

WESTERN INTEGRATION, GERMAN UNIFICATION, AND THE COLD WAR: THE ADENAUER ERA IN PERSPECTIVE

Conference at Georgetown University, March 24–25, 2006. Jointly organized by the GHI and the BMW Center for German and European Studies at Georgetown University. Conveners: Jost Dülffer (Georgetown University/GHI/University of Cologne) and Bernd Schaefer (GHI).

Participants: Pertti Ahonen (University of Edinburgh), Jeffrey Anderson (Georgetown University), Samuel Barnes (Georgetown University), Roger Chickering (Georgetown University), Simone Derix (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung), Martin Geyer (University of Munich), Ronald J. Granieri (Pennsylvania State University), William Glenn Gray (Purdue University), Hope M. Harrison (George Washington University), William Hitchcock (Temple University), Henning Hoff (London), Anja Kruke (Friedrich Ebert Foundation), Wilfried Loth (University of Duisburg-Essen), Vojtech Mastny (National Security Archives), Christof Mauch (GHI), Hans Mommsen (University of Bochum), Christian Ostermann (Woodrow Wilson Center), Johannes Paulmann (International University of Bremen), Daniel Rogers (University of South Alabama), Matthias Schulz (Vanderbilt University), Thomas Schwartz (Vanderbilt University), Guido Thiemeyer (University of Siegen/University of Kassel), James Van Hook (U.S. Department of State).

The thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Konrad Adenauer Visiting Chair at Georgetown University, currently held by Jost Dülffer, provided the occasion for this conference. Bringing together a wide range of scholars from the United States and Germany, it offered an opportunity to take a fresh look at problems that have been central to German contemporary history. Yet, after decades of research on and a vast number of publications about such subjects as the Stalin Notes, the Hallstein Doctrine, and the chances of reunification under Konrad Adenauer's chancellorship, are there any new perspectives to be gained?

The first half of the conference, which centered on international relations and diplomacy, suggested that many of diplomatic historiography's traditional approaches are still in place. Some of the studies presented complemented existing knowledge, while others, by using material from newly opened archives, helped to provide a better understanding of the international framework, the role of domestic politics in shaping *Deutschlandpolitik*, and the importance of Adenauer's personal influence on the Federal Republic.

Jost Dülffer's introductory paper dealt with the "Potsdam Complex," the atmosphere of anxiety and fear that dominated West German imagery as a result of the experiences of World War II, the influence of the Cold War, and fears of a nuclear war. Fearing that the Allies might turn away from the Federal Republic and opt for cooperation with the Soviet Union, Adenauer skillfully exploited West Germany's unique situation within the Cold War scenario and stressed the need to integrate it unconditionally into the West. But his unwillingness to compromise on the issue of unification posed a burden to Allied attempts to alleviate Cold War tensions, Dülffer argued. He then underlined his view that Adenauer's rhetorical demand for reunification did not correspond to the Federal Republic's immediate interests. Keeping peace was much more important, and a divided Germany helped to achieve this goal. Vojtech Mastny critically commented on Wilfried Loth's paper on Soviet policy on divided Germany and on possibilities for reunification between 1952 and 1955, which was read to the audience, by posing the question of whether the problem of German unity had ever really been central to Soviet concern, as Loth assumed. Mastny stressed that Stalin's pragmatic approach to the German problem was grounded in his obsession with the danger of another German attack, a view that Adenauer ("no George Kennan") was unable, or unwilling, to take. Also, Stalin would never have accepted German unification on any terms other than his own, according to Mastny. The uprising of June 1953 and the Soviet intervention, an "investment" in the GDR, resulted in the Politburo's decision to support the GDR's status as an independent state. Adenauer was therefore correct in his decision to concentrate on the Federal Republic's Western integration and its development into a prosperous democracy. This contributed to the later success of reunification along the lines of *Magnettheorie*, Mastny argued—a theme that was taken up many times over the course of the conference. The panel's discussion suggested that German historians' concentration on the question of the likelihood of German reunification in the 1950s might be of greater relevance to the problem of German self-perception than to the overall situation of the Cold War and European integration.

