

MEINECKE'S PROTÉGÉS: GERMAN ÉMIGRÉ HISTORIANS BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

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The basis for this lecture is a new edition of letters from the papers of Friedrich Meinecke, the founder of the history of ideas in Germany.¹ The selected letters illuminate Meinecke's relationship with those of his students who were forced to emigrate after 1933 and show these students' close bond with their teacher, to whom they reported about their lives in the United States and about their scholarly plans, and whom they helped after the war by supplying CARE packages and medicines unavailable in Germany. The letters from Meinecke's papers have been supplemented when possible by letters and notes from the papers of the émigré scholars as well as by analysis of certain aspects of their research.

The letters allow us to explore many questions, including the question of German-Jewish identity. The letters throw light on emigration and remigration, on restitution, and on the lives and scholarly development of Meinecke's students. Here, I will deal primarily with the tension between their love for their native country and their loyalty to and affection for the United States, which had offered them refuge and the opportunity to continue their scholarly careers after they had been driven from Germany. Meinecke tried to persuade his students to return to Germany after the war or at least to accept visiting professorships and to participate in German historical research projects. In a letter to his successor as editor of the *Historische Zeitschrift*, Ludwig Dehio, dated July 21, 1947, Meinecke recommended his students Hajo Holborn, Felix Gilbert, Hans Rosenberg, and Helene Wieruszowski. "On the whole, I have the impression that these Jewish émigré historians do not look upon our fate with émigré resentment, that they know and understand us better than the Americans, and that they could do much good for our scholarship as intermediaries." Time and again, he and his wife commented with great feeling on the "loyalty" of his former students teaching in America, and they were especially proud of them.

I have selected Hajo Holborn, Dietrich Gerhard, and Hans Rosenberg for discussion here because in my opinion they best illustrate the challenge of grappling with life in two worlds. For reasons of time, I have to exclude a number of other Meinecke protégés such as the great Renaissance historian Felix Gilbert, the major founder of *Zeitgeschichte* in Ger-

many Hans Rothfels, the Bolivar-biographer Gerhard Masur, the Renaissance scholar Hans Baron, who alone among the émigré scholars did not resume contact with Meinecke after 1945, and the medievalist Helene Wieruszowski. Some of them will, however, figure in my conclusions. I will also only marginally touch on Meinecke, although there is much new that could be said about his relationship to the United States and American historians.

Hajo Holborn

Hajo Holborn (1902–1969) was the son of Ludwig Holborn, the noted physicist and one of the directors of the Imperial Institute for Physics and Technology; he grew up in the academic world of Berlin. Holborn had to emigrate because his wife, his closest collaborator and translator of many of his works, was the daughter of a Jewish professor of medicine. Moreover, Holborn was also a committed democrat and supporter of the Weimar Republic.

Holborn felt obliged to become active in public life. He wrote to his older friend Dietrich Gerhard on October 14, 1924 that although he would never abandon history as a profession, he was still lured by the thought of “direct participation in public life,” a “yearning,” he wrote, “that at times robbed [me] of all inner calm.” He thought, however, that Gerhard was probably right in thinking that his interests in scholarship and politics could in principle be reconciled, perhaps even melded together.

Holborn’s historical work initially focused on traditional diplomatic history—his doctoral dissertation was a study of German-Turkish relations from 1878 to 1890—and the era of the Reformation. In collaboration with his wife, Holborn published a selection of the writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam, and his Heidelberg *Habilitationsschrift* was a biography of Ulrich von Hutten. Working in the tradition of the history of ideas developed by Meinecke, Holborn linked the shaping of Hutten’s character to humanism, nascent national consciousness, and Protestantism, but he also made clear the importance of Hutten’s social position as a knight.

In 1929, the Imperial Historical Commission [Historische Reichskommission], which Meinecke chaired, commissioned Holborn to write a history of the origin of the Weimar constitution. His search for source material and contemporary witnesses brought him into direct contact with leading German politicians of the day. This project marked Holborn as a confirmed supporter of Weimar democracy, which greatly diminished the chance that any German university would offer him a professorship. Nevertheless, in 1931 he was appointed to the professorship in history and international relations funded at the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik in Berlin by the Carnegie Foundation. The appointment was

only temporary, however, and he combined it with a teaching position as a *Privatdozent* at the University of Berlin. His research on the Weimar constitution, the extensive source materials for which can be found among his papers at the Yale University Library, resulted in several essays, but not in the envisioned book.

