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Preface

In fall 2000 the GHI and the Friends of the German Historical Institute (FGHI) inaugurated a new prize for the two best dissertations completed at North American universities in the fields of German history, German-American relations, and the history of Germans in North America. The prize has been named in honor of Professor Fritz Stern, a leading figure in German historical scholarship and German-American relations since the 1950s. Professor Stern attended the award ceremony for the first two prizewinners—H. Glenn Penny, who earned his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Frank Biess, who earned his doctorate from Brown University. Following the presentations of the two young scholars, Professor Stern engaged in a conversation with the president of the FGHI, Professor Konrad H. Jarausch, and members of the audience. Both the conversation and the presentations of the award recipients are printed here. We are grateful to the German Marshall Fund of the United States for funding the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize.

The 2000 Annual Lecture, given by Professor Wolfgang Hardtwig of the Humboldt University of Berlin, took place at the Institute in November. In his lecture Professor Hardtwig discussed the phenomenology of the Nazi “political religion,” especially before 1933, and analyzed it in the broader context of German Protestantism since the turn of the twentieth century. Professor Jane Caplan of Bryn Mawr College gave an incisive and cogent comment on Hardtwig’s talk, in which she added perspectives on the concept of “political myth” and the world of symbols and signs. Both lecture and comment are featured in this issue.

As part of our continuing effort to broaden the scope of the GHI’s scholarship and to emphasize our commitment to early modern history, the Institute is pleased to present an essay by one of our visiting research fellow, Johannes Dillinger. In his essay, titled “American Spiritualism and German Sectarianism: A Comparative Study of the Societal Construction of Ghost Beliefs,” Dillinger argues that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century witnessed the continued societal significance of “ghost beliefs” in spite of the Enlightenment, as exemplified in prerevolutionary Württemberg and post-
revolutionary America, specifically New York State. This essay is the published version of a paper he presented at the workshop “Magic Meets Enlightenment? New Types of Discourse in America and Germany in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” held in October 2000.

Thematically, the Institute embarked on a wide range of topics in its schedule of workshops and conferences, including projects on cultural anthropology and art history (a conference co-organized by the Centre Allemand d’Histoire de l’Art, Paris), the history of American GI’s in postwar Germany (a conference co-organized by the University of Heidelberg), and environmentalism in global perspective (a conference co-organized with Florida State University), as well as two workshops in social and economic history, both held in Washington, D.C. Among the most memorable highlights of the fall program was a special event marking the ten-year anniversary of the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic in October 1990. The event brought the former GDR minister for labor and social policy, Regine Hildebrandt, to the GHI for a lively presentation and discussion of everyday life in East Germany.

We are especially pleased to report that the Institute and the FGHl have received a generous donation from the ZEIT Foundation for the new Gerd Bucerius Lecture series, which will be inaugurated on June 5 by Lord Ralf Dahrendorf. In addition, we are grateful to the Max Kade Foundation for its support of the new Young Scholars Forum, which will take place at the end of March 2001; to DaimlerChrysler for its financial backing of the workshop on “Grassroots Democracy”; and to the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for its support of the conference on “Coming to Terms with the Past: West Germany in the 1960s,” to be held at the University of Nebraska in April. Finally, we are delighted to announce the inauguration of two new fellowship programs in honor of the late Jürgen Heideking, sponsored by the Annette Kade Charitable Trust and the Fritz Thyssen Foundation. We would very much like to thank all foundations and individuals for their unprecedented support of the Institute’s work.

Christof Mauch
POLITICAL RELIGION IN MODERN GERMANY:
REFLECTIONS ON NATIONALISM, SOCIALISM, AND
NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Wolfgang Hardtwig

The question of whether it makes sense to view National Socialism as a “political religion” — in addition to rather than instead of other interpretive approaches — is based on a simple fact of electoral history: Hitler was particularly successful in Protestant areas. All Reichstag elections from 1928 onward showed a significant statistical correlation between the proportion of Protestant voters and the success of the NSDAP. Various explanations have been offered for this phenomenon. I would like here to concentrate on the question of whether the situation of Christianity — and of Protestantism in particular — at the beginning of the twentieth century contributed to this susceptibility to the National Socialist message. This question cannot be separated from the further question of whether the Nazi message itself exhibited quasi-religious traits, both in its content and in the way it was conveyed. Clearly, the extreme irrationality of the Nazi regime and its crimes, as well as the ongoing search for a satisfactory explanation for genocide and the Holocaust, force us to consider religious concepts and interpretations. Saul Friedländer, for instance, has described the anti-Jewish attitudes that culminated in the Holocaust as “redemptive anti-Semitism,” and Ian Kershaw has raised the question of how it was possible for an “unbalanced, paranoid hatred and a chiliastic vision” to become “reality and a gruesome form of government practice.” Such terminology opens up wide-ranging perspectives in our search for an explanation, but one’s initial reaction is one of profound astonishment: How was such a destructive connection between religion and politics possible in the middle of the twentieth century? How can we speak of chiliastic
and apocalyptic contents and motives of political behavior in a supposedly highly secular world? What were the forms and characteristics of the "cult" that first led contemporaries to speak of National Socialism as quasi-religious, pseudoreligious, or a kind of substitute religion? Is it possible to describe with greater precision the processes by which the nation, the Volksgemeinschaft (national ethnic community) or Blutgemeinschaft (community of common blood) became endowed with a sacred character? If one speaks of endowing political, social, or philosophical contents with a religious dimension, the question then arises: What does religion actually mean in this context? Although this question is ultimately unanswerable, it still must be asked.

I will not examine the potential connections between religious or quasi-religious motives and aims, and the radicalization of the Nazi regime that culminated in the Holocaust. Instead, I focus on the period leading up to the Nazi "seizure of power," with some reflections on the consolidation of power up to the start of World War II. I begin with some observations about a "phenomenology" of Nazi political religion and then move on to an analysis of the political language and historical-political patterns of interpretation that existed in Germany before 1933. I then describe in greater detail the situation of Protestantism since about 1900, and finally I return to the meaning of the terms political religion and religion.

Contemporaries found the "quasi-religious" features of National Socialism most noticeable in its political rituals. In 1937 the French ambassador, André François-Poncet, noted the "romantic excitement, mystical ecstasy, a kind of holy mania" that had taken hold of the "hundreds of thousands" of men and women who participated in the Nuremberg party rally. 3 His observation confirms that National Socialist forms of celebration did indeed achieve quasi-religious effects. The Nazis had very quickly developed a comprehensive political cult. 4 Its stylistic roots were already obvious in the rallies staged by the NSDAP during the so-called Kampfzeit, the years of the party’s political marginalization in the 1920s. Between 1933 and 1936 the Nazis developed a regular calendar of festivities that was intended to pervade all areas of life and to affect people’s day-to-day lives. In part, it was based on Christian or historical celebrations, such as the Erntedankfest (Harvest Celebration) at the beginning of October, the Volkstraumtag (Day of Mourning) in memory of the fallen soldiers
of World War I, and the Tag der Arbeit (Day of Labor) on May 1. Mainly, however, this calendar of festivities sought to transfigure the historical dates of the Nazi movement through excessive yet meticulously organized celebrations. These included the Nazi seizure of power on January 30, the announcement of the party program on February 24, Verpflichtung der Jugend (Youth Commitment Day) on the last Sunday in March, and Hitler’s birthday on April 20. Other important dates were: Mother’s Day on a Sunday in May; the summer solstice on June 21; the Reichspartietag, the Nazi Party’s national convention in the first half of September; and the remembrance day on November 9 honoring those who died for the Nazi movement. By 1939 the celebrations at the national level were thoroughly organized and virtually fixed in form, created and carefully shaped by Joseph Goebbels and even more by Hitler himself. By contrast, celebrations taking place at the middle level of party activity or after the outbreak of the war were primarily the work of the party’s paladins and zealots. Some elements of the cult were fused together synthetically from disparate sources, including the nationalistic celebrations of the nineteenth century, Italian fascist rituals, and the amateur theater movement (Laienspielbewegung). Despite this eclecticism, the ritualized marching of uniformed ranks, ceremonies focusing on “sacred symbols,” the flags, and the obligatory speech by the Führer gave the major Nazi celebrations a unified, cohesive character.\(^5\)

In the first years after the seizure of power even those who cobbled the ceremonies together frequently described them as “cult rituals” (Kultrituale) or “consecrations” (Weihhandlungen). Even Goebbels’s official “Suggestions of the Reich Propaganda Office for the Design of National Socialist Celebrations” made reference to “ritual” or “cult-like” acts (kulitische Handlungen).\(^6\) Confronting the widespread use of such sacral terminology, Hitler explicitly rejected the term cult at the cultural section of the 1938 party conference because such things were best left to the churches. Despite the new rules regarding the terminology to be used, the expansion of the Nazis’ ideological cult continued.\(^7\) This development as well as the meticulous planning of the celebrations by the Ministry for Propaganda (and the “Rosenberg Office”) raise the question to what extent these quasi-religious rituals were actually expressions of a “religion”? And: Were the creators of the cult, including Hitler, Goebbels,
and Rosenberg, “religious” in the usual sense of the word or was their ritualized cult nothing but an arbitrary, interchangeable technique for political rule?

In a recent study Ekkehard Bärsch examined the religiosity of leading National Socialists and reached conclusions that will disturb readers who subscribe to a more-or-less secularized, enlightened, moral-humanitarian version of the Christian tradition.8 “In the German soul Christ is a guest/That is why the Antichrist hates it (Im deutschen Wesen ist Christ zu Gast/ Drum ist es dem Antichrist verhaßt).” Thus ran the lines of a poem written in 1919 by Dietrich Eckart, who strongly influenced Hitler’s ideas.9 Eckart: contrasted German Christianity and Jewish beliefs. According to Eckart, the Germans were experiencing God’s kingdom on earth, the “Third Reich,” whereas the Jews, and only the Jews, were completely caught up in earthly pursuits. At the core of the Jewish religion, Eckart argued, was a “complete lack of the concept of immortality.” Out of this contrast Eckart developed the polarity of godly/Christian/German on the one hand and satanic/Jewish/anti-German on the other. He thus subsumed the relationship of Germans to Jews under the polarity of “Christ” as opposed to “Antichrist.”

Even more disturbing than the research findings regarding Eckart are those regarding Goebbels. The young Goebbels, not yet a member of the NSDAP, began his diary entry for June 27, 1924, under the influence of a personal and historical experience of catastrophe, which he articulated prepolitically in the language of Christianity as a yearning for the return to the spirit of original Christianity.10 Goebbels’s politicization in the months that followed did not undo his Christian patterns of thought. Instead, he transposed the Christian hope for deliverance in the hereafter onto the earthly sphere of politics. As he was drafting his first articles for the journal Völkische Freiheit he wrote in his diary that they were the declaration of someone searching for the völkisch faith rather than the confession of a völkisch believer (“noch mehr das Bekenntnis eines völkisch-Suchenden denn eines völkisch-Glaubenden”; entry dated August 21, 1924). Shortly thereafter, Goebbels replaced the term New World (neue Welt) with the term new kingdom (neues Reich): “I am searching for the new kingdom and the new man. I find them only in my belief. The belief in our mission will lead us to final victory. Heil!” The politicization of the hope for salvation went along with a charis-
matic expectation of deliverance that had not yet found its target a few months earlier: “Germany is yearning for the One, the Man, just as in summer the soil yearns for rain. The only thing that can save us now is a final gathering of energy, enthusiasm, and absolute devotion. These are all miraculous things. But only a miracle can save us! Lord, show the German people a miracle! A miracle!” Just as in Eckart’s case, the dualism of good and evil was then connected to the idea of a German world mission in the fight against the Jews: “The Jew is the Antichrist of world history.”

Whereas Goebbels particularly in his early days formulated his political beliefs explicitly on the basis of Christianity — however he might have misunderstood it — Hitler’s political philosophy reflected a radical rejection of Christianity from the very beginning; a rejection that was quite explicit in Mein Kampf but not, of course, in his public appearances. Like Eckart and Goebbels, Hitler, too, based his diagnosis of the present situation on an unprecedented historical catastrophe, a break in world history wherein everything was at stake. For Hitler, however, the emergence of National Socialism coincided with the incipient and definitive collapse of Christianity. In Mein Kampf Hitler described the dominance of Christianity that began in late antiquity and extended over centuries as the biggest step backward in the history of mankind. Hitler claimed that National Socialism was breaking with Christian tradition, abandoning the disastrous, mistaken path of Christianity and steering history into an entirely new and correct direction. As is well known, he regarded the Christian churches as powerful institutions that threatened his claim to power and therefore had to be carefully and ruthlessly eliminated. Whereas Eckart and Goebbels appear to have combined Christian elements with non- or even anti-Christian elements into a kind of muddy amalgam, Hitler consciously contrasted Christianity and National Socialism as mutually exclusive alternatives.

At the same time, however, Hitler clearly conceived National Socialist ideology as a “political belief.” The final section in the chapter titled “Ideology and Party” in Mein Kampf is called “Creation of a Political Creed” (Glaubensbekennnis) and closes with the following words: “The German National Socialist Worker’s Party adopts the essential principles of the völkisch conception of the world and forms them into a political creed that takes into account practical realities, the nature of the times, and the available human material
and its deficiencies.” In addition to political belief, however, Hitler also referred to the need for religious belief: “If one deprives humanity as it exists today of its religious principles . . . by eliminating religious education without replacing it with anything of equal value, the foundations of human existence would be seriously shaken.”13

These formulations from Mein Kampf strongly suggest a functionalist use of religion, treating it as a kind of social cement in the tradition of Christian-conservative social thought. Yet there are numerous passages indicating that Hitler did have a personal belief in God. Thus he urged “Aryan humanity” to fulfill a “mission entrusted to it by the creator of the universe,” frequently described his conception of the natural order as God-given, and claimed to be “fighting for the work of the Lord,”14 which for Hitler meant above all opposing the “satanic work of the Jews,” who for him were the “personification of the devil as the symbol of all evil.”15

The “reliquioi”d motif of Hitler and many of his top men—with its fanatical dualism of good and evil, German-religious versus Jewish-antireligious—points to a dominant organizing pattern in their thought, namely, thinking in apocalyptic categories. This allows us to turn from the leading figures who invented the Nazi cult to its followers and audience. This apocalyptic way of thinking assumed a life-threatening dualism of good and evil, truth and lies, and light and darkness, but transformed this symbolic structure into a dualism of Before and After, a catastrophic present and a reconciled or “redeemed” future. In this vision of history the present and the immediate future are the “decisive hour” when all forces have to be mustered. In this apocalyptic vision of history the experience of the collapse of all order—political, social, intellectual, and religious—is, despite the attendant suffering, understood to serve the positive purpose of providing the resources of strength that are needed to reach a new state beyond all suffering.

During the 1920s and early 1930s this apocalyptic pattern of thought, the meaning and tradition of which have been examined by Klaus Vondung and Saul Friedländer, appeared within many different religious, political, literary, and scholarly contexts.16 Reviews of Ernst Bloch’s Spirit of Utopia (Geist der Utopie) and his book on Thomas Münzer spoke of a general chiliastic mood that had affected Bloch.17 Expressionist dramas as well as the new or rediscovered literary genres of the Laienspiel and the Weihepiel offered apocalyp-
tic interpretations of the present. The Protestant political theology of Paul Althaus, Friedrich Gogarten, and Emanuel Hirsch was completely in tune with this apocalyptic keynote.18 “We are living in a time of unprecedented darkness. Dark powers are everywhere at work bringing about the collapse of all human and divine order”—thus ran a common refrain in the sermons of Protestant clergy around 1930.19 In his recently published memoirs Sebastian Haffner wrote about the month of August in the catastrophic year 1923: “Gradually, the mood had even become apocalyptic. Hundreds of saviors were running around Berlin, people with long hair, wearing hairshirts, claiming that they had been sent by God to save the world . . . . The most successful of them was a certain Häusser, who advertised on advertising pillars (Litfassülen) and staged mass gatherings and had many followers. According to the newspapers, his Munich counterpart was a certain Hitler. . . . Whereas Hitler wanted to bring about the thousand-year Reich by the mass murder of all Jews, in Thuringia a certain Lambert wanted to bring it about by having everyone do folk dancing, singing, and leaping about.”20

After the end of hyperinflation, the conflict over the occupation of the Ruhr, and the consolidation of the Weimar Republic after the winter of 1923, the apocalyptic hysteria and the “inflation saints” disappeared.21 But there can be no doubt that the apocalyptic pattern of thought once again gained considerable momentum during the world economic crisis, especially in the Protestant middle class and the national political press, and provided an interpretive framework for understanding the singular crisis that had seized state and society. This apocalyptic thinking could gain a secure foothold all the more easily because it was connected to the hope for a charismatic savior who would break out of the normality of political life in Weimar Germany and show the way out of the seemingly hopeless situation by virtue of his extraordinary talents.

“Extraordinary powers”: this was the core of the characteristics that Max Weber summarized in the concept of “charisma.”22 Weber drew a close connection between charisma and religion, which derived from one of the constitutive features of religion, namely, the experience of the difference between the “ordinary” and the “extraordinary.” I do not seek to interpret the established Nazi regime, with its contradictory and self-destructive radicalization processes up to 1945, as a form of “charismatic au-
thority.” Rather, I would like to discuss the extent to which Hitler operated as a charismatic figure who benefited from the hope for a charismatic savior from his early career up until his consolidation of power. This should help us answer the question to what extent one can speak of National Socialism as a “political religion” in the phase during which it became established. The quasi-religious nature of the National Socialist appeal is quite noticeable in two of the characteristics that Rainer Lepsius developed for “charismatic rule” in Max Weber’s sense; the devotion inside and outside the party to the revelations offered by the Führer, and the emotional experience of community.23

In the cases of many of Hitler’s paladins, such as Eckart, Rudolf Heß, Julius Streicher, Baldur von Schirach, Heinrich Himmler, Hermann Göring, and Goebbels, belief in the Führer’s extraordinary abilities and special aura is obvious.24 Heß regarded Hitler as a deeply religious person, Streicher believed Hitler had God’s blessing, Himmler compared Hitler to Christ, and Göring declared publicly that Hitler was sent by God to lead Germany’s resurrection.25 Bärsch’s detailed textual analyses suggest that such formulations cannot be interpreted as conscious attempts to use religious terminology in a purely instrumental and manipulative way. The linguistic and spiritual contexts in which the terminology was embedded, and the frequency with which this figure of thought appeared in German public political life attest to the subjective sincerity of the convictions expressed.

Verses by German poets using religious language to sing the praises of Hitler’s uniqueness as the “Chosen One” and of his unity with the Volk could be quoted in abundance.26 Representatives of Protestant political theology as well as ordinary pastors made Hitler’s charisma doubly important because they demanded not only a Führer but also a “Führer with religious faith” or, as was the case with Emanuel Hirsch, they expressly described Hitler as “homo religiosus.”27 Klaus Schréiner has uncovered considerable evidence of an expectation that the arrival of a charismatic leader was imminent among Protestant theologians, in the arts and social sciences, and in the literature of the 1920s. He even found that Catholic theologians and writers connected the semantics of “Führer” and “Reich” to the idea of a “savior sent by God.”28 Where such expectations had been expressed before January 1, 1933, they
were initially confirmed after the seizure of power – before more perceptive contemporaries realized what was going on during the first attacks on the churches.

The National Socialist cult, then, brought this charismatic quality of the man with extraordinary powers to center stage in a systematic way and with great technical precision. The major celebrations at Reich level were closely tailored to Hitler’s person. To name but a few examples: The “Day of Potsdam” on March 31, 1933, in the Potsdam garrison church evoked the myths of Frederick the Great and of the victor at Tannenberg, Reich President Paul von Hindenburg, and sought to transfer the Prussian heritage, which the speeches endowed with a sacred character, to the new Reich chancellor. Likewise, the memorial meetings for the “martyrs of the movement” that took place at Munich’s Feldherrnhalle and later on the Königsplatz used a full array of religious symbolism. Contrasting displays of light and darkness, the use of fire to represent eternity, and ritual, rhythmic movement to music or drumbeats were designed to make Hitler’s actions appear similar to those of a high priest consecrating coffins with sacrificial solemnity. The Nuremberg party rallies (Reichsparteitage) presented the Führer as both a figure close to his followers and a figure symbolically standing in an aura of loneliness, far removed the Volk.  

