



Université
franco-allemande
Deutsch-Französische
Hochschule

Theresa Ehret

National-socialist rule in annexed Alsace (1940-1944/45). Interactions between the « rulers » and the « ruled » at the local level

Abstract

Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Sylvia Paletschek – Universität Freiburg

Prof. Dr. Catherine Maurer – Université de Strasbourg

This doctoral thesis proposes a new perspective on national-socialist rule in annexed Alsace with a microhistorical focus on the municipal level. The study is based on the ideas developed by Alf Lüdtke who considers “domination as a social practice”. Thus, processes of negotiation of domination between the Alsatian population and local representatives of the national-socialist regime have been studied in an exemplary way in four spaces of interaction: the town hall, the spaces of the party, the church and the (black) market. By adopting a qualitative method, the study analysed the municipal archives of six towns and villages that were selected for case studies as well as testimonies from Alsations. The thesis argues that national-socialist rule in annexed Alsace was a more ambivalent phenomenon than most existing studies suggest. The microhistorical analysis reveals the pragmatism of the actors who negotiated national-socialist rule at the local level. The local representatives of the regime tended to make concessions to the « ruled » under certain conditions. This is explained in particular by the status of the Alsations, who were considered to be ethnic Germans. This work is part of a recent trend in historical research focusing on everyday life in « occupied societies » during World War II. The thesis argues for a consistent terminological and methodological distinction between national-socialist annexation and occupation. It therefore proposes the notion of the “annexed society” as an innovative concept to make the specificities of national-socialist domination in annexed territories visible.

Alsace ; national-socialism ; annexation ; World War II ; municipal level ; microhistory ; history of everyday life ; interactions ; municipal administration ; NSDAP ; food supply ; religion ; « annexed society »