Holborn clearly thought at first that his emigration would be temporary. He wrote to Dietrich Gerhard on September 11, 1933 that they were not leaving “in a bitter frame of mind”: “We feel ourselves no less tied to all that you treasure. But we do not want to be in a position where we would have to offend against what we see as our responsibility and obligation to our background and our intellectual position . . . for the time being, that means only remaining true to one’s profession and one’s self and making the best of one’s fate. Thus I am trying to conceive of our departure now as a sort of study trip that will one day end [with us] at home again.”

Thanks to family connections, and with the help of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars, Holborn found a permanent position in his field much more quickly than the Meinecke students who were to arrive in the United States later. He taught at Yale University with only a few interruptions from 1934 until his death in 1969, rising from assistant professor to holder of a prestigious endowed chair. Without abandoning his deep grounding in the cultural and intellectual world of Europe, he very consciously became an American. In a long letter to Meinecke dated February 7, 1935, he reported on the difficulties in getting settled, but he also stressed the readiness of the German émigrés to help one another and the generally friendly reception he had experienced in his host country. He commented perceptively on the fundamental differences in the effects of the international economic crisis on Europe and the United States: “It is amazing to see what has become of the self-confident and optimistic Americans over the past five years. Young people above all have been shaken in their beliefs and traditions. It is interesting to see how the crisis has made people here more socially aware and more liberal. They have become more open and less prejudiced than they had previously been. European matters have always been studied, but what had earlier been more a matter of curiosity is now an instrument of serious comparison. Under these circumstances, the activities of the Germans here might perhaps be truly fruitful.”

Like the other Meinecke students who emigrated to the United States, Holborn was a supporter of President Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. In his view, two “tremendous transformations of almost revolutionary scale” that had fundamentally changed contemporary America had been brought about. The first was the “permanent establishment of a

new middle-class democracy in place of the former predominance of the rich and the most affluent groups." "This far-reaching social transformation," he argued in 1955, "meant the end of classical laissez-faire capitalism in the economic sphere and the realization of a social-liberal system that many people would call in plain terms welfare-state liberalism. The second and even greater revolution was America's abandonment of the policy of isolation and its new position in international politics." Holborn saw his great task as a political educator in the United States to be to support this second revolution, to help accustom the Americans to great power politics, and to improve their understanding of Europe and Germany in particular.

During the war, Holborn served as the special assistant to William Langer, the famous historian of international relations, at the time Director of Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Studies, the forerunner of the CIA. He was the contact to the War Department's civilian affairs division and was involved in planning for postwar military government, on which he published a book in 1947. After the war, too, Holborn played a direct role in politics. He served as an advisor to the State Department on German issues, and in 1960 he became director of the American Council on Germany. In the latter capacity, he served both as an interpreter of Germany in the United States and as an advocate of American policy in the Federal Republic.

Holborn's most important achievement in the long run was the development of German and Central European history as a recognized subdiscipline at American universities. He could count some of the most important postwar American historians of Germany among his students: Leonard Krieger, Otto Pflanze, Theodore S. Hamerow, Arno J. Mayer, Richard N. Hunt, Herman Lebovics, and Charles McClelland, to name only a few. When Meinecke asked him in March 1946 whether he thought it possible that émigrés who had become American citizens would accept academic appointments in Germany, he indicated that he himself would not out of consideration for his children and his students. In a letter to Meinecke of September 23, 1946, he wrote:

In general I would love nothing better than to help German historians to rebuild historical studies in Germany and you may call on me any time you think I could be of help. . . . However, I would not consider accepting an appointment at a German university. Our children are American children. They have spent all their formative years in this country, and if we go back to Germany they would be exiles. Knowing what that means, we certainly would not want them to go through that experience unnecessarily. Moreover, we have not become American citizens in

name only. We are deeply devoted to the country of our adoption. We have been happy here after getting through the first years of difficult adjustment. I have been particularly lucky in attracting a large number of unusually good students. Some of them are already teaching in various places; others, delayed by the War, will soon start their academic careers. I do not feel that I could leave them. I believe it to be my function in life to finish the task of helping to educate and train a new generation of college teachers of European history in this country and I feel that by doing this I shall contribute at least indirectly to maintaining or rebuilding German historical research.