Although these rituals demonstrated the symbolic self-affirmation of charismatic power, Hitler’s role as a speaker at such mass gatherings revealed the need he had to prove himself. His success as a speaker no doubt was partly due to the ritualistic staging of rallies and to the style he used to proclaim his message. It seems appropriate to describe the crowds at these rallies – to use Durkheim’s terminology – as a kind of “Pentecostal congregation” that was receiving enlightenment. It is impossible to provide extensive evidence for this assertion within the confines of this essay, but descriptions of Hitler’s speeches very much followed this pattern. According to Heß, “[Hitler’s] speeches were thrilling and usually lasted half an hour, although he wanted to keep them to ten minutes. In one hall he was suddenly possessed again by something indescribable – it gripped me so that I had to clench my teeth. On that occasion he spoke over three quarters of an hour. There were many clever and critical minds in the hall; by the end they were all beside themselves with enthusiasm.”
Undoubtedly, another important factor was that Hitler’s rhetoric could build on a semantics that had, over several decades, erased the boundaries between religious and political statements. This process had taken hold in the Weimar Republic and then spread after 1930. Here, too, the language of Protestantism proved particularly persuasive, although Catholics tended to follow suit, particularly after the seizure of power: Among the endlessly repeated terms that easily crossed the boundaries between theological and political statements were “destiny” (Schicksal) and “struggle” (Kampf), indicating that religious language was becoming militarized, and the word “revolutionary.” Hitler’s verbal excesses were mirrored in Protestant sermons, where Christ was now described as the “great arsonist of the history of mankind.”  

Even Catholic priests and writers were not immune to this language of battles and heroes, and began celebrating their own martyrs as “heroes.” I can only remark in passing that the term Reich (realm, empire, kingdom) carried a downright magical power. In both of the major religious denominations, its meaning fluctuated between the “German Reich” and “God’s Reich”; among Catholics it had medieval connotations as well. 

In sum, Hitler himself regularly made use of terms that carried religious connotations. But, more generally, the German historicopolitical language had become religious in tone. Thus the Prussian heritage was “holy,” embodied in the person of Hindenburg; for the völkisch movement, blood was “holy.” Even the left-liberal-republican branch of the German youth movement used the word “holy” in 1921 to describe the country’s flag. A part represents the whole, a basic characteristic of religious thinking according to Durkheim: “When a holy being divides itself, it remains absolutely the same in each of its parts.” The “holy being” here was the German Volk. When Hitler proclaimed that the German Volk had been “assigned a mission by the creator of the universe” he was only picking up on a common theme in Protestant German nationalism, although he gave it a twist that went far beyond any tradition of bourgeois nationalism.

There can be no doubt that the German language and the German conceptual world became radicalized after the defeat of World War I and the revolution of 1918-19. But already from the beginning of the 1860s a belligerent national collective ideal had been developing in the emerging mass political associations of singers, marks-
men, and gymnasists and was further reinforced by the many war
veterans’ associations in Imperial Germany. This militarist-national
ideal was fused with the general national-religious orientation of
the Bürgertum apparent since the end of the eighteenth century. Al-
ready in 1813-14 the rhetoric of the Wars of Liberation had trans-
formed the nation into something sacred and had nationalized reli-
gion, especially Protestantism. On Reformation Day in 1817 the
student demonstrators at the Wartburg festival commemorated Martin
Luther’s posting of his theses and the reformation as both religious
and national events. On the basis of the Borussian “small German”
(klein deutscll) Protestant picture of history, Germany’s Protestant
educated middle classes (Bildungsbürgertum) interpreted the German
victory over France in 1871 as the realization of the “Holy Prote-
stant Empire of the German Nation,” as Court Chaplain Adolf
Stoeker put it. These interpreters of history did not find it difficult
to recognize “the hand of God from 1517 to 1871” in the history of
Germany and thus to endow the founding of the new Reich with an
eschatological quality. This equation of being German with being
Christian—especially Protestant—reached new heights in World War
I, when German theologians declared “our battles” to be “God’s
battles.” Even critical, liberal theologians such as Ernst Troeltsch
preached a “German faith” for a while. After the decline of the
Kulturkampf in the 1890s this national religious consciousness even
carried over to Catholic interpreters of the past and present.

Against this background, it is easy to understand that in the ex-
reme crisis of German identity after 1918 interpreters of German
history who were in any way religious tended to equate national
and religious crises with national and religious hopes for revival.
This interpretive pattern took hold in the nationalism found among
average pastors (the importance of which Fritz Stern has noted), in
political theology, among the German-Christian and new-pagan sect-
tarians, and in the end also in Catholicism. Here German religion
was more-or-less openly referred to as a “German weapon.” From
1919 the religious concept of “reincarnation” was popularly seen as
“Germany’s reincarnation.” Radical-nationalist founders of religious
movements such as Artur Dinter spoke of the “completion of the
Reformation” or of a “second” and “new Reformation,” and they
began to claim that the moral task of the church included “main-
taining the purity of race and blood.” Since the mid-1920s and even
more strongly from the early 1930s some theologians believed that a new receptiveness to religion could be detected among the German people. It therefore was only logical that—just before and after the Nazi seizure of power—the “national revolution” of the National Socialists and the movement for religious renewal were often equated. If the term political religion makes sense, then it applies to the political religion of Germany, mainly Protestant nationalism. From January 30, 1933, onward Hitler appealed to this religious-national orientation by systematically portraying himself as a deeply religious German, a champion of the faith fighting against Jewish and Bolshevik enemies of the faith, and a defender of Christianity against the anti-Christian threats coming from all sides.

Not only was Hitler able to appeal to deeply rooted national-religious convictions in the Protestant middle classes, he also succeeded in using the visual and verbal symbolism of Nazi rituals to activate the cultural memory of parts of the political left for his own purposes. Unfortunately, we still know too little about the way large parts of the German working class adapted to National Socialism after the labor organizations were banned. No doubt the success of the new masters was due to the fact that they were able to meet the demands of the left to a certain extent materially, but also symbolically. The symbolic achievements included the supposed equality of all members of the Nazi Volksgemeinschaft; the removal of class barriers, at least in Nazi rhetoric; the lip service paid to the dignity of “National labor”; the numerous organized events in workplaces and for local groups; and the massive celebrations held on the First of May.

The political liturgy of twentieth-century totalitarian regimes integrated several very different traditions. The rituals and “political hagiography” of the labor movement should not be overlooked in this context. Here the political cults of the Soviet Union and Fascist Italy may have been more important than specifically German traditions. However, religious and church-like elements also existed in the conceptual world and the political practices of German Social Democrats. The clearest example of such practices was the cult of Ferdinand Lassalle, which unmistakably borrowed from the Catholic veneration of saints. Pictures of Lassalle decorated the homes of workers, the song of the Lassalleans studied by Vernon Lidtke incorporated many passages from church hymns verbatim,
and the Lassallean "profession of faith" adopted the formulations of the Christian catechism:

    I believe in Ferdinand Lassalle,  
The Messiah of the nineteenth century,  
    In the social-political rebirth  
    of my destitute people  
    In the indisputable dogmas of the working class  
    preached by Ferdinand Lassalle, etc. . . .  

As is well known, the Lassalle cult came under attack from the August Bebel-Wilhelm Liebknecht wing of the workers' movement; but in later years Bebel himself came to be idolized, and his picture was carried in many processions. In their quest for self-affirmation, socialist workers at party gatherings adopted many of the features of Christian congregations, and they inserted elements of church rites into the staging of the labor-day celebration on May 1. Research in the history of ideas has shown how similar the Christian-eschatological notion of the "Last Judgment" and the socialist idea of "world revolution" were at times, although the 1890s gave the Social Democratic Party (SPD) a major dose of realism. From the 1880s onward, criticism of religion but also criticism of the quasi-religious elements within the SPD frequently reflected the influence of the free-thinker movement and the Monist League. The Monist League itself, however, claimed—as its prophet, Ernst Haeckel, put it—to replace Christianity with a "true religion" of science and reason. Yet we need to take care when looking back on the traditions of nationalism and socialism, for similar or even identical ritual forms can serve quite different political and social aims. The contemporary use of the term religion covers such a wide spectrum of meanings that the term itself indicates very little. Furthermore, sociopolitical and cultural-religious views have been subject to sudden shifts, particularly during the radical cultural, political, and social changes of the early twentieth century. My goal here is not to trace direct lines of continuity, an undertaking that would pose almost insurmountable methodological obstacles in any event. Rather, I wish to identify the mental and intellectual dispositions that allowed the type of sociopolitical claims of deliverance made by Hitler to find widespread resonance. In addition, my purpose is to historicize the concept of "political religion." Even today this con-
cept is still closely linked to Eric Voegelin’s theory of 1938. For Voegelin, a devout Catholic, a political community always had to be a religious order at the same time. Using a very broad theory of secularization, Voegelin held the modern separation of church and state responsible for the establishment of a purely secular symbolic system around a sacred center of Volksgeist (Volk spirit) and “blood” that had become imbued with “religious fervor.”

This wide-reaching theory of general secularization was questioned in a broad sociological discussion of culture and religion in the Anglo-European world since the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1980s historians working on Germany showed new interest in the role of religion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The picture of a closed, church-centered form of life in the premodern world has largely proven to be an artificial construct. Likewise, the history of religion in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has revealed a revitalization of church and faith in the context of renewed confessional conflict between Protestants and Catholics, rather than the relentless secularization supposedly produced by social modernization. David Blackbourn and Helmut Walser Smith have made important contributions to this field.

Four interconnected processes deserve special attention. First, the attraction of the great churches did begin to decline; a variety of alternative religious offerings began cropping up, particularly on the periphery of the established Protestant churches in some German states. Second, new religions were gaining in popularity at the same time. Third, around 1900 religion became one of the major and perhaps even the dominant topic of public discussions in cultural theory. The question of the future of religion was accorded the highest priority not only because of its spiritual significance but because of its implications for the “normative foundations of culture” as a whole. Instead of proposing a scenario of the continuous forward march of dechristianization or secularization—with losers and winners of modernization—it may be better to speak of transformations, or a reformulation or new formulation of religious offerings.

Fourth, I do not propose jettisoning the concept of “secularization” completely. It serves a good purpose, particularly if understood to refer to the transformation of the function of religion since the beginning of modernity. The wars of religion in the early seventeenth century led to a concept of civil peace in which the political
order increasingly separated itself from the religious and confessional identity of its members. Two aspects are important in this increasing separation of state and church: On the one hand, this separation contributed to the process by which, as Max Weber famously put it, the “external things of this world became more important and eventually gained inescapable power over people, as never before in history.” But even this comprehensive process of a new and increasing orientation toward worldly matters should not be described simply as a loss of faith. Although the secular society gave up some parts of the old belief, it did not give up belief itself. As Friedrich Tenbruck wrote, “[The secular society] grew up and triumphed under the influence of a new form of belief. This is why secular society has its own history of belief” (Glaubensgeschichte). This specifically modern belief usually contains a promise of salvation and redemption that is often not spiritual but secular and is organized in terms of a sociopolitical or racial utopia that is to be realized by political means.

On the other hand, religious belief and the position of the church are also subject to the differentiating processes of modern society. Functional systems and ordering principles—state, economy, and culture—become more independent and form “special spheres” that develop their own specific character and rationality. As examples we may refer to the introduction of civil marriage in Germany during the Kulturkampf, the far-reaching legal separation of church and state in the Weimar Constitution, and finally, the logic of a competitive capitalist economy that shows no consideration for Christian customs and values. Paradoxically, the decline of the role of the churches in society coincided with a new denominational focus on the church, for faced with a world that was becoming increasingly distant, the churches drew back within the boundaries of their own denominational milieus or reinforced these boundaries.

What did all this mean for Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s? First, after about 1900 there was a vibrant array of religious options offered by many competitors. Culturally Protestant Bildungsbürger favored an individualized religiosity that kept a critical distance from the established regional Protestant churches. Various movements gained a foothold among the lower-middle classes, including Protestant sects, the Salvation Army, Methodists, apostolic groups, and new-revivalist movements. The latter practiced eclectic and lively
forms of religious worship, which the established Protestant churches regarded as an “invasion by . . . Anglo-American dissenters” and a “disintegration” of religion, which provoked assertions that a particularly “German” style of religiosity existed. Parts of the educated stratum and the working class turned to the free-thinker movement or to the Monist League and thus toward a “scientific” belief in progress. At the opposite end of the spectrum fundamental fears of progress led to alternative blueprints for modernity that took the form of new-pagan or German-Christian sects. The fight for “market share” became so intense that Klaus Scholder interpreted the political theology of the 1920s, which was still connected to the established Protestant churches, as a response to pressures from the new völkisch, right-wing brand of Christianity. The separation of church and state in the Weimar Constitution of 1919 was a deep shock to Protestant conservatives, who were suddenly deprived of their previous position as a seemingly indispensable political and cultural elite and who saw themselves as being ruled by a coalition of socialists and Catholics. The extremely dramatic experience of the revolution of 1918 convinced large parts of the Protestant middle class that they were left not only in a world of eroding Christianity but in an un-Christian, indeed anti-Christian world.

Thus it is all the more understandable that in the 1920s and early 1930s one regularly encounters the lament that it was a time “devoid of religion.” One small church reform movement, the dialectic theology of Karl Barth, responded to this situation by breaking with Protestant attempts to adapt to bourgeois national culture and emphasizing the spiritual demands of the Protestant faith, thus becoming the most important core of the Confessing Church after 1933. The mainstream of German Protestantism, by contrast, succumbed to the temptations of political religion that Hitler and his associates offered. Hitler seemed to be the “Christian statesman” who would destroy the “forces of dechristianization in our people.” Many nationalistic Protestants believed that their desire for a national church that would bridge the denominational gap in Germany would at last be fulfilled—on a Protestant basis, naturally—for it was clear that Hitler was propagating a national belief for all Germans that would transcend the different confessions. The political religion of National Socialism adopted the popular belief in a sacred nation and reinforced it. Many deeply religious people believed that the
worst aspects of religious institutionalization would be overcome and that the previous retreat of faith into narrow corridors would thus be reversed. Reinhold Schneider, a “religious virtuoso” in Max Weber’s sense and later an important Catholic author, wrote in his diary on April 22, 1933: “We have no myth, no religion that forcefully pervades all aspects of life; indeed we can hardly be said to have religious feeling anymore . . . the national is the first, most obvious manifestation of destiny.” He thus demanded that “the destiny of the hero should become one with the destiny of the Volk that looks on.” He ended: “The goal lies in unification, in heroic religion.” 66 This unification seemed not only to halt the retreat of religion into isolated milieus but also to overcome the modern differentiation process by which reality was divided into separate autonomous spheres. 67 This differentiation process seemed to have been reversed by an integrative political religion, and thus the longstanding problem of German political culture, its segmentation into different social and moral milieus, appeared to have been overcome as well. From the national Protestant point of view, Catholics and workers finally had to give up their special role and their more-or-less open hostility toward the state that would be governed by a bourgeois Protestant elite. After January 31, 1933, there was great rejoicing that German disunity had been overcome. “A people that has experienced confusion and separation is now reunited and mourns for its dead heroes,” preached a pastor on the People’s Day of Mourning in 1934, who went on to describe how the different groups in German society had remained passive and isolated from one another in the years of the Republic: “[B]ut today,” he insisted, “the whole people is in mourning . . . suddenly in agreement about the meaning of heroic death for German honor.” 68

In summary, the susceptibility of large segments of German Protestantism—as well as Catholicism after 1933—to the appeals of Nazism can be explained by the segmentation of German society, but also by the historical situation of Christianity in Germany after the turn of the century. Although some theologians’ or journalists’ remarks and some election results in Protestant regions may now appear a bit more plausible than before, the expressions of faith issued by Hitler and his followers and their staging of a political religion designed to mobilize the masses remain extremely offensive.

At the end of this lecture many questions remain open: To what extent, for instance, did the apocalyptic understanding of history
actually influence the more sober-minded representatives of the Nazi ideological elite, such as the pragmatic jurist Werner Best, and the mass of ordinary party members? From the perspective of social history, one would have to examine the materials that the party used to win new members, including portraits of Hitler resembling the pictures of saints and framed with the obligatory uplifting slogans. The reaction of the workers to the political-religious appeal of the Nazis would also warrant further research.

As is always the case with an intellectual-history approach, those who were experts in deciphering and conveying meaning—journalists and philosophers—have claimed more space here than those who were the main target audiences and potential recipients, the faithful church-goers, “routine” Christians or the no-longer-Christians, and the mass of voters. It would also be exciting to carry out gender-specific research into this phenomenon, but this would require new sources. All this could not be provided here. What I would like to do in closing is to attempt to clarify the concept of “religion,” the definition of which I have deliberately left open up to now.

It is, of course, impossible to discuss here the wealth of definitions of religion that theology, religious studies, and the sociology of religion offer us. I will therefore draw on a suggestion made by Charles Glock and Rodney Stark in their 1965 work, Religion and Society in Tension. Their approach has the advantage of not seeking to determine the “essence,” “truth,” or “origin” of religion in general; instead, it defines religion in five dimensions, each of which can be described in a historically precise way. These include the “ideological” dimension, that is, the recognition of certain beliefs; the ritualistic dimension, that is, participation in ceremonies; the dimension of subjective religious experience; the intellectual dimension, that is, the knowledge of dogma and scripture; and finally, the dimension of practical actions that result from the other dimensions. As I tried earlier to indicate, all these dimensions can be found in the thinking and behavior of Hitler and his closest supporters, no doubt also among sections of his wider following. Nevertheless, I am extremely hesitant to use the term “religion” here without putting it between quotation marks. Put in religious-sociological terms, in what way does the inhumane belief system of the Nazis differ from even the highly politicized forms of Christian faith?
All sociologists of religion, regardless of whether they take a functionalist or substantialist approach to the concept of religion, agree that religion involves coping with contingency. The experience of contingency is the experience of the uncertainties of life, the insecurity of being, and the impossibility of living life exactly as one might like. In the experience of contingency the individual experiences a certain distance from reality that allows him or her to ask "whether this reality could not also be quite different, and why it is not different." The extent, content, and interpretation of contingency are historically variable. But it is clear that contingency—and therefore also religious ideas and practices—reflect biographical, cultural, and social disruptions, when the experience of the unexpected and feelings of fear or hope are particularly strong. This need for meaning can be dealt with in a variety of ways: by seizing on rational explanations for the appearance of contingency, by changing one's assessment of reality, or by applying philosophical or political interpretations of the world. What differentiates these forms from a religious approach to coping with contingency? The sociology of religion offers a widely accepted answer that seems quite plausible to me: It is characteristic of religion to go beyond the tangible world of humans, which is just another way of expressing what religious terminology calls "transcendence."

All those things that we humans can achieve through our own devices are vulnerable to skepticism, can easily be shaken up, relativized, and disputed. Only those areas that are not accessible to us can provide us with final certainty. Yet for religious persons this inaccessible domain must be sufficiently clear and close to their lives and must therefore be made real through concrete, ritual practices so that the connection is not lost. Thus the ties between the certain and the uncertain, between the accessible and the inaccessible, and between the immanent and the transcendent form the fundamental structure of religion.

If one applies these reflections to the typical experiences and interpretive frameworks of Germans during the time period under discussion, it is clear that they faced an unprecedented challenge of contingency after 1914, even more so after 1918. The metanarrative dominant since 1871, the story of Germany's unstoppable rise despite considerable obstacles, was suddenly interrupted and gave way to the experience of what most regarded as an undeserved catastro-
phe. The defeat in war, a revolution that produced a shock effect on the middle classes despite the reformist turn it took, the humiliation of Versailles, the “pandumonium” (or Hexensabbat, as Thomas Mann called it) of hyperinflation, and, finally, the widespread deprivation and lack of prospects for the individual during the worldwide economic crisis all added up to a heavy dose of contingency, and—as it turned out—too much for the mental reserves of German Protestantism. Because its resistance to nationalization had long disappeared, Protestantism increasingly endorsed secular, political strategies of coping with contingency and therefore had virtually nothing with which to counter the comprehensive spiritual offerings of the Nationa. Socialist political religion, which offered a quick-fix, all-encompassing solution to all problems through consent to the will of the Führer.

