uncanny afterlife as a powerful political system, which divides Germany into two ideological camps whose respective identities have crystallized around two polarized ideas of what it is that makes their German heritage "special." Unless German conservatives make a serious effort to sift through the building blocks of German historical identity with a view to finding those elements that are acceptable to both sides of the *Sonderweg* divide, and unless the Left ceases to use German Exceptionalism as an excuse for political grandstanding and gamesmanship (by proposing unacceptable symbolic alternatives), there is a chance that the divide will become institutionalized to the point where what ought to be a common project for all Germans, the construction and maintenance of a collective public memory through a shared national narrative and widely accepted symbols to represent it, may become an impossible task. If at worst the case, one might be tempted to ask whether 1945 was truly the end of the German *Sonderweg*, or whether it was simply displaced to a different realm.

otes

An excellent summary of the *Sonderweg* thesis, as well as the various positions and debates surrounding it, can be found in Jürgen Kocka, "Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German Sonderweg," *History and Theory* 38, no. 1, Feb. 1999, pp. 40-50. For an influential critique of the Exceptionalism thesis see David Blackburn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

3. Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991, p. 14.
4. On the various definitions of nationalism, especially with regard to the temporal definition of a "nation," see Anthony D. Smith's survey in *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2000; cf. also pp. xiv-xv of the introduction to this volume.
5. I use the terms "Left" and "Right" in this article as a kind of shorthand to describe two major groups: By "the German Right" (or conservatives) I refer to those who feel that the German national symbols are a well-established and widely accepted tradition and positively emblemize the foundational narrative of present-day Germany. Conversely, I include under the label of "the Left" those who feel that one or several of these symbols are problematic because of Germany's troubled twentieth-century history and who argue that to continue to retain these symbols reflects a failure to address the problematic cultural inscriptions that have crystallized around most of them. Obviously, there is some crossover on both sides: just as there is a (small) minority among German conservatives who do, for instance, have problems with the "Deutschlandlied," there is likewise a minority of leftists who do not see the anthem as overtly problematic. However, there is no question that, historically, support for, and opposition to, the more controversial symbols has almost always broken along these lines.
6. There are historical reasons for this, having to do with a century in which the Left was largely excluded from access to mainstream discourse and responded to this exclusion by complementary strategies of self-exclusion, which manifested themselves in a rejection of much of the traditional German cultural legacy (Smith's "common memories"). See Michael E. Geisler, "Heimat and the German Left, the Anamnesis of a Trauma," *New German Critique*, no. 36, Fall 1985, pp. 25-66.
7. Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 21.
8. Helmut Plessner, *Die verspätete Nation: Über die politische Verführbarkeit bürgerlichen Geistes*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1959.
9. Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York: Harper, 1950.
10. Karl Jasper, *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?* Munich: Piper, 1966.
11. Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.
12. Jürgen Habermas, "Eine Art Schadensabwicklung," in *Historikerstreit*, texts by Rudolf Augstein et al., Munich: Piper, 1987, p. 75. Translation mine.
13. Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1994, pp. 182ff.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

5. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past*, p. 151.
6. While there is no official German national monument, many (mostly conservative) Germans consider the *Hermannsdenkmal* (a monument to the Cheruscan chieftain Arminius, who rallied several German tribes to resistance against Roman invasion and inflicted a crucial defeat on the Roman legions in AD 9) to be a splendid candidate for such a role. However, not only has the *Hermannsdenkmal* its own problematic legacy to contend with, which would render it unacceptable for the German Left; it also does not appear to have a very central position in Germany's collective identity, which would be more likely to turn to either the Brandenburg Gate or a postmodernist emblem, the new dome of the Reichstag (the German parliament building) for a national monument. For an excellent discussion of the *Hermannsdenkmal* see Andreas Dörner, *Politischer Mythos und symbolische Politik. Der Hermannsmythos: Zur Entstehung des Nationalbewußtseins der Deutschen*. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1996.
7. From Deutsches Reich (German Empire) to Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany) for West Germany and, since 1990, for unified Germany; and, from 1949 to 1990, Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic) for communist East Germany.
8. "Das Ende der deutschlandpolitischen Wortschatzprobleme." Helmut Berschin, "Deutschlandbegriff im sprachlichen Wandel," in Werner Weidenfeld and Karl-Rudolf Korte (eds.), *Handbuch zur deutschen Einheit*, Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1994, p. 146. Translation mine.
9. Cf. a poll among leading German intellectuals, solicited by *Die Zeit* in 1990, which produced the following alternatives, among others: German Federation, Federation of German States, Republic of Germany and German Republic. In a study that was supposed to engender a public debate over the constitutionally problematic adoption of the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law, drafted by the old Federal Republic of Germany) as the de facto constitution of reunified Germany, the *Kuratorium für einen demokratisch verfaßten Bund deutscher Länder*, a group advocating the drafting of a new constitution, presented such a document as an alternative to the Basic Law. In their draft they proposed to name the new state Bund deutscher Länder (Federation of German States) to underscore emphatically the importance of Germany as a *federation*. Bernd Guggenberger, Ulrich K. Preuß, and Wolfgang Ullmann (eds.), *Eine Verfassung für Deutschland: Manifest-Text-Plädoyers*. Munich: Hanser, 1991, pp. 81 and 101.
10. The 1848 republicans had adopted these colors from the German *Burschenschaften* (fraternities), who had first used them in 1817 at a public demonstration for German unity, probably as a kind of German response to the French tricolor; they, in turn, are said to have adopted these colors from the uniforms of the Prussian militia (black and red with yellow buttons) who had fought against the French occupation in 1813. On the somewhat murky historical provenance of the colors cf. Hans

Hattenhauer, *Deutsche Nationalsymbole: Zeichen und Bedeutung*, 3rd edition, Cologne: Bundesanzeiger Verlag, 1998, pp. 10f.

21. The *Flaggenstreit* of the 1920s pitted Social Democrats, who had proclaimed as the flag of the new democratic state black-red-and-gold (the colors of Germany's bourgeois revolution of 1848 and the short-lived republic it spawned), against nationalists of all stripes, who saw the black-white-and-red of Bismarck's empire as a remnant of Germany's former glory, arguing that abandoning these colors voluntarily would constitute a betrayal of Germany's history and would be tantamount to internalizing the defeat of 1918. Nevertheless, black-red-and-gold prevailed until the Nazis came to power. Hitler, with his unflinching instinct for political symbolism, appealed to both communists and nationalists by choosing as the official colors of the Third Reich a red flag, with a black swastika set against a white circle. When in 1948 and 1949 the two German states (West and East Germany) were looking for national colors, both chose black-red-and-gold as the colors associated with the nineteenth-century striving for German unity and freedom as well as the revolution of 1848, a tradition to which, with very different emphases, both East and West Germany tried to hark back. It was therefore a foregone conclusion that black-red-and-gold would also be the colors of a reunified Germany.
22. Jost Hermand, "On the History of the 'Deutschlandlied,'" in Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, pp. 251-268; Hattenhauer, *Deutsche Nationalsymbole* (cf. note 20); Hermann Kurzke, *Hymnen und Lieder der Deutschen*, Mainz: Dieterich, 1990; Fritz Schellack, *Nationalfeierlage in Deutschland von 1871 bis 1945*. Frankfurt/Main, Bern, New York, Paris: Lang, 1990; Alois Friedel, *Deutsche Staatsymbole*, Frankfurt/Main: Athenäum, 1968; Guido Knopp and Ekkehard Kuhn, *Das Lied der Deutschen: Schicksal einer Hymne*, Frankfurt/Main: Ullstein, 1988.
23. With the exception of one word I have followed the translation given by Jost Hermand in his wonderfully ironic account "On the History of the 'Deutschlandlied'" (cf. note 22 pp. 251f, translation courtesy of the University of Chicago Press). The exception is the substitution of "if" for Hermand's "when" in the third line of the first stanza. I believe the conditional is more in the spirit of Hoffmann's call for national unity, especially given the fact that the song was written at a time when Germans did *not* "stand together" as brothers!
24. See note 22 above.
25. Knopp and Kuhn, *Lied der Deutschen*, p. 31.
26. Apparently, even the composer himself experienced this effect of his music: Hattenhauer (*Deutsche Nationalsymbole*, p. 43) cites a comment by Haydn that "on troubled days" he would play the song in the morning with the result that "I feel quite well, when playing it, and even for some time afterwards."