The second panel, in which the Western Allies' policies on the Federal Republic in the Adenauer Era were presented, helped to establish a more integrated perspective on the problem of Germany's division and on efforts to achieve its reunification. The United States rhetorically supported the demand for reunification but did not take action to actually achieve it. Reunification would have implied Germany's neutralization, and with regard to the Cold War, this was not an acceptable option. Reunification therefore never appeared to be a genuine possibility from the American perspective. Similar to Jost Dülffer's description of the

fearful atmosphere within West Germany, Christian Ostermann emphasized the Americans' well-known concern about Germany and Europe turning to violence. To keep Germany under control by integrating it into the West best served desires to keep the peace. Whereas the United States did not actively support Adenauer's reunification policy, France actively tried to prevent reunification in order to keep Germany under control, William Hitchcock argued. He described the French dilemma of keeping Germany divided while simultaneously establishing good relations with the Federal Republic. As he showed, French policy on Germany never remained static, but changed several times as a result of international and domestic developments. Internal economic crises, international security concerns, and, not least, the colonial dimension had their impacts on France's position on Franco-West German relations. As Thomas Schwartz made clear in his comment, not only has the role of colonialism and decolonization long been neglected by traditional scholarship on Cold War diplomatic history. Even more, scholarship on the international framework of the German problem, Western integration, and reunification has been recycled (too) many times, repeating well-known facts on a limited methodological basis, Schwartz criticized. He therefore stressed the need to pay closer attention to the role of domestic politics and to Adenauer's role therein and, secondly, to better contextualize and historicize the problems at hand. Such a historicizing perspective might help to better understand current problems of democratization, peace-making, and integration in postwar societies throughout the world, as well as make it possible to evaluate the relevance of Germany's postwar problems, failures, and successes.

Henning Hoff's paper on the United Kingdom's position toward German reunification left no doubt that Britain's efforts to bring about détente in Europe failed in part because Adenauer stubbornly resisted the demand to acknowledge the German status quo, as has been repeatedly shown. Together with the intensification of the Franco-West German relationship, this led in the second half of the decade to the deterioration of West German-British relations, which had been quite constructive until 1955. In this situation, the British government decided to pursue a policy of pragmatic cooperation with the GDR in an effort to alleviate Cold War tensions. This effort, however, was ahead of its time. Hope M. Harrison took up the GDR's role and politics, which had been given little attention so far, in her presentation on East German relations with the Soviet Union regarding the problem of unification. To do so, she focused on Walter Ulbricht and, in a rather unusual move, contrasted him with Adenauer. Harrison found that apart from their diametrically opposed ideological and political positions, strategically speaking, the two statesmen acted quite similarly vis-à-vis their respective allies. Both Ulbricht and Ade-

nauer were genuinely aware of their countries' importance to the superpowers and succeeded in manipulating them to ensure that their countries' interests were paid due attention. The Soviet Union wanted Ulbricht to practice peaceful coexistence with West Germany in order to persuade its population to turn away from the United States in favor of the Soviet Union. But Ulbricht resisted such efforts—another similarity with Adenauer—and prioritized ensuring the GDR's status as a separate German state.

Pertti Ahonen's paper, delivered in the absence of the author, marked the beginning of the second part of the conference, in that it largely left the sphere of international politics and diplomacy and turned to domestic issues. In his paper on the role of the former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse, Ahonen described how many West German politicians, in an effort to secure votes, emphatically embraced the expellees' demands for reunification. Yet it was Adenauer and his advisors who, as "Machiavellian manipulators," expertly used expellees' demands to secure support for their policy on the Oder-Neisse issue, Ahonen suggested. This official revisionism made reunification ever more unlikely (a fact that Adenauer had accepted very early on) and reconciliation with the East ever more difficult (not one of his priorities anyway). In his comment, Matthias Schulz pointed out that while Adenauer had actively prevented unification by resisting any kind of compromise, he simultaneously had demonstrated his pragmatism by engaging the Federal Republic in strong economic cooperation with the GDR.

Before the economic dimension was discussed in depth, Anja Kruke, in opening the fourth panel, presented the issue of polling and polls on Germany's reunification and the FRG's western integration. She showed how the Adenauer administration used the results of polls (most of them taken in Berlin as the "seismograph" of West German morale) in shaping its *Deutschlandpolitik*, thereby encouraging entanglements between decision-making processes on the domestic and the international levels. While Adenauer was able to secure most West Germans' support for his policy on reunification and Western integration, the Social Democrats did not meet the public's expectations on the question of Germany, as Daniel Rogers showed in his paper. In privileging the concept of *Einheit in Freiheit* and opposing any arrangement that fell short of their demands, the Social Democrats soon ran the risk of isolation, increased by their "national patriotism," presented in a strained manner, as well as their ambivalence toward Western integration and their hostility toward the CDU and the Allies. However, the Social Democrats did help to bring about the FRG's Western integration by supporting its rearmament as well as *Wiedergutmachung*, Rogers argued. Both his and Kruke's paper gave an impression of the impact of domestic politics on Adenauer's

decision-making, and his skillful use of public opinion, voters' interests, and fear of communism and war. Accordingly, commentator Ronald J. Granieri encouraged other researchers to follow their examples by taking a wider view of political decision-making processes and by more deeply integrating the cultural and social dimensions.