But why refer to the belief system of Hitler and his henchmen as a “Nazi political religion” instead of calling it simply a highly political form of Christianity? The distinction is slippery, and the more the German Volk and Blut acquired a sacred character, the more the Christian element disappeared. The crucial dividing line seems to lie in the activist claim of National Socialist apocalyptic thought that one could “win salvation through one’s own deeds.” This self-empowerment eliminates the need for what I described as “transcendence,” namely, the recognition of a domain that is inaccessible to humans and that therefore helps religious people to bear the experience of contingency. Those who are religious know that they have no power over this contingency; the uncertainty of being may be reduced here and there, but it cannot be removed entirely. But this is exactly what the political religion of National Socialism was trying to do. It transformed the experience of contingency into an essential and final battle against the enemies of the German people or so-called “Aryan humanity,” a battle that Nazi racial ideology cast in a pseudoscientific and pseudomoralistic way as the fight of good against evil. By securing the supposed health of the people through the destruction of all supposed enemies, all problems would finally be “solved.” Whereas religion assumes the existence of something absolutely inaccessible and bases its “contingency management” (Hermann Lübke) on this assumption, secular belief systems dispute the inevitability of contingency. But because contingency is in fact constantly experienced—including by Hitler and Goebbels them-
selves—the desire to eliminate it results in a belief in the inevitability of a permanent battle, a battle of life and death.

Because a “political religion” believes that it can eliminate contingency and thus liberate or “deliver” people from all their shortcomings through political, that is, controllable means, it is a secular belief system, not a religion. Although the foundation was laid by the Christian sacralization of the nation, Nazi “political religion” went much further: It retreated from the highly developed rationalism of Christian theology, from the differentiating processes associated with modernity, and initially from the taboo against violence that had once been a core value of Christianity but had been weakened by the nationalization of religion.

Notes

Translated by Gilian Woodman, Jan Lambertz, and Richard F. Wetzell.

1 Jürgen Falter, Hitlers Wähler (Munich, 1991), 175-6.
4 On political rituals in Nazi Germany, see George L. Mosse, The Nationalization of the Masses (New York, 1975).
6 Vondung, Magie und Manipulation, 43.
7 Ibid., 44.
9 Ibid., 68; cf. 52-90.
10 Ibid., 96; cf. 91-130.
11 Ibid., 106.
13 Hitler, Mein Kampf, 416-17.
14 Cited in Bärsch, Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus, 289.
15 Ibid., 321.
16 Saul Friedländer, Kitsch und Tod: Der Widerschein des Nazismus (Munich, 1984), 118-19; Klaus Vondung, Die Apokalypse in Deutschland (Munich, 1988).
24 Bärsch, Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus, 136-78.
25 Ibid., 330-3.
26 Ibid., 178-87.
27 Germann, Die politische Religion, 79.
34 Freitag, “Nationale Mythen und kirchliches Heil.”
35 Vondung, Magie und Manipulation, 27.
37 Emile Durkheim, Die elementare Formen des religiösen Lebens (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 314.
38 Hitler, Mein Kampf, 234.
44 Friedrich Gogarten, cited in Germann, Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialistischen Dietrich Klagges, 78.
45 Schieder, Religion im Radio, passim; Robert Stupperich, with Martin Stupperich and Otto Dibelius, Ein evangelischer Bischof im Umbruch der Zeiten (Göttingen, 1989), 147ff.
48 Thamer, "Politische Rituale und politische Kultur.”
49 See all of the essays in Berthold Unfried and Christine Schindler, eds., Riten, Mythen und Symbole: Die Arbeiterbewegung zwischen "Zivilreligion" und Volkskultur (Vienna, 1999).


60 See title name in note 55.

61 Christoph Ribbat, Protestantische Schürmer im Kaiserreich (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), 225ff.

62 Scholz, Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich, 133; Rodney Stark and James C. McCann, “Market Forces and Catholic Commitment: Exploring the New Paradigm,” Journal

63 Scholder, Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich, 3-46, 65-92; see also Kurt Nowack, Geschichte des Christentums in Deutschland: Religion, Politik und Gesellschaft vom Ende der Aufklärung bis zur Mitte des 20 Jahrhunderts (Munich, 1995).

64 Vondung, Magie und Manipulation, 21; Schieder, Religion im Radio, 177.

65 Emmanuel Hirsch, Mey 1933, cited in German, Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialistischen Dietrich Klagges, 79.

66 Reinhold Schneider, Tagebuch 1930-1935 (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), 667-8, 670.

67 Scholder, Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich, 43; Stupperich, Ein evangelischer Bischof, 92-161.

68 Cited in Schieder, Religion im Radio, 185.

69 There is no mention of political religion in Ulrich Herbert, Best: Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft 1903-1989, 3d ed. (Bonn, 1996).

70 As reported in Martin Walser’s autobiography: Ein springender Brunnen (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), 90.


73 Pollack, “Was ist Religion?” 75.
POLITICS, RELIGION, AND IDEOLOGY:
A COMMENT ON WOLFGANG HARDTWIG

Jane Caplan

Wolfgang Hardtwig’s lecture sets up a series of challenging interpretive questions forged from a single familiar fact. As we know from numerous statistical analyses of national voting results after 1928, the NSDAP was highly successful in gaining support among German Protestants in its electoral drive for power and by 1932 had made considerable inroads into the more impervious Catholic vote, as well. But, familiar though it is, what does this apparent relationship between National Socialism and Christian affiliation mean, and how is it to be explained? One representative and authoritative account of the Nazi electorate, Thomas Childers’s *The Nazi Voter*, reads the party’s attitude toward the Christian religion as largely defensive and propagandistic. Childers emphasizes the NSDAP’s repudiation of accusations that it was an enemy of Christianity and its claims that it was the only political movement capable of overcoming the nation’s confessional as well as class divisions.¹ This political interpretation is consistent with his wider argument, now well established in the literature, that after 1930 the NSDAP became a “catch-all party of protest,” an unstable alignment of voters united only in their frustration and despair at the apparent insolubility of Germany’s economic and political crisis.² A logical corollary to this would be that the association of religious belief and National Socialism was as shallow and evanescent as any of the other miscellaneous beliefs and expectations that brought more than one in three of Germany’s voters into the Nazi camp by July 1932—and that the convergence was opportunistic on both sides of the electoral equation: The relationship was exploited by a party that, as we know, was willing to adopt any position that would assist its ruthless pursuit of electoral legitimation.

This type of electoral analysis occupied center stage in the explanations of the Nazi rise to power until a few years ago. It aimed to test the inherited truism that the NSDAP was essentially a lower-middle-class movement—a hypothesis that was already under at-
tack and that did not survive such intensive scrutiny unscathed. But although these efforts yielded massive new evidence about how Germans voted, they were less conclusive in answering the question why voters made their choices; or, in other words, in bridging the inferential gaps between voters and their motives, between evidence and its explanation. Electoral analysis, perhaps too much in conformity with its own premises, tended to yield somewhat pragmatic accounts of voter preferences in Weimar Germany. Older emphases on the appeal of Nazi ideology were rejected in favor of more rationalist explanations of how voter groups assessed their material interests and how the NSDAP targeted these with cynically skilled propaganda. But as materialist explanations of historical processes lost ground at the end of the 1980s, in a secular movement of ideas that needs no reiteration here, so a renewed interest in the operations and mechanisms of ideology has reopened the question of Nazism as ideology and restored a prominence that had been eclipsed by structural and procedural accounts of the movement’s successes and failure.

Hardtwig’s lecture takes this move a step further by invoking that species of ideological conviction we call religious belief and suggesting that it is “the extreme irrationality of the National Socialist regime and its crimes [that] forces us to take religious concepts and interpretations into consideration.” An interesting paradox this, if we recall that it was the perceived inadequacy of irrationalist models of Nazism that led historians in the first place to embark on the statistical studies that provide the empirical starting point of this lecture. But this equation of religion and irrationality may almost be unnecessary because the questions posed by Hardtwig are far more concrete and open to empirical investigation than it implies, even if they also return to the terrain of ideology. Hardtwig asks whether the appeal of National Socialism can be explained by the state of Christian belief in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s; whether the character of the Nazi movement, its ideology, and its leadership actively sought to respond to the aspirations of frustrated and needy Christian believers; whether National Socialism was able to commandeer Germans’ religious beliefs and longings for political purposes because it was, or presented itself as, a kind of political religion.

To ask these questions is to release a Pandora’s flight of historical and conceptual questions, which Hardtwig recaptures with an
impressive grasp and expertise. *Political religion* is the key term here, and it may need some introduction. Although this concept has had a presence in debates about National Socialism since the 1930s, it is probably less familiar to anglophone historians as an interpretive tool than the concepts of mass society and mass politics, or of totalitarianism, with which it has some affinities. Still, the idea of political religion has experienced something of a revival, especially among the German and French academics to whose works HARDTWIG refers. This resurgence of interest has been accompanied by a new depth of empirical and contextual information about the religious affiliations of Nazi ideologists and their ideas, especially through the work of Claus-Ekkehard Bärsch. Not only has Bärsch reassessed the ideas of ideologues like Dietrich Eckart and Alfred Rosenberg, he also has reanchored the potentially loose and amorphous idea of political religion in the core concepts of ecclesia, political community, and state sovereignty advanced by Erich Voegelin and, before him, Carl Schmitt. Meanwhile, other scholars, such as Karl Schreiner, have been exploring the ideological crisis of German Christian belief in the 1920s and depicting the accumulation of salvationist hopes for a political Messiah.

Hardtwig's discussion of these demanding and sometimes abstruse literatures conveys their richness and complexity while at the same time making them comprehensible to readers who are unfamiliar with them. His overarching question is whether the concept of political religion might help us to explain both the attractiveness of the Nazi movement in Germany before 1933 and the apocalyptic character and actions of the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945. Hardtwig concentrates mainly on the first question, basing his remarks on the empirical fact already noted above: the strong statistical correlation between the Protestant electorate and support for the NSDAP. He begins by considering some of the more familiar cultic attributes of the Nazi movement, ideology, and leadership: the calendric of rituals, for example, or the conceptual vocabulary of Eckart and Joseph Goebbels. He then moves outward to situate this in the language and mentality of a broader swathe of Germans in the 1920s and 1930s, looking for what might be called parallel dispositions or overlaps between the Nazi and Christian ideational worlds. He suggests that an apocalyptic representation of national crisis gained currency in Germany immediately after World War I and again un-
der the impact of the depression, creating a favorable climate for a charismatic leader to claim wide legitimacy. And, extending this discussion, Hardtwig also takes us much further back into the history of convergences between the languages of politics and religion in Germany. He considers the specifically Protestant forms of this mentality in the nineteenth century and the range of disappointments and resentments felt by what had once been a Protestant ascendency in the face of a new “red-black” Socialist-Catholic coalition after 1918.

In a conclusion that is perhaps the most difficult part of the lecture to grasp, Hardtwig contrasts the character of religious and political discourse as such. If I follow his text correctly here, he argues that, on the one hand, religion offers transcendent meaning to, but no practical resolution of, the essential contingency or uncontrollability of human existence, notably its openness to death; whereas on the other hand, politics operates with a notion of problems that can in fact be solved. Religion, in a word, offers deliverance in return for the recognition that human control is finite; politics offers control but not transcendence. But what National Socialism did, with its racialized postulate of an essential struggle between the Aryans and their enemies, was to invest the religious experience of contingency with the political mantle of solubility. In other words, it suggested that the core challenges of human existence that religion responds to could in fact become the stuff of political resolution. This was a strategy that fatally politicized the existential challenge of death: And, in attempting to master death, National Socialism created a virtual cult of death.7 (In this sense Nazism was an inherently apocalyptic ideology, in contrast to the reconciliationist promise—however compromised in practice—of the ideologies of socialism and communism, which limits their comparability with Nazism.) Thus Hardtwig finally judges National Socialism to be a secular movement that vacated the true ground of religion when it claimed to offer solutions to what is humanly insoluble. The lesson of his lecture is that National Socialism was able to capitalize on the religious discontent of the 1920s and 1930s but that this does not justify seeing the Nazi movement itself as a political religion. In other words, Hardtwig concludes, the concept is useful as a means to understand the popular appeal of Nazism but not its own character as a political movement. With this discriminating judgment Hardtwig seems to be in
seems to be in syntactic agreement with Philippe Burrin’s suggestion that, in the concept of political religion, “the adjective is more important than the noun”.

This lecture thus presents us with an enormous range of issues, from the meaning of religious belief as such to the history of German political and religious languages, to Hitler’s beliefs and his status among his followers, to the precise circumstances of the Nazi rise to power. Without hope of addressing them all, I trust that what I have selected for this comment will not appear too idiosyncratic; or if it does, that it will stimulate readers to ideas and responses of their own.

First, a comment on the initial argument—that the Nazi Party’s appeal to Christians derived from its own quasi-religious characteristics. For the Weimar period, as I have said, this sets up the challenging task of explaining the relationship between the religious dispositions described in the lecture and the empirical pattern of voter choices, of bridging the motivational and interpretive gaps. Here the lecture presents some creative approaches that also engender new questions. Hardtwig’s description of sectarian religious confusion in Weimar offers a suggestive parallel to the more familiar picture of contemporary party political confusion. He depicts a proliferating market of religious sects to which Nazism offered a vision of reunification, in a striking parallel to the familiar picture of the fragmentation of the political middle that underpins much of the empirical research into electoral choice. Is this image—a crisis of religious loyalty paralleling the crisis of political loyalty—an artifact of research perspectives and existing models, or is it a real parallel that might provide some ways to construct those necessary bridges between climates and behaviors?

Hardtwig also depicts with great cogency the way in which the Nazi Party’s quasi-religious rituals tapped into the climate of salvationist longing and the repertoire of religious symbolism in the 1920s and 1930s. But how differently did Protestants and Catholics respond to this, and why? How were the ideas identifiable in theological and ideological tracts translated into the means of political decisionmaking or mobilization? We know, for example, that Catholic voters remained more committed to their own political party, the Center; than did Protestants to the German National People’s Party (Deutsche Nationale Volkspartei, or DNVP)—a fact that suggests
the importance of a triangular comparison of the religious appeal of Center, DNVP, and NSDAP. Similarly, women were at first less attracted than male voters to the NSDAP, and Catholic women least of all: Do the manipulations of political religion help to explain this gender gap or the fact that it was finally and dramatically overcome in 1932? One might also raise questions from the internal history of the Protestant church: its leadership’s cautious stance vis-à-vis the Nazi movement before 1931, its internal struggles with the German Christian movement, its members’ decisions at the church’s own elections as well as in state elections. All these examples suggest that the bridge linking religious beliefs or deficits with voting decisions still has to be paved once it has been erected.

The largest issue raised by this lecture obviously is the value of the concept of political religion itself to our understanding of National Socialism or, for that matter, of other political movements. The term itself is explored by Hardtwig, and I will not repeat it here. Academic interest in it is attested, as I have already mentioned, by the small mountain of new books, essays, and conference papers that have appeared in Germany and France in the past few years, although not in the United States or Britain. The context in which the concept of political religion has claimed a new prominence is clearly shared by both European and U.S. academics, namely, the collapse of the Soviet system, which has changed the historical and intellectual climate for the study of Europe’s twentieth-century dictatorships. In the United States, however, historians will probably be much more familiar with the revival of debate about totalitarianism in the 1990s, in which the concept of political religion has barely been mentioned. However, another more locally domesticated concept that has not undergone the same revival is that of mass society, an idea that—unlike its more politically self-conscious cousin, populism—has always seemed to me compromised by its frank contempt for the political potential of democracy. In any case, with some exceptions American scholars have recently contributed much more to the exploration of the political ritualism of Italian fascism than of Nazism, in studies that barely acknowledge the concept of political religion. They draw instead on theories of aesthetics, of spectacles and representation, or the construction of self. Even in the absorbing study of fascism published by the English intellectual historian Roger Griffin in 1991, for example, which breathed new life into a
flagging debate, the concept of political religion was sternly dismissed as irrelevant to secular political movements.\textsuperscript{11} This distribution of international intellectual labor reveals the intellectual contrast between an anglophone world that has largely ignored the concept and a Franco-German debate that has itself been conducted as much by theologians and religious philosophers as historians and political scientists. In this context, Hardtwig deserves the gratitude of his American colleagues for drawing our attention back across the Atlantic and over the borders into neighboring disciplines.

I end by putting into play a couple of additional perspectives or concepts offered to students of Nazism by two other scholars from neighboring fields. If political religion occupies a kind of middle rank in the hierarchy of conceptual tools, the concept of “political myth” proposed by Griffin takes us up a step, to what he calls the “irrational mainspring of all ideologies irrespective of their surface rationality or apparent ‘common sense.’”\textsuperscript{12} Under this umbrella, religions and political belief systems are both examples of ideologies. This, to shift metaphors drastically, would provide us with a kind of Ockham’s razor to cut through a lot of debate about the distinction between “political belief” as such and “religious belief” as such, because the argument is that they both share the same ground. Griffin puts the razor to use with his core definition of fascism as “a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism”: It is the palingenetic quality that is most pertinent to this lecture, that is, the myth of rebirth or regeneration, fascism’s promise of a “revolutionary new order,” that offers the key overlap between Nazi and Christian ideology.\textsuperscript{13}

Now to step downward, to the world of symbols and signs. Nazism confronts us with a movement and ideology that were peculiarly plastic and parasitic, as Hardtwig’s lecture has demonstrated. Its appropriation of a repertoire of religious, that is, familiar, symbols and rituals after 1933 strikes me as utterly mimetic and in no way comparable to the originary appropriations made by the revolutionary regime in France that have been so well depicted by François Furet, Monique Ozouf, and Lynn Hunt. But what of the central symbol of the movement itself, the swastika? In a fascinating cross-disciplinary study published a few years ago, Malcolm Quinn anatomized the transformation of this occult symbol into a
self-referential corporate logo, a tautology that substituted self-representation for communication, that “sold the German back to her/himself as an Aryan.” The swastika substituted a system of racial recognition for one of communication: “Racism,” writes Quinn, “creates community without responsibility: It is a magical representation which allows people to believe that they share a fellowship of ‘blood’ without the burden of social or civic obligations . . . [it is an] easily digestible representation . . . which establish[es] ‘birthrights’ rather than duties. Racism . . . accomplishes the same feat with language, privileging a ‘common’ speech over the act of communication; meaning then becomes something which is simply recognised, which need not be articulated or explained.” I offer this reference partly because it suggests an additional angle of vision on the secularized symbolism of National Socialism, one in which the symbols and rituals are related not to transformations of religious belief but to the mechanisms of the sign, and which draw further attention to the character of propaganda as well as the content of ideology. But Quinn’s characterization of the swastika as a sign of recognition rather than communication also condenses something else important about National Socialist ideology, namely, not only its parasitism on inherited symbolic structures—as Hardtwig shows us here in relation to Christian symbolism, and as Alf Lüdtke has shown in relation to the symbols of labor—but ultimately its obliteration of meaning. In both of these textual examples the affinity of the movement to religion becomes epiphenomenal rather than essential. Perhaps paradoxically, this putting of religion in its place may in fact strengthen rather than weaken the kind of cultural and ideological analysis Wolfgang Hardtwig has offered us.

Notes

This is a revised version of the comment to the Annual Lecture presented at the GHI in November 2000. I thank Jan Lambertz for her suggestions.


2 Ibid., 268.

4 A provocative account of these relationships, drawing on the same sources as this lecture, was recently published by Michael Burleigh: The Third Reich: A New History (New York, 2000), introd. and chap. 1.


10 For example, Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini’s Italy (Berkeley, Calif., 1997); and Mabel Berezin, Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interoar Italy (Ithaca, N.Y., 1997); contrast with Emilio Gentile, The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy (Cambridge, Mass., 1996). The work on Germany dates from a significantly earlier period, e.g., some of George L. Mosse’s work in the 1960s and 1970s. For more recently, see The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany From the Napoleonic Wars Through the Third Reich (Ithaca, N.Y., 1991); or James R. Rhodes, The Hitler Movement: A Modern Millenarian Revolution (Stanford, Calif., 1980); see also the numerous references in Burleigh, Third Reich, 10-12.


12 Ibid., 27.

13 Ibid., 26-8 and chap. 2. Griffin goes even further here, suggesting that palingenesis is “not derived from religious myth, but is simply the expression of an archetype of the human mythopoeic faculty” (33).