He was prepared, however, to visit Germany on a regular basis and to teach and publish in Germany.

As for the country of his birth, Holborn thought he could make a contribution to political education by supporting democracy and the integration of Germany within the reconstruction of Europe. It would take us too far astray to discuss Holborn's writings on German history in detail here, especially his three-volume history of Germany since the Reformation. He sought a critical evaluation of German history. He rejected the argument that the failures of the past were rooted in national character, as well as the notion that there was a clear line of development leading from Luther via Frederick the Great and Bismarck to Hitler. Holborn was especially concerned to defend Luther against his critics. In Holborn's view, Germany first set off on the path to disaster in the early nineteenth century. He outlines his thoughts on this topic in what is probably his most important essay, "German Idealism in the Light of Social History" [*Der deutsche Idealismus in sozialgeschichtlicher Betrachtung*], which, tellingly, was published in the festschrift for Meinecke in 1952. German idealism, he argued, was the creation of a small educated elite. It did not have a fundamental understanding of the importance of religion and the churches in integrating society, and it thereby contributed to the deepening of social division and the detaching of Germany from the Enlightenment and the European natural law tradition. By stressing the importance of the power of the state and also with its promotion of a culture of inwardness, idealism distracted from the problem of overcoming the authoritarian state. In this essay, Holborn implicitly took issue with Meinecke, who had not considered the connection between ideas and social development in his work on intellectual history. In a debate with Meinecke in 1950, Holborn, invoking Ranke, stressed the moral responsibility of all individuals and all peoples for their decisions. The responsibility of power was a central theme of Holborn's historical

writing and, quite appropriately, the title of the festschrift published in his honor.

Holborn remained firmly convinced of the importance of the history of ideas and made it the subject of his presidential address to the American Historical Association; he was, incidentally, the first historian not born in the United States elected to that office. This address demonstrated his deep grounding in ancient Greek thought and European, especially German, culture. It also testifies to his long engagement with the history of ideas. In Holborn's view, the history of ideas was the field that best conveyed the unity of the past and its significance for the present. He warned against the danger of a fragmentation of history through increasing specialization within the historical profession, and held firm to his belief that the task of history was to study human nature within its social context. He underscored the central importance of historical thinking in Greek culture and in Western civilization. Holborn thus remained true to Meinecke even though he was interested in trying to anchor ideas in their social context much more firmly than his teacher had done.

Holborn played a central role as an intermediary and bridge-builder in German-American relations. It is highly symbolic that only hours before his death in the early morning of July 20, 1969, he was presented with the first Inter Nationes Prize for Understanding Between Peoples in a deeply moving ceremony in Bonn.

Dietrich Gerhard

Dietrich Gerhard (1896–1985) was the oldest of Meinecke's Berlin students considered here, and the only one to have fought in World War I. Gerhard's rather naive patriotic enthusiasm following the outbreak of the war comes through in his first letter to his teacher. Meinecke, whose *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* had inspired him to study history, was the "leader" who had shown him the way, Gerhard wrote, and whose work had made clear "the connection between state and culture, between power and spirit," the connection between "Schiller's nation of humanity and Bismarck's national state." Gerhard, too, came from Berlin's upper middle class. His father was a noted lawyer and notary, his mother a well-known writer who had ties to Meinecke. Because of her Jewish ancestry, Gerhard's mother later had to emigrate to the United States, as did his sister, the *Germanistin* Melitta Gerhard. Gerhard had a particularly close personal relationship with Meinecke, and in the years 1925 to 1927 and again in 1933 he assisted Meinecke in editing the *Historische Zeitschrift*. His doctoral dissertation on the historical and political thought of Barthold Georg Niebuhr took Meinecke's approach to intellectual history as its model. Niebuhr in his history of the ancient Roman Empire was

not only the founder of the historical-philological method of source criticism but also a diplomat and government office-holder in Denmark and, later on, Prussia. In his introduction to the first volume of Niebuhr's correspondence he edited with a Danish classicist, Gerhard described the tragic conflict between the *vita active* and the *vita contemplative* Niebuhr experienced during an era that "did not know the division between intellectual-creative life and political life."