Hans Mommsen, who had been one of the first Konrad Adenauer Visiting Professors at Georgetown University in 1982, gave the conference's keynote address on the origins of *Kanzlerdemokratie* and the transformation of the democratic paradigm in West Germany. He took up the argument that discarding the idea of a German *Sonderweg* and embracing the Western concept of democracy had been decisive in bringing about the Federal Republic's remarkable success. Emphasizing the intensity of postwar doubts about democracy, which dated back to the experience of the Weimar Republic's failure, Mommsen described the great care taken in establishing the Basic Law with its many safeguards to prevent democracy from failing once more. Although the SPD contributed immensely to the anchoring of parliamentary democracy in West Germany, it was Adenauer's personal achievement that German traditional distrust in political parties was eventually overcome, Mommsen concluded.

The second day's papers dealt with the economic and cultural dimensions of reunification and western integration. Guido Thiemeyer offered new insights into the process of European economic and political integration with his portrayal of Ludwig Erhard's concept of *soziale Marktwirtschaft*, which Erhard regarded as a tool to functionally integrate the European economies, and, eventually, to reach European political unity without having to establish new political institutions. Although he generally supported European integration, Erhard, whose thinking was still based on nineteenth-century liberal internationalism, opposed the idea of giving up national sovereignty. This position collided with Adenauer's more pragmatic, institutional approach, and became a burden to European integration. The West German economic miracle, which William Glenn Gray addressed in his paper, helped to fasten European integration despite such burdens. Drawing on the concept of trust, Gray argued that the Federal Republic's economic success had offered a unique possibility to earn its allies' trust. This trust allowed the West German government to engage in economic cooperation with the Eastern bloc in the mid-1960s without the risk of awakening Western suspicion about a "new Rapallo." In this sense, the *Wirtschaftswunder* provided the basis of détente with the East in the late 1960s, Gray suggested. In his comment, James Van Hook argued that it might be more appropriate to speak of "confidence" than of "trust," seeing that confidence had been the key to West German-Soviet cooperation. He also asked the participants to take into greater

consideration the role of political and economic theories and the processes of implementing such theories in foreign policy making.

The West German government's efforts to create a certain image of the Federal Republic and to persuade allies of the country's trustworthiness provided the topic for Simone Derix's paper on the politics of state visits in the Federal Republic. Derix described the government's attempts to use state visits to create support for West German demands for reunification abroad. This was achieved by giving foreign visitors tours of places that embodied the Federal Republic's belonging to the *Abendland*, its democratic credentials, and its distance to the Nazi past. After August 1961, these tours included the Berlin Wall. Orchestrating these state visits did not always work perfectly, however, and asking every visitor to take a stand on the issue of a divided Germany proved counterproductive in some instances. Like Derix's presentation, Martin Geyer's paper on intra-German sports competition in the Adenauer era offered new perspectives on the cultural and symbolic elements of reunification politics. Although Adenauer, who was distinctly disinterested in sports, believed that sports should not interfere with politics, they played a major role in *Deutschlandpolitik*. The issue of whether to have a united German team or two separate teams, as well as the problem of national symbols, became deeply entangled with the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*. Geyer argued that sports helped to overcome German nationalism and to establish a postnational West German identity that became most visible at the 1972 Olympics in Munich. To the GDR, sports offered a way to establish political legitimacy, which undermined West German demands for reunification. Johannes Paulmann's presentation on the Federal Republic's cultural diplomacy was closely intertwined with his successors' topics in depicting West Germany's self-conscious, painstakingly coordinated efforts to present itself to the world as trustworthy and democratic. In the case of the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, West German planners went to great lengths to portray their country's "normalcy" and to suggest that the Federal Republic had not only turned away from Nazism but also from its urge to emulate, while keeping the greatest possible distance from, Soviet totalitarianism. There seemed to be indications, however, that many West Germans continued to be eager to compete for national prestige, Paulmann suggested.

The lively debate sparked by this last panel clearly showed how enriching it can be to integrate new perspectives, especially the impact of "soft power" on international politics, into international and diplomatic historiography, as Roger Chickering stressed in his comment. Many shared his view that the combination of historiography and ethnography might be regarded as "the most exciting recent dimension" in international diplomatic history. Yet Chickering warned scholars not to under-

estimate the links between culture and power. The subsequent discussion left no doubt that the Federal Republic's behavior during the Adenauer era cannot be understood without taking into consideration the cultural and political experiences of, and the continuities to, Weimar and the Kaiserreich. As Paulmann suggested and others seconded, the Federal Republic's selective attitude in constructing a balanced view of modernity was key to its short- and long-term success. The conference might be credited with conveying the fact that diplomatic and international historiography needs to integrate the international as well as the domestic perspective to a much greater extent. This implies more than just "adding some culture" to international history. Instead, it suggests taking a more contextualized, holistic view that offers a more balanced image of historical problems as complex as the issues of Western integration, German unification, and the Cold War.

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