15 Ibid., 138-9.

A CONVERSATION WITH FRITZ STERN

On November 10, 2000, the first two Fritz Stern Dissertation Prizes were awarded at the annual symposium of the Friends of the German Historical Institute. The prize is named in honor of Professor Fritz Stern, a pre-eminent scholar of modern German and European intellectual history, author of numerous well-received and widely read books, a former provost of Columbia University, and an important figure in the postwar German-American dialog. Selected by a committee comprised of Peter Fritzschke (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Dagmar Herzog (Michigan State University), and Mary Lindemann (Carnegie-Mellon University), the first prize recipients were Frank Biess (University of California at San Diego), who has written a fascinating study of the integration of returning prisoners-of-war into East and West Germany, and H. Glenn Penny (University of Missouri at Kansas City), who has written an innovative work on the cultural politics of ethnographic museums in Imperial Germany. The first five years of the prize are funded by a generous grant from the German Marshall Fund of the United States. The Friends are now actively seeking support for a permanent endowment.

The ceremony was attended by the public, including many of Professor Stern’s former students, esteemed scholars, and an interested lay public. The award ceremony symbolized the passing of the torch of scholarship in German studies to a new generation of Americans. Following the award ceremony and the presentations by the prize winners a conversation took place between Fritz Stern and the audience; questions were posed by the president of the Friends, Professor Jarausch (KHJ), as well as members of the audience (Q).

KHJ: The first question I want to put to you, Professor Stern, has to do with your personal background, because you have an unusual life history that is to some degree typical of a specific group of people. Even if you may not want to give us a full preview, since you are writing your memoirs, perhaps you could begin with a few words about where you were born, your boyhood, your family, and the circumstances under which you came to the United States.
A: Let me start by thanking the Friends of the German Historical Institute, the judges of the prize, and congratulate the speakers, who are very impressive. This event was quite wonderful, and I am indeed deeply touched by it; it means a great deal to me because I think the encouragement of first-rate dissertations is so incredibly important. I had to say that before I answer your question.

I was born in Breslau, now known as Wroclaw. Incidentally, I will be in Breslau again; since 1989 I have been there quite a few times at the invitation of the Poles. I am supposed to give a talk in the context of a major exhibition on Hans Poelzig, a German architect. The only furniture he designed, so it appears (I’m being historically careful; I know of no other claim), he designed for my grandfather, who like most of my male ancestors was a doctor. My grandfather had saved his life—or at least did what doctors did in those days, which was to provide a kind of moral encouragement along with medical care—and Poelzig turned around and designed a great deal of furniture for him. Some of it is in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England, and some of it is in my home in New York.

I don’t want to leave you with the impression that I am writing a memoir. Forgive me if I expand on that for a second. Two years ago I gave a lecture in Holland, published as “Five Germanies I Have Known.” I am expanding that, although at the moment I have taken refuge in an introduction, the second sentence of which reads, “It’s the Germany I didn’t know that I know best,” the Germany of my parents and grandparents. I found that my parents, who left in September 1938, took with them boxes and boxes of letters—I don’t mean packing boxes, but the wooden crates one had in those days. At least a few of the letters go back to the 1860s, a great many to the late 1880s, and then there is an extraordinary correspondence from the First World War. As somebody remarked to me quite rightly, “That’s a great danger because you’re used to doing that kind of work, archival work, as it were, but you must not forget the other part.” The other part is not yet complete, and my own life doesn’t deserve that kind of attention. I shall therefore probably offer reflections, as it were, on the Germanies that I have experienced, felt, and seen.

KHJ: But that is quite an unusual starting point, because for most refugees it was impossible to take along material possessions such as letters,
family mementos, and so on. I think this gives you a chance to reconstruct over several generations the life of an ordinary Jewish family.

A: A Jewish family that converted in various branches, I have to acknowledge. I don’t want to give the impression that I possess a full record. There are bits and pieces that are full, certainly for the First World War, simply because of the enforced separations. But there is a great deal, enough to piece together quite an interesting story, which confirms what we know rather than adding much that is new. It supplies additional evidence for what the German historian Manfred Hettling recently termed the “Wertekatalog des deutschen Bürgertums”—the values of the German Bürgertum. What I have discovered are interesting documentary bits and pieces of that kind of thing.

KHJ: But do you yourself have any memories of Breslau, of your childhood, and schooling? Are those painful recollections? Did you encounter a lot of discrimination? One hears different kinds of stories. Some people had relatively protected childhoods, but other refugees were victims of discrimination and ugly incidents that generated traumatic memories.

A: I had a very peaceful childhood, insofar as that’s possible, from the time of my birth in 1926 until 1932. I can remember the election of July 1932, which puzzles me, now that I mention it, but it is honestly true that I can remember it. I can recall the riots, the street-fighting in the fall of 1932, and I very well remember that I was the one, coming home from elementary school, who brought the special newspaper issue, the Extrablatt, to my parents announcing that Hitler had been made chancellor. And I knew, as I gave it to my father, that this was very bad news.

My father was a well-known doctor who had a large practice that included political friends, mostly from leftist circles. I remember that in the fall of 1932 a bomb was thrown into the house of one of these men, Ernst Eckstein. He was a kind of Lassalle descendent in the sense that he had the same demagogic or great oratorical gift and led the Socialist Workers Party (Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei), which tried to find some middle way between the Communists and the Social Democrats, some bridge. They were more radical than the Social Democrats, less Leninist than the Communists. The Nazis hated him precisely because he was successful. He was found dead in a prison cell in the early weeks of May 1933. All that made an enormous impression on me as a child. I had the great fortune of
having a father who, for some reason, took me into his confidence and wanted me to know some of these things. As I wrote or said somewhere, I knew who threw bombs before I knew where children came from. That was part of my education.

Since you asked how we took our papers out, that’s a very complicated story. My father had the very good sense to want to get out in the summer of 1933. I have not talked about the personal unpleasantness or the growing anxiety of everyone I grew up with. When a close friend and patient of one’s father is murdered, you don’t have to go very far to understand that one is very much in danger.

What is unforgettable, and I want to bring it up precisely as a kind of counterpoint to the growing terror, was that it was known that we were making preparations to emigrate in July and August of 1938. One evening that summer the doorbell rang, and I opened the door. My father had his medical office and examination rooms in our large apartment. Although it was late, I opened the door to a retired major of the German army, now in civilian clothes. I will never forget him. It was absolutely unprecedented for someone to ring without announcement at nine o’clock at night. The major said, “I want to talk to your father.” So I let him in and obviously didn’t go to bed; I had to find out what brought him there. My father told my mother, my sister, and me that the man had come and said, “I’ve always told you not to emigrate because my wife has been a patient of yours for years.” I still remember that myself and that she had a serious illness. He went on, “She needs you. But I am told that you have made up your mind to emigrate. And I have come tonight to tell you that my active comrades in the army tell me that it is very likely that there will be war with Czechoslovakia over the Sudetenland. And if there is a war, you’ll be drafted into the medical corps. And therefore I think that you ought to get out as soon as possible.”

The notion that by that time a non-Aryan, Jewish doctor would be drafted into the Wehrmacht shows some of the illusions that existed at the time. But there also was the decency of the man to come. Instead of packing leisurely, my father and I left the next night, and my mother and sister left two or three nights later. Since everything had been relatively prepared, my parents were able to take their papers along with lots and lots of other stuff. Because we could not
take any money out and there wasn’t any left after all the various exit taxes we had to pay, my parents included even a refrigerator because they thought that it was needed in the United States—we didn’t have one in Germany. So when we arrived with the refrigerator, it’s needless to say that it didn’t work in this country because of differences in voltage.

Q: How did you leave? By train?

A: That is a very good question, although I am afraid that I may be boring you. We left by train from Breslau to Berlin, where we stayed with my aunt. She was married to somebody who didn’t recognize the danger. We tried to get them out later and failed. My aunt and her husband were later killed. We stayed with them for a couple of days and then flew from Tempelhof Airport to Amsterdam. Tempelhof was surrounded by anti-aircraft guns. I remember that vividly. It was a direct flight, the first time I was on a plane, and I was elated to get out. The joy I felt was extraordinary. Suddenly, we landed in Hannover because there hadn’t been enough fuel in Berlin. I’m serious. For obvious reasons they kept as much gasoline in the capital as they could. The fact of landing on German soil one more time was terrible, but the flight went on all right. In Amsterdam we suddenly discovered that the flight from there to London was also a German flight—painted on the back of the plane was a swastika and so on, a horrible moment—but that too passed and we landed in Croydon. My mother’s older brother lived near Cambridge, England, and we spent a great week with them before we took the boat to America from Rotterdam.

KHJ: If I may, I would like to change the subject. What did it feel like to arrive in the United States, how did you get to college, and what was your graduate training like?

A: It was blessed, simply a kind of liberation, although it wasn’t easy. It was terribly difficult for both of my parents. As you probably know, a physician first had to take an English-language exam, and my father, who could quote Greek until the day he died and whose Latin was very, very good, had French as his only modern language. The English came later. After having been a specialist in internal medicine, he had to take all the medical boards again. It was all very difficult, and we had no money. But I remember a prolonged sense of liberation.
I got into Columbia College in 1943 and wanted to be a doctor like my father, my two grandfathers, and my four great-grandfathers—I had no choice, but I was helped by my remarkable incompetence in chemistry and physics, and by the fact that I had two very different but each very wonderful teachers: Jacques Barzun, the European cultural historian, and Lionel Trilling, the literary scholar. I always like to say that I had Lionel Trilling before he was Lionel Trilling. He was then an assistant professor, not yet the celebrated, great man, but I must say it was an absolutely overwhelming experience to have been in Lionel Trilling’s class on romantic poetry in which I distinguished myself mostly by being silent and overawed. To give up Barzun and Trilling for chemistry was just too much.

It wasn’t an easy decision. I hesitated and in fact consulted Barzun, who knew I was thinking of switching. Barzun said, “Marry medicine and keep history as your lifelong mistress.” When I went back to him a second time—I mention that because it’s pedagogically interesting—two or three months later, I said, “I can’t get it out of my system,” and he said “Let me ask a question: What do you want to do?” and I said “I want to teach” and he said, “I know the headmaster of the Lawrenceville School [a private school in New Jersey] very well, would you want to teach there?” I said “Sure. That would be very nice.” And he, “I think you’d make a good historian.” He wanted to make it clear to me that I shouldn’t think that I could go into college-level teaching or anything like that. I believe the test, which to him was intuitive, was to ask, “Would you be satisfied teaching history in high school, albeit a special high school?” And since that seemed perfectly reasonable to me, that was that.

It happens that I have found, in all the mementos that are slowly re-emerging, my mother’s date books from the entire period in the United States. And I found there by chance the date on which she went to see Einstein to show him the mathematical material she had devised for a different approach to teaching mathematics. He came downstairs after he had spent an hour looking at her material and afterward asked me what I was doing. I told him that I couldn’t make up my mind between the two subjects, and he said, “It’s easy, medicine is a science and history is not, therefore you’ll be going into medicine.” I obviously didn’t follow his advice. One person once said to me, “You’ve taken your revenge on him by writing about him.”
KHJ: In between your leaving and getting to Columbia University a process of cultural transformation must have taken place. How did that work for you? Did you find it easy to speak English? Did you have Latin and Greek in Breslau, and what was that like? Here you were competing in one of the leading American institutions with lots of people who were steeped in their own culture. For some refugees, at least, these kinds of transitions were hard.

A: I have nothing but happy memories of my time in Public School 152, Queens, where I began as a twelve year-old in first grade. And you’re right about the Latin and Greek. I took two-and-a-half years of Latin and three months of Greek at the Gymnasium — in preparation for emigration, obviously. I can’t honestly recall the difficulties you’re alluding to. I do remember in the fall of 1940 I was given a scholarship to a New York private school, which doesn’t exist anymore, and in school we had a debate. Even in those days they had presidential elections, and I volunteered to be the spokesman for F.D.R. I spoke with all the passion I commanded, and a wonderful girl spoke for Willkie and did very well. The Democrats won, I’m glad to say. So I always meant to be politically active.

All in all, I think college was hard for me, partly because I didn’t know what I wanted to do, and later I felt that I was ill prepared.

KHJ: You didn’t tell us how you got to your subject in history, since it is a large field. There are many different kinds of things you could possibly have done. Since your teachers also worked on other topics, how did you end up with the German subject, after you had just physically escaped that country?

A: I did not think of myself as a German historian until much later. When I first worked under the tutelage of Barzun and Trilling — and on my own volition — I thought of myself as an historian interested in European culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I wrote my dissertation, or certainly meant to write it, as a study of a German subject within a European context. This seemed to me self-evident. Perhaps my wish to be a Europeanist was arrogant. One can’t, of course, master it all. But the desire was always there. I wanted to see the content and the context of German history, which I first taught in 1951 at Cornell, when my employment at Columbia had ended and I had to scramble for a job. At Cornell I was an “acting” assistant professor since I had no Ph.D. I was teaching four courses and finishing my dissertation. One of the courses was German history. To
put together a syllabus for a German history course in 1951 was actually not an easy matter. There was A. J. P. Taylor’s *Course of German History* (1945), but otherwise not all that much. But that made the field quite open. There was an element of luck in that situation.

German history was central not just to me but to the world after the Nazis. Something terrible had happened, and good German historians and many American scholars asked themselves, How could it have happened? They actually may have been helped by the fact that the page was blank, or at least relatively blank, compared to what it is now. The unsatisfactoriness of A. J. P. Taylor, however enticing he was, was apparent. It was an exciting situation.

KHJ: Your answer clarifies a quality of your own work, which sees German problems in a broader perspective. This, I think, is essential because in some other cases there is a narrowness in discussions about the German legacy. You also pointed this out at a very important lecture at the centennial meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA) — on a panel that we shared — that the professional development of Central European history is an achievement of the postwar or Cold War period. European history did, of course, exist in this country before, but it was much more generalized — as we think about Bernadotte Schmitt and Sidney B. Fay. They dealt with the grand politics of Europe. But beyond diplomatic history, research on internal, cultural, social, and other kinds of German history was developed as a result of your own cohort.

A: I am grateful to you for mentioning the AHA talk because it meant a lot to me to dig into the work of American historians and try to prove that there was a good deal going on at the time. The names that instantly come to mind — this is by no means a complete list — are Pauline and Eugene Anderson, Walter Dorn, who wrote important articles, and Sidney Fay, whom you mentioned. Then of course there was Hajo Holborn, who is very important to me, particularly here in this context, and having looked at his picture [hanging in this lecture hall] all morning long with the deepest affection. I had the good fortune to become his friend in the late 1940s or early 1950s, although never formally his student, but there was no distinction between being a friend and a student of Holborn, who was teaching at Yale. That was an enormous influence. I am also bound by ties of friendship to Felix Gilbert — the other picture I was gazing at here. They were of a different generation, both students of Friedrich Meinecke. And as Holborn sometimes
said, “I danced in Meinecke’s house, as he had danced in Ranke’s.” Holborn and Gilbert had a feeling for a longer tradition—and Germans now talk about this tradition that was lost. When you think about what the German historical profession lost when these young men were forced to emigrate, and they were not the only ones—there was Hans Rosenberg and many others—it is quite extraordinary.

KHJ: I completely agree. I only wanted to point out that it is a considerable part of your generation’s achievement, that your cohort had an enormous influence in the United States by pushing the beginnings further back and articulating them; it wasn’t just the refugees who were already mature and settled as historians and scholars. How did you get to The Politics of Cultural Despair (1961)? There was a lot of older literature around. We already mentioned Taylor, but there was also Rohan Butler and so on; there were all sorts of explanations for Germany having gone wrong through the centuries, whereas you were wrestling with the same question but in a much more precise and constructive manner.

A: I did my master’s essay on Arthur Moeller van den Bruck. I can’t tell you now how I happened to stumble on van den Bruck, but he was quite fascinating. By tracing his life and thought I came to realize that he came out of certain traditions that went back further. So, for my dissertation I picked two other people to study, of two different generations. One, Paul de Lagarde, and the other, Julius Langbehn, from a generation later. I was fascinated by their writings. I realized they were second-rate—at one time I toyed with a dissertation or book to be called “After Nietzsche,” since Nietzsche had an enormous influence on these people. I should add that I had a particular fascination with Nietzsche from the beginning. So I was just looking at what one might call a neglected side of “lower” German intellectual history, and yet the impact of these thinkers was considerable, precisely because it was cultural and political at the same time. They had their European analogues, which I tried to make clear in both the introduction and the conclusion.

I did not write in an effort to whitewash the Germans, as it were. After all, I am known and decried as someone who has defended the notion of a German Sonderweg. Not that I didn’t agree and indeed say that there was such a thing as a German Sonderweg, a deviation from the West. But it was nevertheless terribly important to me to make it clear that in order to recreate the past, we have to
show the many connections to a larger culture, which for historical-political reasons in Germany took a particular turn. There were also political analogues, but in Germany politics took a world-historical leap that fortunately did not take place in other countries.

KHJ: It’s interesting that these figures, as you quite rightly said just a moment ago, expanded the scope of intellectual history because the older generation was still examining the great thinkers. Referring to those who were thought of as somewhat second-rate must have been difficult and daring to some degree. You kept doing this also in a political context. Of course, with Germany questions of politics always intrude, and one can’t do intellectual history with the politics left out, to paraphrase a cliché.

A: Something else is and remains terribly close to my heart and brain, and that’s *The Varieties of History* (1956). That collection of essays by great historians was purely a labor of love. I have a great capacity, if I may say so, for admiration. I don’t like to deal with second-rate people, necessarily. And it has just occurred to me that this is also a reason for this other book. Somehow, in my graduate days, I was required to take a compulsory course on the history of history writing, which was incredibly dull and quite unsatisfactory. And I suddenly had the idea “I want to see what the great writers of history from Voltaire on down had said.” I did this entirely for my own education. It was truly a labor of love. I owe a certain amount of encouragement to Richard Hofstadter, who said this was a very good idea. Actually, he said, “It’s going to sell.” I was very grateful to the publisher who took it on — royalties were three percent at the time — because I just didn’t think that anything would come of it. Well, it has done very well and is still very much in print. I still read it myself again and again with fantastic pleasure, and it’s something I want to pass on to other generations. The great historians, from Voltaire onward — French, English, German, American — with all the changes should still inspire us and give us a sense of tradition that we dare to go into, that we should carry on.

KHJ: Let me ask you something else. I am not fortunate enough to have been a student of yours in a direct sense but encountered you by reading The Politics of Cultural Despair and *The Varieties of History* in graduate school. Your subsequent work came to focus directly on the issues of the First World War. How did that come about?
A: The First World War was a subject of abiding interest to me, in my lectures and in my teaching. Perhaps the fact that my father was in the First World War for four years on the western front had something to do with it, though relatively little except to bring a certain emotional content to the subject. The war’s importance, reflected in George Kennan’s remark that it was the seminal catastrophe of the century, was clear to me, I must say. The war was an absolute horror and marked a break in the world. When Peter Gay and Jack Garraty brought out a history of the world, they asked me to write the chapter on the subject, which led me to give an undergraduate seminar on the First World War. But even earlier, in *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, I had written a chapter on it.

I think I’m right that this was simultaneous with the eruption of the Fritz Fischer controversy. This debate, put very briefly, was sparked by a book that was published in 1961 by Fischer, whom I had met. He came to see me at Cornell in 1951, and it was an uncanny meeting. The book, which was called *Germany’s Aims in the First World War* (1967) [original German ed.: *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, 1961], caused a storm in the German historical guild, and Hans Herzfeld invited me to the 1964 German Historical Congress in Berlin, where the old guard, Gerhard Ritter, Hans Rothfels, and Karl Dietrich Erdmann, were going to finish off Fischer for good. I must say that the two students of Fischer (who were there to defend him) didn’t help him very much. It was somewhat left to two outsiders—Jacques Droz, a wonderful French historian, and myself—to speak up. It was a deeply politicized meeting. Fischer’s book insisted on Germany’s responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War, not solely responsibility, but it did away with the comfortable notion that Europe had slithered into the war. Fischer made clear, on the basis of archival material on the German side and subsequent research, that there was far more conscious planning. But other Germans disagreed; in particular, one right-wing historian had, at the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the war, just written that it was a *Betriebsunfall* — a factory accident or an occupational accident. The audience consisted of about 1,000 people, 900 of them perhaps students. I said at one point in my prepared speech, “Is there such a thing as a whole series of *Betriebsunfälle* without coming to the conclusion that maybe something is wrong with the *Betrieb*?” The place broke up, and the response resembled a political demonstration. Right
afterward, Ritter and company no longer would shake my hand, which I took to be a Germanic sign of being taken seriously. After 1968 I was accused—in jest—of having started the student revolt by inciting students with my remark, but that was rather far from my intention.