With Meinecke's encouragement, Gerhard broadened his range of interests during his studies in Denmark, and this openness to new fields and new questions was to be a hallmark of his subsequent career. This was a result of his intense engagement with problems of social and economic history, as well as of his concern with the basic problems of European history. Gerhard was especially influenced by two things: his close reading of Ranke, especially Ranke's interest in universal history; and his two-year residence in Great Britain as a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation to conduct research for his *Habilitation* project on England and the rise of Russia in the eighteenth century. For Gerhard, London was "a window on the world at large." The subject of his study was the "growth of the geographic and economic integration of the world." It was thus a contribution to the early history of globalization. His research also made him aware of the tremendous importance of economic interests and overseas trade in British politics.

Gerhard began teaching in Berlin in 1932, offering courses on political and economic history, the history of England, and the history of the British Empire. The onset of Nazi rule meant that Gerhard would not be able to hold on to his position at Berlin in the long run and that he would have to give up all hopes of pursuing an academic career in Germany. In early 1934, he delivered a series of lectures in Edinburgh; late in 1935 an invitation to spend a year as a visiting professor at Harvard provided the occasion for Gerhard's emigration to the United States. From 1936 until 1965, he was an exceptionally successful teacher at Washington University in St. Louis. He offered courses on Europe since the Reformation, German and Russian history, and the history of the British Empire. The focus of his teaching was less the differences between the European nations than the common features that distinguished them from both the United States and Russia. Taking a comparative approach to constitutional and social history, he underscored the stability and continuity of European history from the High Middle Ages to the French and Industrial Revolutions.

In a twelve-page letter to Meinecke dated August 20, 1948, Gerhard set out his scholarly agenda. This letter makes clear that he was less interested in building upon Meinecke's work than upon the comparative studies of Otto Hintze, another famous Berlin professor of history. His

interests, as he explained to Meinecke, were shaped by three factors: first, his experience in the United States; second, the upheavals of the twentieth century that had largely destroyed the old European order; and third, his conception of his role as a teacher of European history in the United States, where the corporate structures characteristic of Europe did not exist. Gerhard developed his ideas more fully in an essay entitled "*Regionalismus und ständisches Wesen als ein Grundthema europäischer Geschichte*" ["Regionalism and the Corporate Society as a Basic Theme of European History"] that he contributed to the festschrift published on the occasion of Meinecke's ninetieth birthday in 1952 and later in a series of essays and his book *Old Europe: A Study in Continuity, 1000–1800*. As that title suggests, Gerhard saw the era stretching from the eleventh century through the end of the eighteenth century as a unit. His work is characterized by its comparative focus, which implicitly took the United States and Russia into account, and its "universal" perspective, which nonetheless excluded large parts of the globe.

Conservative by temperament, Gerhard was uncommonly open and accessible to his students, even by American standards. He became a U.S. citizen shortly before Pearl Harbor and took an active part in civic affairs. Shortly after the war, for example, Gerhard tried to organize donations in St. Louis to help the destroyed regions of Europe and to build local support for the policies of European reconstruction. Later, Gerhard—along with his close friend, historian Theodor von Laue—was deeply involved in the civil rights movement.

Gerhard indicated to Meinecke in 1948 that he would gladly return to Germany as a visiting professor. In both 1950 and 1951, he spent a semester at the University of Münster. He taught at the University of Cologne in 1954, and in the following year he accepted a professorship in American Studies at Cologne. During his six years as a faculty member in Cologne, Gerhard also held on to his position in St. Louis in order to maintain his U.S. citizenship, and he devoted great energy to teaching American history in Cologne and European history in St. Louis on a regular basis. He sought to make his institute in Cologne "a bridge for reciprocal German-American understanding." The United States now gained a firm place alongside Europe and Russia in his research. He had already made his first contribution to American historical scholarship in 1953 with a lecture on the development of the credit system in the American universities; he later expanded upon that lecture in a comparative study of American and continental European universities. At least implicit comparison with Europe also figured in Gerhard's work on the development of American society and the role of churches in American life. He also wrote several studies on Abraham Lincoln. He demonstrated that Lincoln considered the expansion of slavery a threat to the idea of a

free society and also fought to preserve the Union because he feared that the collapse of what was then the only large-scale democratic republic would be a setback for democratic ideas worldwide.