On the influence of sacred music on national anthems of the "monarchic" variety cf. Robert Michels, *Der Patriotismus: Prolegomena zu seiner soziologischen Analyse*, Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1929, pp. 224-228. The final 50 pages of Michels' book deal with "national songs" and contain insights that make this volume worth reading even today.

On the difference between nation and state, which, in a number of ways, is particularly relevant to modern German history, see Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 89-117.

The Maas (Meuse) is in the Netherlands; the Memel (Nemen) demarcates the border between Lithuania, Poland, and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad; the Etsch (Adige) is in Northern Italy, and the Belt refers to two straits in Denmark. But in the 1840s parts of the Netherlands, on both sides of the Maas, were a member of the "Deutscher Bund"; the Memel was the border between East Prussia and Lithuania; the Etsch was in Southern Tyrol, formerly part of Austria, still predominantly German-speaking at the time; and the southern tip of the "Lille Bael" in Denmark is roughly where the actual border between Germany and Denmark runs today. For far more outrageous territorial claims by Hoffmann's contemporaries see Hermand, "Deutschlandlied," p. 254.

This is the song intoned by the Nazi officer Major Strasser (Conrad Veidt) in *Casablanca*—the song that is presently drowned out by "La Marseillaise" in the rendition of Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid), accompanied by what looks like half the French resistance. The lyrics were written by Max Schneckenburger in 1840. Hattenhauer, *Deutsche Nationalsymbole*, p. 55.

It is interesting to note that Hans Kohn, in his classic study *The Idea of Nationalism*, published in 1944, refers to the "Deutschlandlied" as a "popular German song," not as the national anthem. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, New York: MacMillan, 1944, p. 648

These included an a capella rendition of the hymn by Adenauer at the Tiranía Palast in Berlin on April 18, 1950, with most Social Democrats leaving the auditorium in protest (while others eventually joined in) and the West Berlin military commanders looking on stone-faced. Hattenhauer, *Deutsche Nationalsymbole*, p.66.

Heuss did so reluctantly, and only after his own attempt to replace the controversial "Deutschlandlied" with a newly created hymn by Rudolf Alexander Schröder had failed due to lack of popular support. Hattenhauer, *Deutsche Nationalsymbole*, pp. 63ff.

Cf. George Mosse, *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism*, Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England 1993, p. 18.

Michael Jeismann, "Die Nationalhymne," in Etienne François and Hagen Schulze (eds.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, vol. III, Munich: Beck, 2001, p. 663.

"Hessens Schüler sollen alle drei Strophen der Nationalhymne lernen." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 March 1989.