The depth of my concern for the First World War is unquestionable. I also then got ahold of the Riezler Diary, and you and I both worked on that particular text, which is an irresistible and important source. And let me add, it was an accident that I was invited to speak at the Historical Congress in Berlin in 1964. If I hadn’t been invited, I’m not sure that I would have done as much work as I did. I probably wouldn’t have hunted down the Riezler Diary. I would not have researched the German chancellor’s confidant, from before the First World War until he was dismissed. It was very difficult to get access to the diary, etc. The accident happened to coincide with a deep, abiding interest of mine, and I am grateful that I had the chance to do it.

KHJ: Your story does illustrate a mechanism of support for critical views on the past inside Germany through Anglo-American scholars, who have played an important role in helping transform historical scholarship. I think I’m not misinterpreting you by saying that this is also one of the functions you consider important. But we should probably move on to Bleichröder and Bismarck (Gold and Iron, 1977).

A: Let me say one more thing about accidents. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, in connection with my dissertation, I wanted to do research, but there wasn’t all that much archival material in the first place. I thought, the more interviewing I could do for a better sense of the people I was writing about, the better. That included an interview with Heinrich Brüning, Germany’s chancellor from 1930 to 1932. And I mention that because again it’s the accidental that is so interesting. Historians—and many have written about Brüning, who has remained as controversial as any major figure in history—have always been tempted to say that Brüning’s First World War experience as a machine gun captain was incredibly important to him. I went to see him in Hanover, New Hampshire, where he was living at the time, more-or-less in exile. In the first ten minutes he said, “You have to understand the period, the 1920s. I came from the First World War. I was a machine gun captain. And my dream, politically, was to recreate the cohesion that I felt then.” And then he told me that he
had all sorts of soldiers under him from every class, and they had worked together, and that’s what he had hoped for in politics. I mention this because I still think that we historians must be alert to the gifts that are given to us by chance.

KHJ: If I may comment on that by citing your own words: The development of scholarship might sometimes seem to be a series of accidents, but it takes a certain sensibility to make these accidents happen. One has to be fortunate enough to encounter people with whom one can pursue those interests, but one also has to recognize such chances.

A: That is very kind of you. I accept that. The origin of Gold and Iron is quite simple. David Landes, an economic historian then at Columbia, came to me one day in 1954. We were teaching together, and he said, “Listen, I was given the papers having to do with Bleichröder, who was a major Jewish banker in Berlin.”

I knew that Bleichröder had a connection with Bismarck. “I was given those papers,” Landes said. “I think it would be better if you and I do the book together. We could do it in a year. This is new material. Nobody has ever seen all that is left of the political part of a major banking house in Berlin.”

That was in 1955 or so. I didn’t get started on it until my first sabbatical, which was in Paris, where we were going to work in the Rothschild bank. Landes had arranged access to the archives for us. That gave me a chance to work on the Banque Rothschild. It was fascinating. On the first or second day in the archives the first things we saw, covered with the historic dust of one hundred years, were what we would nowadays call the canceled checks that the Rothschilds kept under the rubric “Bleichröder.” We went through them very quickly and discovered there wasn’t much there. But on the second day I found a canceled check made out from the Bleichröder bank to the Rothschilds on behalf of Cosima von Bülow, née Liszt. And since Cosima von Bülow, also known as Cosima Wagner, was a woman on whom I had once written a paper, a well-known anti-Semite who is one of my most detested women of the nineteenth century, I was struck that she would have dealt with a Jewish bank. She would probably have said in self-defense, “Well there aren’t any other bankers,” which wasn’t true. Still, it was an encouragement to the cultural historian to do what had to be done.
It was incredibly hard, in retrospect, to get to all the archives I needed—these included the private Bismarck archives, archives in the GDR, and many others. A committee of French communist historians who knew perfectly well that I was a bourgeois historian helped me get in. But that, too, involved an incredible accident—having been there in 1961 and 1962, three months before the building of the Berlin Wall and a year afterward, and finding rich material. David Landes then decided that he needed to work on something else, though he was always willing to read what I had written and remained enormously helpful. But in the end it was left to me. The book took not one year but sixteen years of writing. But I learned a great deal, and it, too, had a great impact on my life.

KHJ: My graduate students are still admiring the work, since we just discussed it in our reading course. Books have a life of their own once they leave the author’s desk. I hope it will please you to hear that it is still in demand, because it speaks to the quality of that double biography and the very difficult economic and diplomatic connections that you had to work through in order to put it together. If you had more time we could also talk about your most recent work, the various essay collections, the book on Einstein’s German World (1999), and so on. But I do also want to bring up the question of you being a transatlantic public figure, your efforts to promote a critical conception of the past in Germany and, finally, your role in teaching a differentiated kind of German history in an Anglo-American context.

A: I think I sort of stumbled into that role. I grew into it. There are many in this audience who have played that role as much as I have, unlike what happened after the First World War, or in the 1940s and early 1950s. Beginning in the early 1950s we formed collegial relationships, even friendships, with German and European historians. It became a common enterprise, which didn’t exclude having “common targets” or common causes of great interpretation. I would mention, above all, Ralf Dahrendorf and a great many more of whom I really would want to speak. We were essentially united by a sense of what had happened and what could be learned from the German disaster.

I was very fortunate early on in having good relations with German historians. The first ones I became particularly close to in European history were Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Jürgen Kocka, Hans and Wolfgang Mommsen, and so on. It was wonderful. We worked separately and together, and sometimes refuted in different ways what
we would assume to be common misinterpretations, attacks on us, or whatever—but never along national lines.

One other aspect of the question that you rightly posed is that since the 1950s I also have tried to have a civic life in the United States, and occasionally, when the spirit moved me or when the occasion demanded it, I did want to be a citizen in a political situation. Recently, I wrote a letter to the editor of the New York Times, attacking Condoleezza Rice’s pronouncement that the Bush administration would withdraw our troops from Kosovo (“We don’t need the 82nd Airborne division to escort kids to kindergarten”), and I called that particular statement “frivolously irresponsible.” Jokingly, I refer to that letter as my job application to the Bush administration. So I do take the responsibility to take sides as a citizen, not as a professional historian.

KHJ: I am glad that you were able to comment on your public commitment as well. You have, of course, spoken out in a variety of venues such as the Bundestag, the journal Foreign Affairs, also some articles in the German media. Since I do see questions from the audience, we now want to turn to your students, colleagues, and friends here.

Q: Let me say at the outset what a privilege it is and how moved I am to participate in this unique occasion, this personal and highly enjoyable discussion. Against this background, I wonder whether you would like to share your impressions of when and under what conditions you first went back to Germany. What impressions and feelings did you have?

A: When I went back to Germany, to Munich, for the first time in 1950, I worked in the library for my dissertation. I chose Munich in part because a group of Social Democratic Sudeten Germans who had been expelled were there. They had been friends of my family when I was a child and had found themselves in Munich. I had the great fortune to meet Franz Schnabel there and spend some time with him. He was a liberal, Catholic historian.

My feelings toward Germany then were very bad. That’s probably an understatement. Suffice it to say, I had to overcome ugly feelings, I mean strong antipathies, to put it mildly.

I recently discovered in my disorder, which students of mine will remember from my office, a review I wrote of a book by H.H. Tettens, a German refugee, that was called Know Your Enemy (1944).
It was a flaming attack, a denunciation basically even more punitive than the Morgenthau Plan. When it first came out in the early 1950s I wrote a review denouncing it, saying, “This won’t do.” This was a totally ahistorical effort. I had a sense that one can’t condemn a whole people—which again may in part have to do with the fact that, after all, I grew up knowing German democrats.

Q: As you may know, yesterday there was a very impressive demonstration of 200,000 people in Berlin and elsewhere. Even CNN covered it. I was quite moved. I wonder whether you would like to share your views on this and the background that led to the demonstration.

A: I didn’t see the event of November 9, and I’m not sure how much I can say on the subject. It would take so much time for me to sort out what’s there. For the first time in German history, since 1949, and increasingly since 1970 or so, there are liberal Germans, and now there are Germans who are prepared to go out on the street and demonstrate for a decent society, let me put it that way. The fact that they have done it in the face of desecration and rising anti-Semitism, and in light of the unease with which Germans and Jews continue to live together, is another matter. Though it’s a different group of Jews now, the unease is still there. We see that all the time. There is a great deal of goodwill among some Germans, but among other Germans, a different group, there is a feeling which I find hard to deal with, which is, “My goodness, what we have lost.” Well, that’s not that ambiguous, I mean, to bemoan the fact that your parents and grandparents participated in or accepted the expulsion of a group that now is missed. But on the whole, as I’ve said in the context of Austria’s Jörg Haider, I think the 1930s or the experience of the Third Reich has immunized a great many Germans to a considerable extent. But I don’t think that immunity lasts forever.

Q: Let me ask a question as a student: Over the years you have stressed the importance of illiberalism in German society. But another school has developed that has argued, in fact, that this is vastly exaggerated and Germany could not have missed the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie. It’s also contrary to your friend Lord Dahrendorf. It’s a school that argues that the difference between England and Germany really isn’t as great as it’s been made out to be and, in fact, that Germany had a much stronger liberal tradition, and that this Sonderweg, which is
tied very much to the question of liberalism, is vastly exaggerated. I wonder if you could comment on that train of thought.

A: I welcome the question for the simple reason that I could be quite wrong. I’ve been attacked precisely as a proponent of the Sonderweg notion, which I did not coin by any means but which I accepted. I do believe that there were different paths to modernity in Germany as against in England, France, or Belgium. I have now taken on board the marvelous studies that show how strong a liberal tradition there was—Peggy Anderson’s recent book Practicing Democracy (2000)—and that there was, after all, on different communal and urban levels a relatively strong liberal tradition. I am seeing this in my own work right now. Perhaps I generalized too quickly, perhaps I overemphasized it.

However, as I’ve had occasion to remark in a couple of places fairly recently, the Germans themselves were not unaware of this separate identity. I mean, read Max Weber or Walther Rathenau and Ernst Troeltsch before 1914. I’m struck by Rathenau’s remark, “How long can we live in a different climate?” In the 1920s others turned this sentence around to “we want to be different.” Thomas Mann very quickly recovered from this national aberration of the Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen (1918), but others throughout the Weimar period maintained, “We don’t want to be part of the West.” So I don’t think the notion of a Sonderweg is entirely made up. There was an illiberal strain in German education, in student life, etc. Were there analogues elsewhere in Europe? Yes. I have always insisted, for example, that after all, considering the immensely neuralgic point of anti-Semitism, that it was certainly a European phenomenon, and before 1914 it was probably stronger in France than in Germany. In Germany, as I once put it, in the treatment of Jews there was both hospitality and hostility. The hospitality should not be forgotten.

Maybe I’ve even learned from some of my more extravagant critics, who see me as a favorite target because of this Sonderweg notion. Particularly young English historians who mind that some of my cohorts were guilty of what Isaiah Berlin most beautifully described as the Anglophilia of the Central European and that looked to England through rose-colored glasses.

Q: I was on the Columbia campus in 1944 in the Navy midshipman school; I don’t remember seeing you. Nicholas Murray Butler was still around,
but did you know James Shotwell, the great American historian who had edited a monumental work on the economic and social consequences of the war, the First World War that is, with a group of transnational scholars? He had earlier written The History of History (1939).

A: I met him. That’s all I can say. I grew up in awe of him. That: Carnegie sponsored history of the First World War which you referred to remains a marvelous attempt at an international history. A typically post-1918 American effort, getting Europeans involved.

I learned a tremendous amount from one of the books in that series, which I think I inherited somehow via another teacher, maybe even Shotwell’s copy, but I’m not sure. Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy’s The War and German Society (1937) is a splendid book on the First World War and introduced me, in part, to the social, psychological, and cultural effects of that conflict.

And I pointed it out to the Germans. Do you realize that that book has never been translated into German? That’s an astounding fact. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was a major figure in political science in Hamburg in the 1920s until he had to leave Germany. He went to Oxford and wrote while at Oxford. It remains a highly suggestive and important work.

KHJ: Thank you Professor Stern for this conversation and for the illuminating answers you offered us.
AMERICAN SPIRITUALISM AND GERMAN
SECTARIANISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE
SOCIETAL CONSTRUCTION OF GHOST BELIEFS

Johannes Dillinger

In 1854 the United States Senate received a request for a congressional investigation into the possibility of receiving messages from the dead.¹ This request was signed by 15,000 adherents of the Spiritualist movement—a movement that had been triggered by the Fox sisters six years earlier.

The senators' answer ridiculed Spiritualism as yet another relic of premodern "superstition": In their opinion, alchemy and natural magic had to their credit the fact that they had been the predecessors of rational "useful" science. In contrast, Spiritualism was an absurd delusion that could only be accounted for by the corporal and mental instability of individuals or by the ineffectiveness of the educational system.² The Senate thus echoed the Enlightenment's polemics against magic and folk belief. In this essay I attempt to determine the place of Spiritualism in enlightened nineteenth-century America. I compare the Fox sisters—the "mothers" of Spiritualism—and their early followers with a German sect that worshipped ghosts. This sect flourished in the early 1770s in Württemberg, in a rural town hardly touched by Enlightenment ideas. Traditional folk tales about the spirits of the dead provide the background matrix of a tertium comparationis. I concentrate on three major topics: First, the origins of the respective spirit narratives; second, the organizational patterns developed by Spiritualism and the ghost sect; and third, their ideas concerning life after death. The comparison is justified by structural affinities between the two cases of alleged contact with the dead. It clarifies the specifics of both systems of belief and helps us to understand the role they played in their respective societies.

Make-Believe: Contexts, Origins, and Development of Spiritualism and the Ghost Sect

The Fox sisters' Spiritualist movement and the Württemberg ghost sect emerged in areas that had earlier witnessed religious revival
movements, Pietism was an integral element of Württemberg Protestantism. During the first decades of the eighteenth century Württemberg’s authorities had looked with suspicion upon the so-called Separatist Pietists that formed local conventicles and engaged in household and family worship. In 1743 the duke officially legalized them and at the same time established church and state control over these groups. After that the Pietists, formerly outspoken critics of the state, became reclusive and quiet. They did not rekindle their zeal until the 1780s when lay preachers inspired a new wave of religious enthusiasm. The Fox sisters found their first followers where they lived, in a part of upstate New York that had come to be known as the Burned-Over District. It had been inflamed by a variety of religious revivals in short succession; the Shakers and the Mormons, Perfectionists and Millerites all had found adherents here. During the earliest stages of their careers the Fox sisters came under the influence of the Congregational Friends, a small group of former Quakers. The Congregational Friends considered the disciplinary structure of Quakerism irreconcilable with the idea of the “inner light”—God’s spirit in every individual that guaranteed personal freedom.

The Foxes started off from this background of religious heterodoxy. A very brief outline of the Fox sisters’ career will be sufficient here. In 1848 mysterious rapping and knocking noises were heard in a house in Hydesville, New York, which was at that time inhabited by the Fox family, who were German Americans (their family name had originally been “Voss”). It was claimed that the noises were messages from the dead. The family’s three daughters, Margaret, Kate, and Leah, were considered to be mediums. In the presence of the Foxes the dead “spoke” on their own account or even answered specific questions by knocking. During the 1850s the Fox sisters attracted enormous public interest from all over the United States and Europe. Under the guidance of Leah, who was the eldest of the sisters by more than twenty years, the Foxes became the first professional mediums. Numerous investigations into the authenticity of the spirit manifestations conducted by scientists, doctors, and theologians were an integral part of the Fox sisters’ career. The sisters always welcomed these investigations and yet always rejected them later as prejudicial and hostile because the results suggested that the spirit noises had been made by the mediums themselves. In
contrast to later Spiritualists the Fox sisters never actively engaged in politics, politicians and state officials also took no official notice of the sisters.10

In the 1860s the Fox sisters slowly withdrew from the public eye. By that point the Spiritualist movement they had helped found had spread all over the United States and to Europe.11 Literally thousands of mediums imitating the practices of the Fox sisters offered their services. Despite criticism, the Spiritualists themselves never seriously questioned the authenticity of the Foxes’ claims. One might say that the events at Hydesville not only were the starting point of Spiritualism; the way in which they were interpreted by the Fox sisters and their earliest followers also was the closest approach to an orthodoxy that the dazzlingly complex Spiritualist movement made before the end of the nineteenth century.

In contrast to the American Spiritualists, the Württemberg ghost sect has so far been ignored by historians.12 We therefore must look at it in some detail. In 1770 Anna Maria Freyin, the maidservant of Georg Buck, a butcher in the small Württemberg town of Weilheim an der Teck, claimed to have met two spirits. The nature of these spirits was ill defined: Although Freyin maintained they had gone to heaven, they nevertheless haunted her master’s house. I will return to this apparent contradiction. The spirits or ghosts were seen and heard by Freyin, Buck, and a fast-growing number of curious visitors. The ghosts that, in a peculiar way, belonged to heaven rather than to earth conducted religious services with those present. They quoted passages from the Bible, prayed, sang religious songs, and urged people to live morally impeccable lives according to Christian ethics. Within weeks random gatherings at Buck’s house to see the ghosts and worship with them developed into regular meetings. Buck, who had been excluded from the Eucharist because of his drinking and laziness, became the spokesman at these meetings.

According to Protestant tradition, the church suspected the ghosts were really demons and complained to the authorities. Christoph von Bühler, the head of the regional administration (Oberamtmann), promptly exiled Freyin from Württemberg.

Nevertheless, the ghosts kept coming to Buck’s house, and the meetings continued. Buck, who was heavily in debt, borrowed money from some of the ghosts’ adherents. He promised to repay them as soon as the spirits had told him where a treasure could be
found or how he could win a fortune in the lottery. But there was more to this movement than monetary motives: The people who met regularly at Buck’s came to regard the spirits’ utterances as divine revelation. It was claimed that the ghosts were capable of working miracles greater than those that had occurred at the birth of Christ. Buck’s followers stated publicly that they received far better instruction in Scripture from the spirits than from their minister. The religious songs sung by the spirits were said to be of unearthly beauty and in themselves proof of the divine nature of the apparitions. Freyin was adored as a saint: She was called “redeemer of souls . . . right holy warrior, spiritual mother . . . worker of miracles.” The ghost worshippers celebrated the anniversary of Freyin’s decisive meeting with the spirits on the Epiphany, which in German had the somewhat ambivalent name of “Fest der Erscheinung.” This can be interpreted as the celebration of Jesus’s appearance or as the “feast of the apparition.” Thus, the church holiday was reinterpreted and its name understood as an allusion to the spirits. Buck adopted a six-year-old boy whom he did not allow to attend Protestant services and catechism. The child was considered to be on particularly good terms with the ghosts. According to Weilheim’s Protestant minister the boy offered the spirits a veneration solely due God: He had reportedly been taught to kneel down and worship them. In all likelihood he was being prepared for the role of priest.

Freyin’s and Buck’s followers cultivated the aggressive self-confidence of an elitist group. They “alone had bright, open eyes, whereas the other people were blind, perverse, and pitiable.” They claimed to have received a special gift from God, arguing that “the matter about the ghosts was something divine and those who were not chosen could not comprehend it.” The Freyin–Buck group can be seen as a religious sect; a new cult was established in the form of regular gatherings, a holiday, and the gestures of adoration performed at least by Buck’s adopted son. The ghost worshippers actively tried to recruit other people to join their group and openly rejected the authority of the established church. Freyin supposedly had begun to write down the sayings of the ghosts, their prayers and hymns considered immediate divine revelations by the sect. This basically was the genesis of a holy book.

Early in 1771 the central administration of the Württemberg Protestant church decreed that the meetings at Buck’s house were to be
discontinued immediately. This prohibition was ignored. One month later the Oberrat, Württemberg’s state council, ordered Bühler to find the exiled Freyin. The authorities hoped that if Freyin could be convicted for fraud, the activities of the ghost worshippers would come to an end. But Bühler was not able to find Freyin—a raid on Buck’s house ordered by the duke failed because warning had been given in advance. The leaders of the ghost sect reveled in “prophecies” reinterpreting harassment and impending failures as the road to martyrdom and a prerequisite to their final triumph. They insisted with even more zeal on the truth of their revelations and attacked the established ecclesiastical and secular institutions. Buck publicly denounced the minister of Weilheim as a “preacher of lies” and the town clerk as a “writer of lies” (Lügenprediger, Lügenschreiber). Buck thus denied the representatives of church and state their moral integrity. He thereby implied that the church and the state themselves were based on mendacity. Buck rejected both officeholders as liars, frauds, and—regarded from the perspective of an unenlightened Christian ideal state—as opponents of the divine order. In doing so Buck denounced both church and state as corrupt. The Weilheim minister was right when he warned Bühler that the polemics of the ghost sect could be harmful to public order and to the social fabric itself.