Gerhard was particularly interested in Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis on the importance of the frontier in the shaping of American democracy. Taking his cue from Turner, he considered the movement of frontiers in Canada, Australia, and South Africa, along with medieval Germany's colonization of eastern Europe and czarist Russia's eastward expansion. He demonstrated that social transformation depended not only upon geographic space but also, and more importantly, upon the concrete historical circumstances and institutions of the times.

With his work on American history and on European society, Dietrich Gerhard saw himself working in the tradition of Alexis de Tocqueville, whose writings on American democracy as well as on the historical continuity from the *ancien regime* to Revolutionary France were of fundamental importance for his own conception of both American and European history. Gerhard in his works on American history did not intend to add to the specialist research produced by his American colleagues. Rather, he consciously sought to illuminate and interpret the main lines of American history from a European perspective.

From 1961 to 1967, Gerhard was director of the modern era section of the Max Planck Institute for History in Göttingen. Late in their lives, Gerhard and his wife lived in Constance, where their oldest daughter, who happened to be married to a historian, resided.

Gerhard did not dispute the importance of ideas in his later work, but he saw them as closely linked to the development of institutions, political forces, and economic interests. At a time when historians, especially in the United States, are giving increased attention to non-Western cultures and the interactions between different cultures, Gerhard's ideas might strike some as passé. Nonetheless, his approach to universal history, his studies of globalization during the eighteenth century and, above all, his method of comparison can still serve as means for discerning and understanding basic historical developments.

Hans Rosenberg

Like many of the Meinecke students who emigrated, Hans Rosenberg (1904–1988) was what the Nazis termed a “half Jew.” His father was a Jewish merchant, while his mother came from a Protestant family of civil servants in Brandenburg. Rosenberg was raised as a Protestant but eventually became an atheist. Born in 1904, he experienced World War I and the revolution of 1918–1919 as an adolescent, and that experience turned him into a firm democrat.

Of the three historians I am considering here, Rosenberg probably had the closest personal relationship with Meinecke, but was also the most critical of Meinecke's work. He wrote to Meinecke for the first time on April 23, 1924. Stressing his interest in intellectual history and the philosophy of history, Rosenberg asked Meinecke to supervise his planned doctoral dissertation on Wilhelm Dilthey as historian. Dilthey was the most important figure in the development of intellectual history in Germany. Quite unusually, Rosenberg went on to write that he not only respected Meinecke as a "great scholar and researcher" but also had a "feeling of personal love" for him. Meinecke was a kind of father figure for Rosenberg, whose father had died in 1918. He showered Meinecke with CARE packages after 1945, and during his first Berlin stays he took lodgings across from Meinecke and saw him regularly for breakfast. Until his death, Rosenberg had a photo of a bust of Meinecke hanging as the only picture in his study; that photo now hangs alongside a photo of Rosenberg in my own study. Rosenberg had distanced himself early on from Meinecke's style of intellectual history and its concentration on the great minds of the past. In a later brief note on Meinecke, he described himself and his friend Eckart Kehr as the "heretics" of the Meinecke school, and Rothfels, Kaehler, Holborn, Baron, Gilbert, Gerhard, and Masur as its loyal members.

On Meinecke's advice, Rosenberg wrote his doctoral dissertation and *Habilitationsschrift* on the historian, philosopher, and politician Rudolf Haym, a representative of classical mid-nineteenth-century German liberalism. One of his goals was to bring to light a German tradition of liberal political culture and thereby take a clear stand against the "anti-democratic, conservative-nationalist outlook" that prevailed among historians at that time. Simultaneously, though, he also made clear the limits of classical liberalism, especially its lack of connections to most of German society and its reluctance to take on the ruling powers.