38. "Vom "Deutschlandlied" muß nur Strophe drei gelehrt werden." *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 5 April 1989, p. 79.
39. Benjamin Ortmeier, *Argumente gegen das Deutschlandlied: Geschichte und Gegenwart eines Lobliedes auf die deutsche Nation*, Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1991.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 114ff.
41. "Haben wir eigentlich eine Nationalhymne?" *Frankfurter Rundschau* (Abend), 6 June 1988, p. 129.
42. BVerfGE 81, 298—*Nationalhymne* (07.03.1990). Cited in *Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Nationalhymne*, Landesbildstelle Berlin / Lothar Wolf et al. (eds.), Berlin: Colloquium, 1990, pp. 66-72. I am indebted to Henning Fulbier for making this document available to me.
43. Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann (eds.), *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966*, Allensbach & Bonn: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1967, p. 175.
44. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (ed.), *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1967-1980*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981, p. 110.
45. "Viele läßt die Fahne kalt," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 27 August 1988, p. 199. However, only one year later, another IPOS poll reports that a strong majority (67%) said that they thought it was a good idea to play the German national anthem on "special occasions," with only 4% objecting to it and 28% expressing no opinion (cited in Werner Weidenfeld and Karl-Rudolf Korte, *Die Deutschen: Profil einer Nation*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991, p. 138). This is a remarkable difference compared with the 1988 poll. One can only speculate that the events occurring in the GDR at the time, just prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, may have instilled in West Germans a heightened awareness of the achievements of their own state, which may have translated into increased support for its symbols.
46. Translation mine.
47. As Herrmann Kurzke puts it, "what had once been a taboo, is now revealed as the actual teleological focus of the text." Kurzke, *Hymnen und Lieder der Deutschen*, p. 159 (my translation.)
48. Bertolt Brecht, *Gedichte Vol. VII: 1948-1956*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1964, p. 55. Reprinted courtesy of Suhrkamp Verlag. Translation from Bertolt Brecht, *Poems 1913-1956*, John Willet and Ralph Manheim (eds.), with the co-operation of Erich Fried, London: Eyre Methuen, 1976, p. 423. Reprinted courtesy of Methuen Publishing Ltd.
49. "Symbole für das neue Deutschland," *Die Zeit*, 25 and 26, 15/22 June 1990.
50. "Grüne fordern neue Nationalhymne," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21 September 1998.
51. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* of 28 March 2001, reprinted (in German trans.) on the German government server: <http://www.bundesregierung.de/interview;34876> Interview-mit-Bundeskanzler-Sch.htm. In the interview, Schröder quotes extensively from Brecht's hymn and commends it as a model for clarifying the difference between patriotism and nationalism.

52. "Mann und Frau' statt Bruder?" *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 19 June 1990, p. 139.
53. gw, "Drei Strophen als 'Reminiszenz.' *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 7 October 1997, p. 27.
54. This led to a heated debate even within the ranks of the CDU itself. "Debatte um erste Strophe des 'Deutschlandliedes,'" *Der Spiegel online*, 24 June 2000, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,82541,00.html>.
55. I am indebted to my colleague Allison Stanger for this reference.
56. See Sanford Levinson's *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998, for a fascinating discussion of the contexts and frameworks within which problematic historical symbols may or may not cause misunderstandings or even offense. I would like to thank my colleague John McCardell for bringing Levinson's volume to my attention.
57. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
58. ABC *World News Tonight*, 9 November 1989.
59. James O. Jackson and Christopher Ogden, "Is One Germany Better Than Two?" *Time*, 20 November 1989, p. 37.
60. E.g. "Über Alles" [sic!], *National Review*, 13 October 1989, pp. 16f.; "Et Cetera-Über Alles?" *Commonweal*, 9 November 1990, pp. 629f; Strobe Talbott, "NATO über Alles," *Time*, 26 March 1990, p. 47; "Dm Über Alles" (editorial), *Nation*, 9 April 1990, p. 475f.
61. Peter Shard, "National Anthems Still Cause a Stir in the Modern World," *Agence France Press*, 8 December 2000.
62. On the objections raised to celebrating the *Sedantag* by various groups see Schellack, *Nationalfeiertage in Deutschland*, pp. 67ff.
63. Hattenhauer, *Deutsche Nationalsymbole*, pp. 126ff.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 149f.
65. Actually, this is not literally true. As Hattenhauer (*Deutsche Nationalsymbole*, 154-155) reminds us, the words "national holiday" were not part of the official language. The law stipulated only that June 17 would henceforth be called the "Day of German Unity" and become a federal holiday. However, in subsequent years the day took on all the practical attributes of a national holiday.
66. Bill Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich*, London/New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 98.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-116.
68. Such as Willy Brandt's speech of May 8, 1970. Brandt was the first to use the date to point out unambiguously Germans' ultimate responsibility for the sufferings on both sides. Similarly, Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker's speech of May 8, 1985, exhorted all Germans to remember their country's historic responsibility for World War II and the Holocaust as part of their individual identity.