At Weilheim the consequences of Buck’s breach with the traditional order began to appear. A local official who had joined the sect was despised by Buck’s opponents and also disrespected by Buck’s followers as a representative of the established order. Religious doubts were voiced, and some of the parishioners complained that “they no longer were sure what to believe . . . [and] wanted to throw their bibles out of the window.”

The ghost sect emerged at a time when Württemberg’s old religious minority, the formerly critical conventicles of Separatist Pietists, seemed to have been silenced for good. Facing what they considered another threat of “revolution” the authorities finally resorted to harsh measures. After they had refused to confess that they were frauds Buck and another leader of the ghost sect were sent to Ludwigsburg Prison for two years. Without their spokesman the group slowly dissolved. In 1773 Bühler managed to arrest Freyin. Under massive pressure she confessed that she had been hiding in Buck’s house all the while staging the alleged appearances of the
spirits. Some days later Freyin escaped from prison in the traditional way, using a rope made from bedclothes. This time, however, she disappeared for good. The last person who spoke out in favor of the ghost sect even after imprisonment and flogging was pronounced insane by the Württemberg authorities in 1774.

The differences between the Fox sisters and the Württemberg ghost sect are obvious. Following the principles of the Enlightenment the authorities of the midnineteenth-century United States did not consider it their duty to judge religious orthodoxy. The American discourse was predominantly scientific: Did the Fox sisters really communicate with the dead? Were their allegations correct? In contrast, the Württemberg discourse was predominantly religious: Were the teachings of the ghost sect true?

Because of the scientific nature of the American discourse, the Fox sisters' spiritual messages were considered an object of empirical research, whereas nothing that we would consider rational scientific investigation ever took place in Buck's house. Although Württemberg's state authority was comparatively tolerant, it was far from being indifferent when religion was concerned. As one might expect, the unenlightened state persecuted magic or at least unorthodox beliefs, whereas the enlightened state ignored them and thereby allowed them to flourish. By separating church and state the Enlightenment had made room for heterodoxy and magic. It was their pre-Enlightenment environment that made Freyin and Buck revolutionaries. The authorities could not ignore their claim that they had received divine revelations without the assistance of the church, especially when it became obvious that these revelations were at least in part contradictory to established theology. The ghost sect formed a new hierarchical structure analogous to the churches, but in doing so it brought into question the old hierarchies of society.

Let us now take a closer look at the origins of the respective movements and the ways in which they constructed their spirit narratives. Freyin claimed that she had encountered a ghost whom she described as dark and terrifying. In Christian folklore almost every ghost longs to end its existence. It wants to leave the realm of the living for good and to go to heaven. Some just linger on in their usual surroundings, their workplaces and homes, without apparent cause and disappear after a certain time. Most must remove a specific obstacle that binds them to Earth: A wrong has to be atoned for
or a task was left unfinished before death. The living could free wandering souls by praying for them, blessing them, or helping them to accomplish their respective tasks. Freyin somehow - she never elaborated on that point - managed to deliver the ghost she had met. The phantom changed its appearance and became bright white and beautiful. Freyin maintained that after his deliverance the ghost kept returning to Buck’s house every night and day and was even joined by a second white spirit. According to folk belief, the redemption of a ghost meant that its ties with the world of the living were dissolved; it would show itself - in white symbolizing its redemption - one last time and then disappear forever. The ghost Anna Maria Freyin had freed, though, still remained visible to her and to others: The white figures that Freyin, Buck, and numerous other persons saw in the house in Weilheim were no ghosts that existed between the world of the living and the hereafter of Heaven, Hell, or - according to Catholic teaching - Purgatory. They had been delivered, that is, they had already reached eternal bliss. The apparitions therefore were part of the heavenly sphere, their utterances regarded as divine revelation. The motif of the redemption of a ghost, so well established in Christian folklore, had been used by Freyin in contradiction with folk tradition and theology alike in order to create a new religious narrative of direct contact with heaven.

The Fox sisters’ alleged first encounter with ghosts followed more traditional lines: In their house in Hydesville the Fox family had repeatedly been disturbed by strange rapping and knocking sounds. When these rappings seemed to react to things the Fox children said, their mother asked the mysterious being several direct questions. These questions were answered by knocking noises. Mrs. Fox’s questions mirrored traditional ghost beliefs: Were the rappings caused by an “injured spirit”? Had a wrong been done him in this house? Had he been murdered? Was his body hidden in the house? Under what circumstances had he been killed, who was the murderer, and should he be brought to justice? The sources depict Mrs. Fox as a woman who had little formal education but a rich knowledge of folklore, as her eldest daughter remarked in retrospect: “We knew nothing of Clairvoyance, Magnetism, or Trance Mediums,” but ghost legends had often been narrated in the family. When the Foxes called their neighbors to witness the manifestations, they at once accepted the interpretation along the lines of popular belief suggested
by Mrs. Fox. Without hesitation, they went into the cellar to identify the spot where the corpse was supposedly hidden, and one day later a series of fruitless diggings started in the basement of the Hydesville house. This behavior was completely in keeping with old folk belief: It was vital to find the murdered man’s body and give him a Christian burial, otherwise his soul could not rest. In addition to that, the ghost obviously wanted justice to be served: The person it had identified as the murderer soon had to defend himself against accusations. In the beginning the narrative of the Fox sisters was not about mediumship at all; it was about a haunted house presented in entirely traditional terms. When the Foxes left Hydesville and the mysterious rappings followed them into their new home, they declared that they had found another haunted place and inquired about crimes committed there.

The idea that noises caused by ghosts could be used as a means of communication was unusual but not alien to popular culture: The best known example was of course the Cock Lane ghost that had caused a major sensation in 1762. Ann Braude pointed out that the notion that women were more apt than men to become mediums because of their alleged passivity and suggestibility was entirely in keeping with old gender stereotypes. Virgins were thought to have a special affinity for spirit influences in magical folklore. This means that at the very beginning of the Fox sisters’ career there was an alleged poltergeist apparition that was interpreted and dealt with in an entirely traditional way, whereby the old ideas of using the ghosts’ noises as a means of communication and of spirits that presented themselves to women had been applied. This was exactly the kind of bricolage one might expect in traditional folklore. Up to this point, the Fox sisters’ story seems as void of all enlightened thought as Freyin’s narrative.

Structuring Belief

Thanks to Bühlner, who wrote report after report about the ghosts, we are well informed about Buck’s followers. All his early adherents suffered from deficiencies in their social lives, but these deficiencies were of various natures: People with a bad reputation found their way into Buck’s gatherings. The respectable poor and people without family support joined the sect. The Amtmann of Weilheim,
the head of the local administration, became an ardent follower of Freyin. As the representative of territorial authority he was an outsider in town, subject to constant critical surveillance by the townspeople. Within the group of Buck’s followers social differences did not matter. On the contrary, the ghost worshippers were criticized for consciously ignoring them. When Bühler learned that his subordinate, the Weilheim Amtmann, had joined Freyin’s sect, he was outraged not because the Amtmann had accepted the religious authority of a woman but because he had accepted the authority of a maid-servant whom he treated as if she was his social equal or even his better. Within two years the background of the ghost worshippers became completely heterogeneous. An alderman and a number of craftsmen who seem to have been perfectly integrated in local society had joined the movement. When a noblewoman became interested in Buck’s sect her family intervened claiming that she was feeble-minded and needed to be put under guardianship.

Due to the lack of structure of early Spiritualism, it is next to impossible to say anything conclusive about the Fox sisters’ followers in terms of number or social status. Preoccupied with the respectability of the movement, Leah Fox and the other spokespersons stressed time and again the support it received from people of a “higher order of intelligence” and quoted endless lists of doctors, lawyers, and clergymen who had formed investigative committees. The fashionable bourgeois forms of presentation the Fox sisters used, including lectures and fee-based private consultations, at least suggest that they attracted a bourgeois audience, the fashionable and the would-be fashionable.

As one might expect, these bourgeois Spiritualists did not regard themselves as “conservative” or even as opponents of the Enlightenment. Although the Foxes used elements of traditional ghost beliefs, there was a “technical” element of modernization in the Fox sisters’ séances: Instead of asking simple questions to be answered with a knock for the affirmative and silence for the negative, from the summer of 1848 onward the alphabet was recited, and the spirits spelled complex sentences by rapping for the appropriate letter. Four years after Morse had sent the first telegram from Washington to Baltimore, this became known as the “spiritual telegraph.” In later séances it was claimed that this mode of communication had not been conceived by any living person. It was the spirits themselves
who had had the idea and who slowly and carefully manipulated the Fox sisters into applying the new means of communication. The Fox sisters even knew who had invented the spiritual telegraph: the spirit of Benjamin Franklin. The inventor and revolutionary leader of the American Enlightenment, Franklin was an inventor and revolutionary in the spirit world, too. In the words of Leah Fox, Spiritualism was “a new truth, which was destined to revolutionize this world, and establish a communication between the here and the hereafter. . . . It is not surprising that the Spirit on the other side who seems to have been the principal initiator, not to say the inventor of this new development in the evolution of Humanity. . . . was . . . Benjamin Franklin.” In one of his earliest messages Franklin claimed that “the world will be enlightened” by Spiritualism.

Indeed, this was how the Spiritualists themselves depicted their movement. They ridiculed their opponents as conservative, unenlightened. As the Spiritualist and ex-governor of Wisconsin Territory Nathaniel P. Tallmadge wrote in 1853, the skeptics were “Far behind the intelligence of the age [in which] . . . mesmerism and clairvoyance . . . are considered by intelligent and scientific men as well established as electricity and magnetism.” Leah Fox compared herself with Galileo and the skeptics at Harvard University with the Salem witch hunters. She also kept referring to the movement she had helped to found as “Modern Spiritualism” not so much to stress the differences between spirit messages and traditional ghost beliefs but rather to emphasize that she considered Spiritualism to be an integral part, indeed the pinnacle, of the enlightened era that had begun with the American revolution.

The religious aspects of Spiritualism did not run contrary to this trend; as a matter of fact, they reinforced it. For Leah Fox the spirit messages she presented as concrete, scientific facts had demonstrated the “immortality of the soul (heretofore a mere dogma of unproved and unprovable ‘faith’), which is the foundation corner-stone of all religions and of all Religion. In the words of [Apostle] Paul, to ‘faith’ they ‘add knowledge.’” The idea that wraiths appeared to prove that death did not terminate human existence was not new; in fact, it was the stock-in-trade of the theological interpretation of ghosts since at least St. Thomas Aquinas. But the Fox sisters and other Spiritualists reinterpreted it in a particular way. Of course, the spirits declared that they intended to fight materialism, but they wanted
to do so by—quite literally—materializing themselves. By producing effects in scientifically controlled environments they demonstrated the reality of a hereafter by using electricity and magnetism with superior scientific knowledge. Religion had become the object of Spiritualist-scientific proof, and it was proven to be in line with Enlightenment principles: The religious message of the spirits was opposed to churches, strictly nondenominational, and deistical. On the basis of these findings it becomes obvious that the U.S. Senate was quite wrong when it denounced Spiritualism as a relic of the unenlightened past.

The organizational patterns of Spiritualism mirrored its nondogmatic, antiauthoritarian principles as well as they mirrored structural elements of America’s republican society. Even the Fox sisters, the mediums par excellence, never achieved or claimed any kind of institutionalized authority. In contrast to Freyin, they did not attempt to establish the hierarchy and dogma of a new church. Everyone could consult a medium, and it was maintained that every family had at least one member with mediumistic talent. Bret Carroll demonstrates in his history of Spiritualism that the movement overcame its opposition to supralocal organizations and binding rules only at the end of the nineteenth century, when fraudulent mediums and sensationalism strongly threatened its credibility. But Spiritualism remained antiauthoritarian, based not on groups or institutions but on individuals reflecting the ideals of an enlightened bourgeois society. It has already been mentioned that during the earliest stages of their careers the Fox sisters had come under the influence of the individualistic doctrine of the Congregational Friends. This religious individualism certainly influenced the Foxes, but the personalized theology of the Congregational Friends itself was part and parcel of the new enlightened culture that emphasized the freedom and responsibility of individuals.

Believing in Structures

Not only the Spiritualist movement itself was shaped by the new demands and possibilities of postrevolutionary civil society. The new society also profoundly reshaped the imagination of the dead. The Fox sisters quickly stepped beyond the boundaries of popular ghost beliefs. They claimed that just weeks after the first rappings at
Hydesville their own dead grandfather had urged them to help other people communicate with their “friends in heaven.” Conjuring up the dead or conversing with them in dreams and trances was an element of popularized learned beliefs. John Dee, Emanuel Swedenborg, the Shakers, and Andrew Jackson Davis all had allegedly talked to souls from the hereafter and not to the ghosts as described in folk tales. The Fox sisters and all Spiritualists after them adopted this tradition and dropped the imagery of ghost legends that had been so prominent at the beginning of their career. They no longer communicated with ghosts lingering between the realms of the living and the dead, haunting places until they fulfilled a special task. They now maintained that they were able to establish contact with and receive messages from any dead person. In this respect the Fox sisters were right never to use the word “ghost” for the apparitions they allegedly dealt with but to refer to them discreetly as “spirits.”

Both the Fox sisters and Freyin had managed to construct narratives that started with elements of traditional ghost legends and developed into the claim of having contact with the hereafter. During the early modern period the common denominator of all theological schools engaged in the debate about ghosts was that this was impossible. The Catholic Church accepted at least the theoretical possibility that God could send souls from Purgatory back to Earth. Having renounced the idea of Purgatory, the reformed churches maintained that all ghosts were just demons trying to deceive those people whose faith was shaky. In any case, it was not possible for the living to converse with the souls of the dead. Of course, there were folktales about dreams of damned or saved souls. But these motifs were not related to ghost legends. Insofar as the impossibility of contact between the world of the living and the hereafter of Heaven and Hell is concerned, popular culture basically shared the ideas of learned theology: The whole point of redeeming a wandering spirit was to sever its bonds with the living world. Traditional ghost belief had never questioned, let alone ever provided, an alternative to Christian notions of life after death.

Freyin, Buck, and her followers claimed only to be able to see two redeemed souls. The role of the Württemberg ghosts was that of saint, prophet, or angel: They revealed the will of God to the faithful. In this respect, Freyin’s ghosts more resembled Joseph Smith’s angel Moroni than the infinite number of dead seen by the Fox sis-
ters. In addition to their claim of being in contact with delivered ghosts, the Württemberg sect entertained ideas concerning the hereafter that differed from those of the established Protestant Church. The surviving records provide precious few details. According to Buck, the apparitions proved, contrary to Protestant teachings, that there was "a third place in which the ghosts of the deceased stayed." Even if this brought the Catholic image of Purgatory to the minds of Württemberg's Protestant ministers, Buck was probably thinking of something else. The souls in Purgatory did not interact with the living world and were hardly capable of conveying religious instructions. The Catholic neighbor territories of Württemberg did not accept Buck's explanation. On the contrary, it greeted his assertions with "laughter and scorn... and was said that if such things would happen in their area the fantasists would be punished severely on life and on limb." The "third place" was probably the realm of ghosts between Earth and the Christian hereafter. It seems likely, even though there is no clear evidence that Freyin and Buck were influenced by Pietism. Espousing the ideas published in 1765 by Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, an influential minister, some Württemberg Pietists believed in the existence of the "intermediate realm" (Zwischenreich), where the souls of the deceased awaited their ascent to heaven. Yet Pietists never entertained the idea that spirits could relay religious instructions. On the contrary, prominent Pietist preachers were said to conduct sermons of consolation for the dead residing in the intermediate realm.

Unlike the practices of the ghost sect, in Spiritualism the living did not receive messages from the dead during the equivalent of a divine service held at more-or-less regular intervals. Rather, contact with spirits took the form of a voluntarily established communication between unspecified individuals. At least in theory, anyone could converse with anyone else. Whereas Freyin's two ghosts were religious teachers of unquestionable authority for the whole group, the dead in Spiritualist belief were at best personal guides. The structure of communicating with spirits established by the Fox sisters reflected the modern everyday communication processes of midnineteenth-century America. Contact with the spirit world had been democratized, and the interaction with spirits was not in any way controlled by hierarchies or authorities.

The Spiritualists' hereafter was unlike the one imagined by orthodox Christianity. American Spiritualists — Andrew Jackson Davis
prior to and in this respect more influential than the Fox sisters—presented a dynamic version of Swedenborg. Heaven consisted of seven concentric spheres, the seventh being the seat of God. In entering heaven each soul assumed a position within the spheres corresponding to its level of spiritual development attained on earth. But the souls did not remain in one position: Under the influence of higher spirits they could and inevitably would rise to the seventh sphere. There, they would not be united with God but rather join him while keeping their individual personalities. Heaven had become a place of improvement and evolution, of the permanent progress of individuals. Leah Fox summarized death as “but birth into another stage of progressed and progressive life, in unchanged personality and identity.” The static eternal bliss of Christianity was done away with. Hell, the cul-de-sac of eternal damnation, became completely obsolete in a dynamic hierarchy of upward mobility.

What was the meaning of this new conception of the hereafter? What was its particular attraction? Even if we do not share Bronislaw Malinowski’s crude functionalism, we may assume that the rules and purposes of magic as well as the imagination of the spirit worlds are constructed in correspondence with the needs and ideals of the respective society. In some cases, for example fairy rafts or the witches’ sabbath, folk belief creates not a utopia but rather a somewhat distorted but still easily recognizable mirror image of everyday society, a “doppelgänger” society.

In any case, spirit beliefs tend to reinforce societal values. Traditional ghost beliefs are the best example of this. Ghosts are punished or have to atone for crimes or misconduct as defined by everyday standards of acceptable behavior: A miser must count his money for eternity, an aristocratic hunter who rode through the villagers’ crops must join the Wild Hunt, the peasant who manipulated his neighbor’s boundary marker to his advantage must find somebody who can point out the place where the marker rightly belongs, and a murderer must continually re-enact his deed. Ghosts exemplify moral obligations: Deceased friends or relatives return to give aid or advice. Even if they did not necessarily have disciplinary function, it is quite obvious that ghost legends reflected and confirmed the rules of an everyday morality concentrating on social roles, community, and family values.

One might say that traditional ghost beliefs spelled out a system of norms in keeping not with the reality of preindustrial rural soci-
ety but rather with the expectations of behavior this society upheld. In folk belief ghosts exemplified social rules, but they were not imagined in analogy to a society. They were defined as exceptions, as the few unfortunate ones who could not leave the world of the living as long as they had their specific tasks to fulfill. The ghost ships, armies, and the Wild Hunt are no exceptions: Generally speaking, they are not depicted as a group of individuals but rather as a collective identity.* Freyin had blurred the distinction between ghosts and redeemed souls, but even she was still fixated on the traditional imagery of spirits as solitary, nonsocial beings: She claimed to be able to communicate only with the two spirits she had redeemed.

When Spiritualism renounced the orthodox Christian teaching of Heaven and Hell it gained a freedom denied to traditional folk belief. The dead now were available for the construction a different imagined society. Traditional ghost beliefs had been expressions and confirmations of the norms of preindustrial societies, and the fairy rafts and witches’ sabbath had even been mirrors shaped by these rules. The same is true of Spiritualism. That the spirits were totally unlike their traditional predecessors was due to the simple fact that society, or rather the ideals of society, had changed. The dynamic hierarchy of individuals both willing to and capable of improving their position in the Spiritualist hereafter reflected nineteenth-century East Coast America, a bourgeois capitalist society that emphasized the individual’s “pursuit of happiness.” Both systems of belief did not deny or question the existence of a hierarchy, that is, of classes, but were convinced of that it could be scaled. Progress by society as a whole as well as by the individual was a central idea. The Spiritualists’ interpretation of heaven and the values of this bourgeois society were very optimistic: Not only could every soul reach the seventh sphere, every soul would inevitably reach it. The Spiritualists’ hereafter might well have been invented by Horatio Alger, the Fox sisters’ contemporary. The Spiritualist idea of the dead as free-willed individuals in an environment that demanded and rewarded progress absolutely corresponded with the enlightened ideals of society. The Württemberg sect had been based on a traditional, more-or-less intact agrarian society; it still lacked the social experiences and the set of ideas engendered by the Enlightenment, which the Fox sisters were able to use. “Modern Spiritualism” imagined “modern” spirits: It spelled the Enlightenment of the dead. When
Tallmadge defended the Foxes’ claim that Franklin’s spirit invented the spiritual telegraph, he did not hesitate to justify Spiritualist beliefs by referring to his conception of American society: “With all the evidence of progress which surrounds us here, how can we discard such evidences from the spirit-world, which is believed to be one of ‘everlasting progression’?” The success of the Fox sisters and of the movement they had helped found was due to their two-fold use of the Enlightenment discourse: They presented spirit messages as rationally proven and open to scientific investigation. The subject matter of these messages both reflected and expressed popularized Enlightenment ideas and the values of the new bourgeois society. In this respect, Spiritualism was totally in keeping with traditional ghost beliefs: The imagined realm of spirits both was shaped by and confirmed society’s rules and ideals. Thus, the Fox sisters and their followers were less innovative than the Württemberg ghost sect.