Rosenberg's move away from the history of ideas as practiced by Meinecke occurred in two stages. First, in the late 1920s, Rosenberg wrote a series of essays on collective political mentalities during the *Vormärz* era and their bearers in the middle and lower classes. With these essays, which appeared together in book form in 1972 under the title *Politische Denkströmungen im Vormärz*, he attempted to build bridges "between research on intellectual history, on social history, on political groups, on associations, on parties, and on interest groups." Rosenberg was later quite critical of these essays and their inadequate grounding in the social sciences, but he also saw them as a first step away from the prevailing methods and issues of German historiography. Rosenberg achieved a breakthrough in historical inquiry and insight with his pioneering study of the international economic crisis of 1857–1859. Written during the

Great Depression in the years 1932–1933, this study drew on the theories of economic cycles to investigate the first international economic crisis of the modern era. By adopting this approach, Rosenberg distanced himself greatly from the topics, sources, and methods prevailing in the German historical profession. He was interested above all in analyzing the influence of economics and economic cycles on politics and society. He wanted to illuminate the interactions between the triad of state, economy, and society, which had traditionally been neglected in German historiography as a result of a one-sided concentration on the state.

Rosenberg's position became untenable once the Nazis came to power. He left for Britain in 1933. Meinecke however succeeded in preventing Rosenberg's dismissal as researcher for the Historische Reichskommission for nearly two years. That gave Rosenberg the opportunity to improve his English and to publish three books, thereby strongly bolstering his chances of securing a scholarly position abroad. In 1935, Rosenberg left Britain for the United States. Emigration did not change his liberal political views or his scholarly interests and methods. After an extremely difficult transition period in which both Depression-era economic troubles and antisemitism played a part, Rosenberg finally succeeded in securing what was to become a permanent position at Brooklyn College in 1938. In 1959, he accepted an endowed chair at the University of California, Berkeley, and remained there until his retirement in 1970.

Rosenberg seriously considered returning to Germany after the war. On May 6, 1946, he wrote to Meinecke that "should the opportunity arise" he would be willing "to return to a German university" despite the long years of hardship likely awaiting Germany. But in 1947, he declined to take over the chair previously held by his "*Habilitation-father*" Johannes Ziekursch at the University of Cologne. Rosenberg's decision was spurred in large part by the reservations of his wife, who had been quite shaken by a visit to her destroyed native city. In a letter to his wife from September 10, 1948, he expressed his regrets, however: "As far as the intellectual and political meaning and purpose of professional life within the framework of personal capabilities are concerned, teaching at a university in Germany during the next ten to fifteen years would offer an entirely unique opportunity that will not arise again. From this perspective, I realize more clearly today than I did last winter that it was a fundamental mistake and a betrayal of inner conviction, of my better conviction, to decline the call to Cologne." A year later, Rosenberg was offered a professorship at the newly founded Free University of Berlin; once again, he declined the offer. His view that Berlin's situation as an enclave within the Soviet zone was not viable in the long run was then probably crucial to this decision. Rosenberg did, however, teach in Berlin as a visiting professor, and he had an exceptional impact as a teacher,

particularly during the semesters he spent there in 1949 and 1950. His Berlin students and, in turn, their students were to have a decisive influence in the development of social history in West Germany.

Immigration influenced Rosenberg's historical writing in several ways. For one, it spurred him to engage in non-German historical scholarship much more intensively than he had previously. It brought him into closer contact with the fields of economic and social history, which were further developed in the United States, Great Britain, and France than in Germany. And it provided an opportunity to expand his engagement with related social science disciplines, notably economics, political science, and sociology. In addition, Rosenberg's teaching responsibilities, which required him to deal with the whole of European history from the High Middle Ages to the present, prompted him to give more attention to the sorts of comparative questions Otto Hintze had raised, and to think about longer time-frames. He repeatedly warned his German students about the danger of intellectual provincialism that could come with overspecialization—a danger he thought was particularly acute in the field of American history—and he stressed that it was the historian's task to analyze major historical causal connections. On the subject of specialization, Rosenberg once told me, "One knows more and more about less and less until one finally ends up knowing everything about nothing."