69. Most notably Helmut Kohl's and Ronald Reagan's controversial decision to jointly commemorate the day at Bitburg cemetery on May 5, 1985, a burial site for German soldiers as well as forty-eight members of the Waffen-SS; also Kohl's somewhat awkward attempt at rewriting history by joining the various Allied semicentennial celebrations of their 1945 victory. Niven suggests that Kohl may have done so in the hope of shifting the emphasis of the celebrations away from the 1945 victory over Nazi Germany and onto German reunification and the end of the cold war. (*Facing the Nazi Past*, pp. 109-111).
70. Hattenhauer, *Deutsche Nationalsymbole*, pp. 155.
71. On the process by which October 3 was chosen as the national holiday, see Wilhelm Hennis's fascinating and informative account "Aus Kohl's Erbe," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 September 2000, p. 57.
72. "Bonn: Immer noch offene Fragen," *Foxtus Magazin*, no. 16, 18 April 1994, p. 28.
73. Arnulf Baring, "Niederlage und später Triumph," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 October 2000, p. 55.
74. "Historiker für Nationalfeiertag zur Märzrevolution," Associated Press, 12 January 1998.
75. "SPIEGEL-Gespräch. 9. November als Feiertag," *Der Spiegel*, 21 August 2000, p. 41. My translation.
76. "SPIEGEL-Gespräch. Dieses schreckliche Aber," *Der Spiegel*, 9 October 2000, p. 32. My translation.
77. Jörg Aberger "Nationalfeiertag. Nachdenken über die Nation." *Stern.de*—10/3/2004. <http://www.stern.de/politik/deutschland/index.html?id=530583>.
78. Cf. F. Gunther Eyck, *The Voice of Nations: European National Anthems and Their Authors*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995, p. 43.
79. One that is mentioned once in a while is the final movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the composition based on Friedrich Schiller's "Ode to Joy." Certainly, this would be an elegant solution since both the text and the composition predate Germany's troubled years and are thus unencumbered by the country's difficult legacy. Nor would such a choice run into significant opposition abroad. Yet most national anthems include some sort of specific reference to the geography of the country they represent, its people, other national symbols, or major historical figures. None of this is true of Schiller's and Beethoven's famous hymn. So Germans would have to identify with this hymn solely on the basis of the status and nationality of its writer and composer.
80. Among other functions the Paulskirche has become the annual host for the ceremonies surrounding two of the most prestigious honors awarded in the Federal Republic: the *Goethepreis* (Goethe Award) and the internationally renowned *Friedenspreis des deutschen Buchhandels* (Peace Prize of the German Booksellers' Association). On the significance of the Paulskirche as a national symbol see also Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Die Paulskirche," in François and Schulze, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, vol. II, pp. 47-66.

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Russian Symbols—Nation, People, Ideas



Richard Stites

ONE CAN WASTE a lot of time, space, and verbiage on definitions—particularly of such a loaded word as “symbol” and its derivatives. It has become so overused that frequently writers (myself included) have had to fall back on alternatives such as “emblem” or “metaphor.” Those words are not interchangeable, but recourse to them shows how engrossed are interpreters of our era (or working in our era) with the need to summarize and to substitute signs for senses or even words. I will also employ the word “image,” which, in the words of Julia Kristeva, is a “bearer of hypnotic emotion.”¹ The element of emotion in her phrase needs no further comment, but her “hypnosis” is suggestive of the deep impact of some images and their ability to induce something like robotic or involuntary behavior. To Kristeva’s stress on the cerebral and the unconscious, I would add the physical force of imagery—often indicated by the term “visceral” when speaking of spontaneous or elemental responses. And, as anyone who has ever been truly angry or afraid knows, certain signs can be just as stomach churning as a word. Signs having the widest national resonance in the nineteenth-century Russian Empire were the tsarist emblems; the Orthodox religious symbols; and the various devices connected with Slavic legends as embedded in folklore, Panславism, middlebrow print culture, and—at the turn of the century—modernist art.²

The history of the tsarist double-headed eagle has been traced many times from its origin in Byzantium, where it reflected the division of the late Roman Empire into its Western and Eastern components with capitals in Rome and Byzantium (Constantinople) respectively. When the latter fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, some Russians claimed a kind of *translatio imperii* from one Orthodox Christian realm (Byzantium) to another (Muscovite Russia). The eagle, along with court rituals, some terminology (Caesar = Tsezar = Tsar), and more than a few