Corresponding to bourgeois society, Spiritualism always emphasized the role of the individual. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that at least a part of the movement could even surpass society in its quest for personal rights. Some mediums became spokespersons for the abolitionist campaign and the suffrage movement. Spiritualism was not subject to what Timothy McCarthy called the “split personality disorder” of midnineteenth-century America that embraced the Enlightenment at the same time that it tolerated slavery.

In 1888, facing poverty and alcoholism, Kate and Margaret Fox accused their sister Leah and other Spiritualists of exploiting them. Both publicly admitted that they had produced the so-called spirit rappings themselves and renounced Spiritualism. Margaret converted to Catholicism. Her rejection of Spiritualism repeated old denominational arguments: “No, the dead shall not return, nor shall any that go down into hell. So says the Catholic Bible, and so says the spirits will not return. God has not ordered it.” For her to withdraw from Spiritualism meant returning to pre-Enlightenment thought.

Notes

I would like to thank my colleague Petra Feld (University of Kassel) who discussed this article with me several times and sacrificed her time to proofread it.

2 Ibid., 154-9.
5 Ann Braude, Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century America (Boston, 1989), 12-16.
8 Davenport, Death-Blow, 83.
10 Although the Spiritualists were clearly disappointed, for the Foxes themselves politics seem to have remained a minor issue. Leah’s later “criticism” of the Washington establishment bordered on the nonsensical: “But to return to Washington, it was not at that time a very satisfactory place for the prosecution of Spiritualism…. It was, indeed, a centre of political agitation, and business connected with the Government; but at that time, at least, too much whiskey was consumed there… Washington is a mean city. I despise nearly everything I meet here” (Underhill, Missing Link, 269, 271).
11 The fact that Spiritualism was more successful in America than in Europe was explained with the cliché of the “ignorant American.” The Fox sisters’ movement was rejected as just another fashionable folly that been able to attract mass support in America but was accepted only by an comparatively small uneducated minority in Europe. The reluctant psychic researcher Kiesewetter, for example, explicitly called the Foxes’ Spiritualism “some craziness that is worshipped as a new gospel by hundreds of thousands of insipid Yankees and some thousands of misguided Germans who lack reason and knowledge.” Quoted in Carl Kiesewetter, Geschichte des Neueren Okultismus, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1891-5; reprint, New York, 1976), 1:448.
12 I will publish a more detailed account of this sect in Johannes Dillinger ed., Kriminalität im frühmodernen Württemberg, in 2002.
13 In European folklore as well as in later American Spiritualism the idea that ghosts sing is very widespread. Leah Fox even claimed that the rappings spelled musical notes to her. See, e.g., Underhill, Missing Link, 415-20; and Carl Mengis, “Geistermusik,” in Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer and Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, eds., Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, 10 vols. (Berlin, 1927-42; reprint, 1987), vol. 13. See also the Spiritualist hymnals by Esther C. Henk, Spirit Voices; Odes dictated by the Spirits of the Second Sphere (Philadelphia, 1853); and J. B. Packard, Spirit Minstrel (Boston, 1853). A analytical comparison of the known texts of such spirit songs might further promote our understanding of the respective sets of beliefs.
16 Davenport, Death-Blow, 92-117.
17 Underhill, Missing Link, 6, 41, 74-84, 101, 403-4, 424-6. See also Davenport, Death-Blow, 119.
18 Thompson, Motif-Index, E 341; Jones, Things that Go Bump, 36; Müller and Röhrich, “Der Tod und die Toten,” G 14-23.
19 Underhill, Missing Link, 7-39.
20 Thompson, Motif-Index, E 402. See Douglas Grant, The Cock Lane Ghost (New York, 1965).
21 Braude, Radical Spirits, 23-5.
24 Underhill, Missing Link, 68.
26 Underhill, Missing Link, 55-6.
28 Capron, Modern Spiritualism, 338.
29 Underhill, Missing Link, 299-300.
30 Ibid., 3.
31 See Claude Lecouteux, Geschichte der Gespenster und Wiedergänger im Mittelalter (Cologne, 1987).
32 See Capron, Modern Spiritualism, 345.
33 Underhill, Missing Link, 403.
35 Underhill, Missing Link, 51.
36 Carroll, Spiritualism in Antebellum America, 22, 44, 163-4, 182-3.
37 Richard Haug, Reich Gottes im Schwabenland: Linien im württembergischen Pietismus (Metzingen, 1981), 160-2. Oetinger himself was influenced by Swedenborg; see Ernest F. Steffler, German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century, Studies in the History of Religions, vol. 24 (Leiden, 1973), 117-18. It is possible that the much older legends of the Nobiskrug or the Kalti Herberge as shelters of the dead played some role in Oetinger’s concepts.
38 Brown, Heyday of Spiritualism, 78-87; Carroll, Spiritualism in Antebellum America, 62-7.
39 Underhill, Missing Link, 3.
Johannes Dillinger, “Böse Leute”: Hexenverfolgungen in Schwäbisch-Österreich und Kurrier im Vergleich, Trierer Hexenprozesse, Quellen und Darstellungen, vol. 5, (Trier, 1999), 120-34.

41 Thompson, Motif-Index, E 337, E 416. See also Jones, Things that Go Bump, 21-30; and Müller and Röhrich, “Der Tod und die Toten,” H 24, H 25, H 27, H 50.

42 Thompson, Motif-Index, E 320, E 366. See also Jones, Things that Go Bump, 37, 45; and Müller and Röhrich, “Der Tod und die Toten,” F 1, 9-14

43 Thompson, Motif-Index, F 403.2.3.7, E 501.3, E 510. See also Wolfgang Behringer, Shaman of Oberstdorf (Charlottesville, Va., 1998).

44 Capron, Modern Spiritualism, 346.


47 Moore, In Search of White Crrows, 44.

48 Davenport, Death-Blow, 37.
Africans in Early Modern German Society: Identity—Difference—Aesthetics—Anthropology

Vera Lind

How did Africans come to live in the German territories during the early modern era? What did they do after they got there, and what impressions did Germans and Africans have of each other? Unlike many other European states, none of the German states was a major sea power and none possessed colonies in the early modern period. German participation in the overseas slave trade was hardly noteworthy, and there were few scientific expeditions to foreign lands sponsored by German states during this time. Yet, like in other European countries, in the early modern period many Africans and ex-slaves from the Americas lived with aristocratic families in the courts of German territories or with wealthy bourgeois families as highly regarded and privileged domestic servants. Outfitted in elaborate costumes, black servants added a fashionable, exotic element to households and could therefore be used to show off the significance and wealth of the people for whom they worked. For the same reason blacks also served in the military of many German states, most as splendidly dressed musicians; many were recruited by German troops in North America. Moravian missionaries from Saxony also brought ex-slaves with them to Germany from the Caribbean.

There were many German individuals and groups in the early modern period who could and did report on encounters with Africans, African Americans, and other foreign peoples while abroad. These included scholars and adventurers accompanying foreign expeditions, such as Reinhold and Georg Forster, who traveled with James Cook, and the Moravian missionaries who began working in
the Caribbean, Suriname, and North America in the 1730s. In addition, tens of thousands of Germans emigrated to the North American colonies, and many wrote letters about their experiences to their home villages. Additionally, about thirty thousand "Hessian" soldiers served with the British troops in North America during the War of American Independence, and about half returned home to tell about it. German scholars and others could draw on second-hand sources such as English and French travel accounts, many of which were translated into German, for information about Africans. In short, contacts and impressions between Germans and Africans were not insignificant during this era, yet they have never been thoroughly studied.

African-American history is an important, well-established field, but research on the black population in early modern Europe is still in its infancy, with most work concentrating on France, England, and the Netherlands. This is surprising not only because blacks were so numerous, but also because they in many ways had an important cultural impact, as their presence in German art, literature, public debate, and daily life suggests. There are hundreds of paintings from this era portraying black and white people together. Black Africans in exotic dress were favorite motifs on porcelain, clocks, and in paintings, silhouettes of Africans appear in the coats of arms of several German cities and families, and blacks were popular characters in novels, poems, and plays. Furthermore, contemporary popular magazines and newspapers frequently engaged in the debate on slavery, and German Enlightenment thinkers followed closely the developments in other European countries and overseas. Many German scientists and philosophers also participated in the eighteenth-century discourse on defining the nature and history of human beings, which involved defining and classifying the differences among them.

During my fellowship at the GHI I plan to write a history of the relationship between Africans and Germans in the early modern period that includes an overview of the lives and living conditions of blacks in Germany as well as an analysis of what happened in a cultural sense when the two collided. This microhistorical approach relies on archival sources, visual images of the period, and contemporary scholarly texts, and aims to provide insight into individual experiences and perceptions in local societies. It also hopes to con-
nect these findings to the broader questions concerning slavery, abolition, colonialism, the Atlantic world, scientific racism, religion, and the Enlightenment’s search for a new definition of humanity.

Discovering sources for this project is no easy task: Few Africans in early modern Germany could write, which creates an imbalance between sources left by Africans and by Germans. One geographic region I decided to focus on was the Hesse and Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel area, where a relatively large number of Africans lived during this period. There had been a tradition of black servants and military musicians in these regions since the seventeenth century, and in the eighteenth century these two dukedoms provided the largest contingents of German soldiers fighting in the Revolutionary War in America. Numerous diaries left by these soldiers provide insight into their perceptions of slaves and slavery in America. Also, after the war many former slaves accompanied the German troops back to Europe, so that by the late 1780s the number of Africans in these two German states increased considerably. Hesse and Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel thus seem to provide ideal conditions for a microhistorical investigation of both the African and German experience, and perceptions of each other over the course of two centuries. Furthermore, I use more than four hundred paintings and other artworks found throughout Germany, which provide visual images of representations involving Africans. Reports by Moravian missionaries in the Caribbean and the interviews they conducted with slaves add another perspective. In addition to archival sources, I also use contemporary journals, newspapers, and scholarly works, which are rich sources for German comments on slavery and emancipation, as well as anthropological research and attempts to define humanity.

In some ways the treatment of black musicians, soldiers, and servants was similar to that of their white colleagues, but there were fundamental differences. The lives of many Africans can basically be described in terms of “privileged dependency.” Unlike France and England, none of the German states had a legally defined status for people who had been bought as slaves in other countries and then brought into Germany. Blacks were subject to property relationships and were considered valuable possessions, however they could move about freely within white society; their de facto slave status was quite different than it was for African slaves in other West-
ern countries. For example, many Africans and the African Americans who came with the Hessian soldiers married into local families of all social strata and had children. Religion played a critical role in their integration into German society. One of the most decisive criteria in early modern Germany for judging strangers in general was whether or not they were Christian. Thus it is not surprising that the act of baptism was of central importance for most Africans living in Germany. Most who were not already Christians were baptized on their arrival. Baptized soldiers and court moors thus no longer were threatening savages but were united in faith with Christian society. This did not mean that they were equals, but baptism became a rite of passage that allowed blacks to be accepted into German society, in marked contrast to other countries. The close relationship of the act of baptism, social integration, and sponsored social status is made clear when one examines the names of those who served as godparents for the soldiers, including dukes, landgraves, other aristocrats, and high-ranking military officers. Also, baptism was the only prerequisite for blacks intending to marry local women. This is noteworthy, considering the difficult, bureaucratic procedure normally required by the authorities for marriage. In the stratified, hierarchical society of early modern Germany, “mixed” marriages of social unequals usually were undesired, yet such marriages between blacks and whites did not produce hostile reactions. The numerous examples of intermarriage are an indicator of social integration.

Throughout the early modern period German states welcomed Africans and maintained a generally positive image of them. Besides acceptance and integration into daily life, their presumed beauty and the darkness of their skin also elevated them to the status of privileged, highly valued, exotic attractions. Splendid, colorful costumes of Oriental rather than African origin made them stand out. Labeled as showpieces, blacks had to fulfill the specific task of representing the wealth and social standing of their sponsor. This is obvious in numerous paintings from the eighteenth century: Many are group portraits of a family or children, or portraits of aristocrats, emperors, dukes, duchesses, and so forth, accompanied by a black servant. On the one hand, black persons are part of an almost intimate scene, showing their closeness to the sponsor and the esteem in which they are held. On the other hand, the black person is used
as an “exoticized” token of wealth. Some paintings, particularly the ones depicting aristocratic white women with their black servants, clearly involve sexual connotations. In others, the color scheme of the painting emphasizes the contrast between black and white skin color.

Regarding the perspectives or feelings of the Africans themselves, the sources provide few clues. The African-American soldiers escaped a cruel system of slavery and came to a strange land with unheard-of possibilities for social integration. However, this also involved abandoning their home and leaving behind people like themselves. Many others led short lives as dependent objects of their protector’s fancy, and being accepted and integrated was often accompanied by the experience of alienation rather than acculturation.

With none of the German states involved in slavery and the slave trade, these topics nonetheless were constantly debated among Enlightenment thinkers. Many Germans followed closely the discussions in England, France, and North America, translated and reprinted many articles from foreign-language publications, and themselves wrote long articles concerning slavery. German intellectuals almost uniformly condemned slavery because they viewed it as incompatible with the principles of humanity and Christianity. Condemnations were made not only by intellectuals: Through fortunate coincidence, the diaries of the Hessian and Brunswick soldiers and officers fighting in the Revolutionary War in North America allow us to trace the thoughts of common people and members of the lower aristocracy. Some soldiers probably had at least some experience with Africans at home because there had been a long tradition of blacks living in the German states before the war. Hessian soldiers spoke out time and again against slavery, condemning it for the same reasons propounded by the Enlightenment thinkers.

During this debate on slavery Africans also became the object of a fierce debate among German intellectuals over the nature of human beings: What is human? By what criteria does one distinguish humans from animals? What are races and how are they defined and distinguished from one another? With the dissolution of the Christian worldview that had put everything in its proper place, purely theological definitions of human beings no longer seemed satisfactory, and learned people everywhere sought new scientific explanations. The presence of black people in the German territo-
ries influenced this debate, in which many prominent German Enlightenmen: thinkers were involved, among them Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), Georg Forster (1754-1794), and Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). Some, such as Samuel Thomas Soemmerring (1755-1830), a professor of anatomy in Hesse-Kassel, conducted their own anthropological research. Soemmerring dissected the corpses of four black soldiers who after the war had accompanied the returning Hessians and died shortly thereafter.9

The results of this anthropological debate were contradictory and did not provide any definitive answers. Those involved employed diverse methods in various fields and debated whether the differences they found were based on "race"—a concept based on skin color—natural-environmental factors, or culture. The German position in the debate on difference was a developing consensus that there were differences in groups of humans but that these differences did not imply any moral or intellectual inequalities between them. In other words, they strongly agreed on difference without hierarchical ranking. There were those who deviated from this position, like Soemmerring, who concluded in his book that Africans belonged to a lower order of humans, closer to apes than to the higher order of humans, or the historian Christoph Meiners (1747-1810), who saw Africans as rightly enslaved because of their low standing in the human hierarchy since Creation. But these exceptions were heavily criticized or, in the case of Meiners, not even taken seriously by their colleagues.

German Enlightenment thinkers were motivated by the quest to understand and classify (and dissect) everything in the living world, and their anatomical and physiological research was not limited to black and white people; it included, for example, the exploration of differences between the sexes as well. But there was no need to assign rank or connect findings of difference with any evaluation of inherent morality and/or mental abilities. Therefore, the connection frequently made between the emergence of scientific racism and the abolition movement in studies on slavery in France, England, and North America does not work in the case of the German states.10 The new empirical studies did represent a transitional phase between older theological views and new racist theories of the nineteenth century; however, the generally accepted notion of African cultural
deficiency together with scientific racism did not develop until the late nineteenth century, when Germany participated directly in colonialism.

It is interesting that this anthropological debate was carried out with such intensity at a time and place not directly affected by slavery.\textsuperscript{11} Yet perhaps this response could occur in the German states precisely because there was no danger that the discussion would directly challenge social, political, and economic arrangements, for the threat of ideological crisis might have limited the terms of the debate. Further, presumably free from any responsibility in these matters, it was easy for participants to condemn others for their contradictory claims. Criticizing others offered an opportunity for German intellectuals to openly discuss the concepts of “freedom,” “equality,” and the problem of bound labor in general—touchy issues in a society that still relied heavily on various forms of dependency and servitude. They could voice abstract, veiled criticism directed at their own society without being censored. In that way, investigating “difference” and opposing slavery met an important need of German Enlightenment thinkers to define their own identity. The contrast with other races and their social conditions assisted these thinkers in their attempts to understand themselves.

From a comparative perspective, the encounter between Africans and Germans clearly developed along different lines than in other countries within the Atlantic system. Having no economic, political, or social dependency on slavery meant less racist views and a greater focus on the positive, exotic appeal of Africans. Nonetheless, the German focus on the exoticism of Africans and acceptance of their status of privileged dependency reveals that tolerance and exploitation were closely related.

Notes

\textsuperscript{1} A few Germans did take part in the slave trade during this time. For a short period the Great Elector, Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg, planned to make Prussia a sea power and to this end instigated a plan to participate in the slave trade on the Guinea coast. The trading company he founded in 1679 failed, however, because the lack of colonies made it difficult to turn a profit. After enduring heavy financial losses for a number of years the company was sold to Dutch interests in 1698. Also, some Germans did sail on Dutch and Danish slave ships. See Albert Hüne, \textit{Vollständige historisch-philosophische Darstellung aller Veränderungen des Negersklavenhandels von dessen Ursprüngen an bis zu seiner gänzlichen Aufhebung}


4 A research project at Harvard University, "The Image of the Black in Western Art," analyzes the presence of black people in works of art (published in a series of books with the same name) and has an extensive collection of references to artworks throughout the world, including Europe and Germany.


6 Legally, however, blacks in Germany could find themselves in an ambiguous position. The lack of legal regulations in the German territories could serve as a disadvantage to Africans, who could not use the courts to defend themselves, as they could in England and France. For example, when a black man, who was bought in Copenhagen, instituted proceedings for his freedom in the Prussian courts in 1780—a unique case—the obviously helpless court referred to the "natural law" to possess property and rejected his case. See Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren*, 133-4.

7 For example, a thirty-year-old black man named Ludwig Wallis was a Presbyterian when he joined Brunswick troops in America in 1781. He died three years later in Brunswick. See Kittel, "Mohren als Hofbediente und Soldaten," 94.

8 Less than a third of the blacks registered in France in the second half of the eighteenth century were baptized. See Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France*, 82.

9 Soemerring published his research findings in 1784 in a book called *Über die körperliche Verschiedenheit des Mohren vom Europäer* (On the Physical Difference between the Moor and the European). Eighteenth-century German texts refer to black peoples in different, often not clearly defined terms: Contemporaries usually referred to black persons as *Mohren*, but this word was also used as a catch-all concept for non-white, non-Christians (Chinese, Indians et al.). Further, they also be-
gan using the term Neger, from the French nègre, which had specific reference to the inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa. All this reflects the general problem in eighteenth-century Germany of identifying and classifying non-European peoples. On the eighteenth-century etymology of the term Mohren, see Sander L. Gilman, On Blackness Without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany (Boston, 1982), xii.