Rosenberg's research, which he was able to take up again seriously in 1940, centered on two main sets of questions: first, the formation and long-term influence of elites in German political, economic, and social life; and second, the dynamics of economic change, in particular the influence of economic cycles on mentalities, social structures, and historical processes. These questions brought him, in turn, to the subject of the Weimar Republic's inherited burdens, its collapse, and the Nazi seizure of power. Analyzing that complex of topics was intended to help prevent such a catastrophe from ever occurring again.

Rosenberg's main work on the first set of questions was to be a major study of the Prussian Junker class from the thirteenth century through World War II. He was interested in the long importance of the Junkers as large-scale rural landowners, as leading members of the bureaucracy, and as military officers. The study was never published in the form originally envisioned in the 1940s. An almost-finished manuscript with many notes on planned revisions survives in Rosenberg's papers, and some sections were published during his lifetime. In 1958, he published an extensively reworked version of the central portion of the work under the title *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1600–1815*. This book was well received, not only by historians but also sociologists and political scientists in the Anglo-Saxon world. In Germany, on the other hand, little notice was taken of it on account of the lack of a trans-

lation and because of Rosenberg's criticism of the "Prussian legend," which ran counter to the position of many Germany historians.

Rosenberg's papers also include outlines for two projects on the history of social elites. One of the projects, conceived around 1953–1954, would be a continuation of his completed but not-yet-published work on the German bureaucracy; it would focus on the bureaucracy, the German tradition of the authoritarian bureaucratic state, and the German elites in the century from 1815 to 1918. The second project, which Rosenberg planned in 1964, was to deal with inequality in Germany from 1348 to 1525—in other words, from the demographic crisis of the Black Death to the so-called Peasants' War.

In his second area of interest, the impact of economic cycles, Rosenberg in 1967 published a book on the so-called Great Depression in the Bismarck era. This study had a tremendous influence on the development of the field of social history in West Germany. It examined the negative consequences of the so-called long wave of recession from 1873 to 1896 on economic, social, and political life, and on political ideas and mentalities in Germany and Austria. Here, too, Rosenberg sought to analyze the conditions that were later to make the Nazis' rise to power possible.

As a self-described wanderer between two cultures, Rosenberg repeatedly grappled with his identity as both a German and an American. On his acquisition of U.S. citizenship, he wrote to his wife in July 24, 1944 that "one in principle [should] really look at this matter from only a practical viewpoint. With an American passport and American cash, the world will stand open to you after this war. That is the flipside of emigration. Even an American court recently ruled that acquiring citizenship does not carry the moral obligation to become an American 'patriot,' but rather merely the obligation to respect American law. . . . Culturally, I am a German and will remain one forever." Rosenberg explained his position even more clearly in a report on his Junker project that he wrote on January 31, 1947 for the president of Brooklyn College. "My outlook is no longer that of an emigrant. By degrees I have acquired the mentality of an immigrant who has taken roots in the land of his adoption. . . . At the same time, however, I do not consider it a disloyal attitude if I in a humble and restrained way . . . remain faithful to what I value as the fruitful kernel of the German university tradition which, however perverted in recent years, has made no trifling contribution to the common treasures of our Western civilization. In all fairness to my old academic masters, now dead, maimed, or half-starved, it must be said that it was the magic of that to some extent transplantable tradition rather than stirring intellectual events at Brooklyn College which furnished me with

the major incentive to tackle a bigger and more difficult job [than] I had ever ventured to handle before.”

It was with great interest and personal satisfaction that Rosenberg later followed the development of the new social history in West Germany. At the urging of his wife, who wanted closer contact with her grandchildren after the death of her son from a previous marriage, Rosenberg returned to Germany in 1977. The University of Freiburg made him an honorary professor, and the University of Bielefeld awarded him an honorary doctorate. He saw these honors as “a symbolic act of intellectual restitution.” Despite initial misgivings about relocating, he eventually felt very much at home in Germany. He was in close contact with his German students and made new friends. I found it deeply moving that many residents of Kirchzarten, the Black Forest town where Rosenberg lived, attended the memorial service for him at the University of Freiburg, and paid their respects to their “dear neighbor Hans Rosenberg” in a newspaper death notice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to summarize a few points raised in this lecture.

1. The decisive influence on all of the historians I have considered here—and the same applies to Rothfels, Masur, Gilbert, Baron, and Wieruszowski—was German and European culture, and that influence came before they emigrated, above all through their studies at German universities. All of them were very positive about their German university experiences. That did not, however, prevent them from criticizing German universities’ failure to resist National Socialism, their hierarchical organization, or their inadequate relationship with the broader public after 1945. These historians’ thinking was also deeply influenced by their engagement with political developments in their native country before and after 1933 and by the broadening of their horizons through emigration.

2. The degree to which these émigré historians were “Americanized” varied. Holborn very consciously became an American; Gerhard emphasized that he was deeply rooted in older European traditions, and Rosenberg, in German culture.

3. With the exception of Gerhard, there was a marked continuity in the topics the historians considered here worked on before and after emigrating.

4. In the United States, Meinecke’s émigré protégés supported President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal Policies, which Holborn and Gilbert viewed as a domestic and foreign policy revolution.

5. All three historians saw themselves as bridge-builders between the United States and Germany. This was especially clear in the case of Holborn, who wanted to explain American politics in Germany and German politics in America, and Gerhard, who sought to make America comprehensible to the Europeans and Europe to the Americans. Rosenberg sought to explain “the German problem” for the English-speaking world. All wanted to support the process of democratization in the Federal Republic through critical engagement with the German past. For Rosenberg in particular, that also meant modernizing historical studies in Germany by incorporating the questions and methods of social history and related social science disciplines.

6. I was surprised that, with the exception of Rosenberg, the historians considered here saw Ranke as their great master, along with Jakob Burckhardt. Likewise, Gilbert and Masur, the latter of whom had written his doctoral dissertation on Ranke’s concept of world history, had grappled first and foremost with Ranke and Burckhardt. All of them directly or implicitly engaged with Meinecke throughout their careers. All saw themselves as his students, but not as members of a “Meinecke school,” a notion Meinecke himself rejected. Holborn—and for that matter Gilbert, Baron, and Masur, too—sought to build upon Meinecke’s approach to the history of ideas, whereas Gerhard and Rosenberg ended up going their own ways. All except Baron were also stimulated by Otto Hintze’s concept of a broad-ranging comparative constitutional history.

7. The historians considered here were uncommonly successful teachers. For a time, Holborn had an almost dominant influence on the development of German history as a field of study in the United States. His direct influence on historical study in Germany, on the other hand, was limited, in contrast to that of some of his students. Rosenberg’s influence on revising the German image of history after 1945 was greater than Fritz Fischer’s. Fischer, for all his sharp criticism of German policy before and in the First World War, used traditional sources and methods, unlike Rosenberg. Rosenberg also had a more decisive influence on the development of modern social history than Werner Conze. Gerhard helped spur international interest in the history of corporate societies, and contributed to the development of American studies as an academic discipline in Germany. Gilbert and his fellow Meinecke-student Hans Baron played a key role along with other German émigrés like Paul Oskar Kristeller in making the United States a major center of research on the Italian Renaissance and early humanism, fields in which the Federal Republic has still not recovered from the blood-letting of 1933.

In sum, it is remarkable that despite the economic crisis in the United States during the 1930s, despite the cultural chasm between Germany and the United States, despite sometimes considerable difficulties with the

English language and in getting established after emigrating, all of the emigrated Meinecke students succeeded in pursuing academic careers in America, and often ended up in leading positions. They were able to do so thanks to their originality, their diligence, and their determination, as well as their training. They were also undoubtedly helped by the increased American interest in Germany and Europe spurred by Nazi rule and the war and, later on, by the Cold War. Emigration and remigration, hard as it was for the émigré historians and their families, proved to be a boon to scholarship in both countries.

Translated by David Lazar

Notes

¹ *Friedrich Meinecke: Akademischer Lehrer und emigrierte Schüler—Briefe und Aufzeichnungen 1910–1977*. Eingeleitet und bearbeitet von Gerhard A. Ritter (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006). Biographische Quellen zur Zeitgeschichte. Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte von Elke Fröhlich und Udo Wengst. 514 pp. The letters quoted here have been translated from the German, except the letter of Holborn to Meinecke of September 23, 1946 and Rosenberg's letter to the president of Brooklyn College of January 21, 1947, both of which were written in English.