40 John C. Greene argued that the main interest of the Americans on anthropological questions before 1800 was religiously motivated, in order to use the Bible to justify slavery. He therefore refers to Thomas Jefferson’s “Notes on Virginia,” the “History of Jamaica” by Edward Long (repubhlished in the United States in 1788), the work of Benjamin Rush from 1792, and to professor of anatomy John Augustine Smith’s work from 1808. See John C. Greene, “The American Debate on the Negro’s Place in Nature, 1780-1815,” Journal of the History of Ideas 15 (1954): 384-96.
Penal Reform in Modern Germany, 1880–1945

Richard F. Wetzel

My research project examines how, beginning in the late nineteenth century, a new generation of German legal reformers gradually transformed the criminal justice system. This transformation manifested itself in two basic processes of change: first, a shift in emphasis from moral retribution to the protection of society as the primary purpose of criminal justice; second, the dissolution of the nineteenth-century system of fixed and uniform punishments in favor of a system of individualized preventive measures that incorporated non-penal forms of state intervention such as education and medical treatment. My project places the origins of this reform movement in the context of the emergence of the “scientific” study of crime that became known as criminology, fundamental changes in German liberalism, and the rise of an interventionist welfare state. After showing that the political implications of the reform proposals were highly ambivalent from the outset, my study examines the development of German penal reform under three different political regimes, from Imperial Germany through the Weimar Republic to the end of the Nazi period.

Imperial Germany’s criminal justice system was a compromise based on the principles of retribution, deterrence, and rehabilitation. Starting in the 1880s, this criminal justice system came under attack from a new generation of legal reformers, who pointed to high recidivism rates as evidence of the system’s ineffectiveness. Dismissing the traditional moral foundation of criminal justice, these reformers argued that the purpose of punishment should not consist in inflicting just retribution but in protecting society from future crimes. They therefore made the radical proposal that a criminal’s punishment should not depend on the gravity of the offense committed (the principle of deterrence) or on the person’s individual degree of guilt (the principle of retribution), but on the future danger that the particular offender posed to society. Instead of serving a fixed prison sentence, each offender was to be subject to individualized and open-ended preventive measures designed to prevent him
or her from committing future offenses. Depending on the type of criminal, these measures could take different forms, including a suspended sentence, rehabilitation, indefinite detention, medical treatment or correctional education.

My research project has three major themes: the erosion of individual legal responsibility, the transformation of the criminal sanction, and the political ambivalence of the penal reform proposals.

The Problem of Individual Legal Responsibility

Criminological research on the causes of criminal behavior, which the penal reformers championed, undermined the notion of legal responsibility. For if a person’s criminal actions were, to a significant extent, determined by their heredity or environment, how could one hold the offender morally or legally responsible? But if criminal offenders were not responsible, what distinguished them from insane persons? In short, the reformers found themselves in a dilemma: to make the criminal sanction effective, they had to understand the causes of crime; but all of the “scientific” explanations of crime undermined the notion of free will and thus the very basis of the criminal justice system. My project examines how the reformers and their critics confronted this central dilemma and what compromises they developed in order to reconcile the determinist implications of “scientific” etiologies of crime with the notion of individual legal responsibility.

The Criminal Sanction and Non-Penal Forms of State Intervention

Having abandoned the retributive purpose of punishment in favor of a purely preventive approach, the penal reformers sought to empty punishment of its “punitive” content. As a result, the penal sanction began to become dissolved into a spectrum of individualized measures that became increasingly similar to non-penal modes of state intervention, such as education, medical treatment, and police detention in a workhouse. Because of the increasing connection of penal and non-penal forms of state intervention in what Michel Foucault has called a “carceral continuum,” my project pays particular attention to the intersection of penal reform with the emergence of an interventionist welfare state, eugenics, and other reform movements such as the child welfare movement.
The Political Ambivalence of the Penal Reform Proposals

The reform movement's abandonment of a retributivist system of fixed and uniform punishments in favor of individualized preventive measures had profoundly ambivalent implications. On the one hand, the primacy given to individualized treatment was an attempt to liberate criminal justice from the schematism of deterrence and from the harshness of retribution. By turning the penal sanction into a preventive rather than a punitive measure the reformers clearly paved the way for a more humane criminal justice system. On the other hand, however, the new approach was also fraught with grave dangers. For if punishments were no longer limited by the proportionality principle of retributive justice or by a system of fixed punishments, the individual offender would be left defenseless against the potentially limitless protective demands of society.

Since the major figures of the penal reform movement during the Imperial and Weimar periods were liberals, the project will address the question of how the reform movement was connected to fundamental changes in German liberalism. On the most general level, it seems clear that the penal reformers' call for the indefinite detention of habitual criminals reflected the Janus-faced nature of the modern interventionist welfare state and what Detlev Peukert has called the "rifts and danger zones" of modernity.³

The ambivalent nature of the reform proposals explains why they met with critical responses from opposite directions. Whereas some critics warned that the reformist system of individualized and indefinite preventive measures would establish a police state without any protections for individual liberty, others charged that the reformers were a group of weak-kneed humanitarians whose focus on prevention rather than retribution sapped criminal justice of its moral meaning and deterrent effect.

Although these criticisms forced the reformers to make compromises with the system of fixed punishments and the principle of retributive justice, many reformist proposals were accepted by the mainstream of the German legal profession, incorporated into the draft codes elaborated by official penal reform commissions, and in some cases implemented through partial judicial reforms. Finally, the ambivalence of the reform proposals explains why the reformist project remained both attractive and controversial for such different
political constituencies as Weimar democrats, Nazis, and postwar Germans.

Synopsis

1. Criminal Justice in Imperial Germany

The first chapter of the book in progress discusses Imperial Germany's criminal justice system as a compromise between three potentially contradictory penal strategies: general deterrence, retribution, and rehabilitation. The German penal code prescribed a fixed range of punishments for each offense in accordance with the liberal penal philosophy of general deterrence. The courts calibrated sentences to represent the "just measure of pain" corresponding to the offender's individual degree of guilt in accordance with the principle of retributive justice. The prison administrators charged with administering these sentences, finally, often pursued the very different goal of rehabilitating the offenders. The remaining sections of this chapter provide brief background on the emergence of criminology as a scientific field and on society, politics, and crime patterns in Imperial Germany.

2. From Retributive Justice to Social Defense

The second chapter examines why and how all three strands of the nineteenth-century criminal justice system—retribution, general deterrence, and rehabilitation—came under attack from a new generation of penal reformers under the leadership of Franz von Liszt in the early 1880s. At the most fundamental level, Liszt argued that the purpose of punishment was not to inflict just retribution but to protect society from future crime. Moreover, while the current system sought to protect society primarily through general deterrence, the reformers insisted that this purpose was best achieved by preventing each individual offender from committing future crimes. They therefore proposed that a criminal's punishment no longer should depend on the gravity of the offense but on the future danger the offender posed to society. Hence, instead of serving a fixed prison sentence, each offender ought to be subject to individualized and indeterminate preventive measures designed to prevent him or her from committing future offenses. Although these preventive mea-
sures could include rehabilitation, Liszt and his fellow reformers were quite pessimistic about the possibility of rehabilitating repeat offenders and focused attention on the large number of "incorrigible habitual criminals" who ought to remain imprisoned for indefinite periods. The chapter's last section examines the emergence of an organized penal reform movement in the shape of the Internationale Kriminalistische Vereinigung and its German section.

3. The Debates About Penal Reform: Conflict and Compromise

The third chapter examines the debate between the penal reformers and the "classical" school of criminal law, which defended the retributivist status quo. My analysis of the debate focuses on two main issues: the retributivists' charge that the determinism inherent in the reformers' "scientific" approach to crime as a product of biological and environmental factors undermined the notion of legal responsibility; and the retributivists' charge that the reformers' call for indeterminate preventive measures posed a grave threat to civil liberty. Regarding the first issue, the reformers wavered between two positions. Initially, they frankly acknowledged that their scientific approach to crime had rendered the notion of legal responsibility untenable, but argued that this notion had become dispensable because penal sanctions were to be based on individual "dangerousness." Realizing that this position was too radical, however, they subsequently made various attempts to redefine individual legal responsibility in ways that would make it compatible with their determinist view of crime.

While the problem of legal responsibility remained fundamentally unresolved, on the issue of indefinite punishment and the threat it posed to civil liberty a compromise was reached. For although the classical school insisted that all punishments must be fixed in advance, they shared the reformers' concern about incorrigible habitual criminals and therefore came to accept the reformist demand for the indefinite detention of such criminals. The resulting compromise proposal of formally separating an habitual offender's detention into a fixed term of "punishment" and a subsequent indefinite term of "preventive" detention revealed that the retributivist mainstream was beginning to yield to the reformers' call for a highly interventionist strategy of crime prevention. By 1902 both the gov-
ernment and the Association of German Jurists (Deutscher Juristentag) called for the revision of the German penal code along reformist lines.

4. Individualizing Punishment

The reformers’ demand that the penal sanction serve the purpose of preventing the individual offender from offending again in the future led them to call for the replacement of the standard fixed prison sentence with a variety of alternative sanctions tailored to the individual offender. What is more, even though the reformers still used the term punishment, they proposed to strip the penal sanction of its punitive content and to dissolve it into a spectrum of individualized preventive measures, many of which were similar to non-penal measures such as education (for juvenile delinquents), medical treatment (for abnormal offenders) and administrative detention in a workhouse (for incorrigible habitual criminals). This chapter examines the debates about alternative sanctions for four different categories of offenders—occasional, abnormal, and habitual offenders as well as juvenile delinquents—among the penal reformers and in the German legal profession at large, as well as the introduction of such alternative sanctions into judicial practice through various partial reforms.

5. Reforming the Penal Code, 1906-1932

The first two sections of this chapter trace how reformist ideas were incorporated into the draft penal codes of the two prewar reform commissions convening between 1906 and 1914 and into the two postwar draft codes of 1925 and 1927. Although these draft codes were still based on the retributivist principle that punishments ought to be determined by the criminal’s offense, a number of proposed innovations represented a major step toward the reformist vision of criminal justice as a system of individualized preventive measures designed to protect society. These innovations included the introduction of suspended sentences for first-time offenders, the indefinite detention of multiple recidivists, correctional education (instead of punishment) for juvenile delinquents, and the medical internment of mentally defective offenders. When the 1927 draft code was introduced as a bill in the Reichstag that same year, penal reform ef-
forts finally reached the parliamentary stage. The chapter's third section discusses the ensuing political deliberations between 1927 and 1932, the attitudes of the different political parties toward penal reform, and the ultimate failure of penal reform due to the gradual dissolution of the Weimar Republic. The final section examines the attacks of right-wing and pro-Nazi jurists against the penal reform movement in the last years of the republic.

6. Penal Reform Under the Nazi Regime

The final chapter examines the complex fate of penal reform in the Nazi era. Whereas Nazi jurists attacked the penal reformers as humanitarian liberals who were soft on crime, both the reformers' concern with effective crime prevention and the biological-medical approaches to crime underlying the penal reform agenda appealed to the Nazis. The chapter's first section examines early Nazi penal legislation, especially the Law Against Habitual Criminals of November 1933, which implemented the indefinite detention of habitual criminals that the reformers had long called for. The following section looks at the often conflicting efforts of pro-Nazi jurists to construct coherent "Nazi visions" of penal policy, and the relationships of these blueprints to the longstanding conflict between retributivists and penal reformers. After tracing how these efforts played out in the work of the official penal reform commission, whose 1936 draft code ultimately failed to become law, the last section examines the radicalization of penal policy in the later years of the Nazi regime, with particular attention to the wartime preparations for a "Community Aliens Law" (Gemeinschaftsfremdengesetz) that reflected a thoroughly biologized vision of penal policy.

Notes

1 On this subject, see Richard F. Wetzell, Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880-1945 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000).
CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

THE CLAIM TO SOCIAL RESOURCES: A CONTESTED ISSUE IN TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE, 1776 TO THE PRESENT

Workshop at the GHI, September 22-24, 2000. Conveners: Daniel Letwin (Pennsylvania State University), Christof Mauch (GHI), and Richard F. Wetzel (GHI). Participants: Thomas M. Adams (National Endowment for the Humanities), Keith Allen (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum), Christopher Capozzola (Columbia University), Karl Christian Führer (Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte, Hamburg), Edward Larkey (University of Maryland at Baltimore County), Sascha Liebermann (University of Dortmund), Timothy Patrick McCarthy (Harvard University), Sonya Michel (University of Illinois at Chicago), Sam A. Mustafa (College of Charleston), Karen Riechert (University of Tübingen), Lutz Sauerteig (University of Freiburg), Georg Schild (University of Bonn), James C. Van Hook (Trinity University).

Ever since the American and French revolutions signaled the emergence of democracy, nationalism, and market capitalism, debate over the claim to social resources—from food to health care, employment to education, housing to suffrage—has animated political life on each side of the Atlantic. To what extent are such benefits the birthright of all, and to what extent are privileges to be restricted by gender, class, ethnicity, race, or other social distinctions? By what principles (liberty, equality, rights of citizenship, universal rights, etc.) should popular access to social resources be expanded or curtailed? How these questions have been contested and resolved across the transatlantic world provided the focus for this stimulating three-day workshop. The workshop was divided into four sessions, each devoted to a different period.

The two opening papers went back to the revolutionary epoch of the late-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century—an age
when modern debate over the scope and meanings of democracy, equality, and citizenship began to take shape. Sam A. Mustafa examined the civic sensibilities of the mercantile bourgeoisies of the American port towns and German Hanseatic cities. As leading political actors in cities like New York and Hamburg, Baltimore and Bremen, and Philadelphia and Lübeck, such figures embraced an egalitarian republicanism, expressed through philanthropic enterprises. Here, Mustafa argued, was “capitalism with a strong social conscience, practiced remarkably similarly on both sides of the Atlantic.” In his review of African-American crusades for emancipation and racial equality (both within and beyond the abolitionist movement) Timothy Patrick McCarthy discussed how a nascent print culture served to popularize debate over race and equality. Although neither dealt centrally with contested claims to social resources, each paper illuminated ideological tensions that would come to frame such contestation: in particular that between the egalitarian thrust of bourgeois liberalism and the material inequalities of emerging capitalism, and that between egalitarianism and inequalities of race, gender, and ethnicity.

The following session surveyed issues of rights and resources as they arose from the late-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. The transformative epochs of war figured prominently here. Christopher Capozzola considered how World War I altered America’s ideological landscape. If wartime mobilization reflected (and redoubled) a coercive “culture of obligation,” it also inspired a current of opposition to conscription, political repression, and inequalities of race and sex. Although swiftly curtailed, such crusades foreshadowed a more socially inclusive, rights-oriented vision of citizenship. Notably, this budding culture of rights in America only began to address the distribution of social resources. The latter, however, was central to Karl Christian Führer’s study of housing confiscation in Germany during the eras of the two world wars. The modern German state has long assumed a role in the allocation of this vital resource—but never more dramatically than during and following World Wars I and II, as state authorities took to quartering the homeless in private homes. Although justified by the exigencies of war, this practice triggered “charged debates on the rights of those citizens who had a roof over their head and those who sought or needed one.”
Other contributions on this period explored the issue of social resources in comparative perspective. Looking at the distribution of “life’s most precious social resource”—food—Keith Allen asked why Berlin (and London) lagged behind Paris in the public provision of midday meals to children outside the home (a remarkable fact, Allen observed, given Germany’s oft-noted place on the leading edge of social entitlement programs). Detailing the emergence of this issue during a time (1890-1930) when growing numbers of women worked outside the home, Allen cited Germany’s stubborn adherence to traditional ideas of family life, “complete with a male breadwinner, female homemaker, and parental authority over children’s consumption.” Karen Riechert reviewed the impact of the newly founded International Labor Organization—“the first truly international legislative organization”—on the domestic politics of interwar France and America. She found that although the adoption of international labor standards were greeted with apprehension by the French and American governments, they left their stamp on public discourse over labor policy in each country.

The workshop next turned to the second half of the twentieth century. In her study of the complex postwar policy debates over the provision of old-age pensions, Sonya Michel detailed the efforts of the American business sector (as represented by the National Association of Manufacturers, or NAM) to tip the balance of support for social entitlements from the state to private employers. Motivated by a blend of free-market doctrine and strategies of management and investment, and bolstered by support from organized labor, NAM’s campaign for social security for the elderly hastened the coming of a largely privatized, individualized welfare structure—“an increasingly bifurcated, nonegalitarian, nonredistributive system that allowed the inequities of the market to pursue less privileged Americans even into their ‘golden years.’” If Michel was concerned with the limited reach of social welfare (even at its height) in the United States, Lutz Sauerteig was interested in the corrosion of Germany’s ambitious welfare state. Sauerteig highlighted shifts in debate over the German healthcare system, as its impressive postwar growth ran up against a range of obstacles—escalating costs, economic recession, and a rising pool of elderly patients, among others—starting in the 1970s. These pressures, he observed, sharpened the tension between imperatives of “solidarity” on the one hand
and those of “self-responsibility” and “cost containment” on the other. The mounting influence of these latter principles was manifested in controversial trends toward higher premiums, direct patient contributions, and shrinking of health benefits. Along a similar vein, James C. Van Hook analyzed the introduction of the West German “social market economy” by the neoliberal Ludwig Erhard during the late 1940s and 1950s. Challenging the social-democratic insistence on redistributive state action as the chief means to overcome inequality and want, the social market economy preferred measures (such as anticartel legislation) to ensure equal access to the market. Interestingly, each side invoked its own explanation for the rise of Nazism on behalf of its position—social democrats stressing the inherent inequities of capitalism and neoliberals emphasizing Germany’s progressive tradition of state intervention. Edward Larkey took the story of social resources onto unusual terrain with his study of regional government subsidization of popular music in postwar Germany, particularly during the culturally charged decades of the 1960s and 1970s.

The final set of papers addressed issues and models pertaining to the distribution of social resources in today’s transatlantic world. Georg Schild asked why no counterpart to the German system of Kindergeld (state child support) has taken root in the United States, notwithstanding that country’s outspoken devotion to “family values.” Thus, Schild took on a familiar problem: the comparative weakness of social welfare provisions in the United States. In the case of state policy on children, he held, the American position reflected a tendency to tie social welfare to need or prior contribution, and to weigh to the material cost of public entitlements more highly than the social benefits. Antonia Kuper outlined the comparative origins and trajectories of affirmative action. Focusing on the promotion of women and (in America) minorities in higher education, Kuper highlighted many contrasts in the German and American variants of affirmative action—in its legal and ideological foundations, its implementation, its scope, its reception, and its impact. Sascha Liebermann challenged the broad linkage, on both sides of the Atlantic, between one’s claim to social resources and his or her station as a wage-earner. As technological displacement renders human labor ever more marginal to the production of a nation’s wealth, he contended, job status becomes increasingly untenable as a basis for its just distribution. Thomas M. Adams placed the recent
incarnation of a European Union-vintage "European Social Model" (and the clash between neoliberal and social-democratic variants of that model) into deep historical perspective, going back even further than the papers that opened the workshop. Although recognizing novel aspects to the current model, Adams found much in present-day thinking that echoes traditions of social provision (including charity, public assistance, and market regulation) long predating the seminal state welfare initiatives of the late-nineteenth century.

Spanning a diversity of topics, settings, and periods, this workshop underscored just how varied and elastic has been the claim to social resources across the transatlantic world. Exchanges at the sessions were no less wide-ranging than the papers themselves. What have been the meanings of democracy, equality, and citizenship? What has been seen as the rightful scope of state intervention? In what respective measures has social entitlement been anchored in employment status or citizenship? What explains the relative weakness of material entitlements in America or the growing fragility of social welfare in Europe? How has the appearance of international standards shaped the resolution of such questions? These were among the salient points of inquiry throughout the proceedings. Without a doubt, the workshop did more to sharpen than to resolve these issues. Just as surely, it reconfirmed the power of historical and comparative perspectives to illuminate the issue of social resources, as it moves—alive as ever—into the new century.

Daniel Letwin

DOOMED TO FAIL? EAST GERMANY'S COLLAPSE REVISITED

Workshop at the GHI, October 11, 2000. Convener: Wilfried Maußbach (GHI). Participants: Christoph Buchheim (University of Mannheim); G. Jonathan Greenwald (Political Counselor, U.S. Embassy to the GDR, 1987-1990); Regine Hildebrandt (GDR Minister for Labor and Social Policy, April-August 1990); R. Gerald Livingston (GHI); Christoph Mauch (GHI); Isolde Stark (University of Halle-Wittenberg).
This workshop was the second in a series of events that combine scholarly presentations with the recollections of contemporaries; the first was the workshop with Freya von Moltke in June 2000 (see the fall 2000 issue of the Bulletin). Christoph Buchheim began the proceedings with a paper that was primarily concerned with the reasons behind the sudden collapse of the East German economy after unification. He ruled out two common explanations going back to the early postwar period, namely, an unfavorable starting position relative to West Germany and large-scale reparations exacted by the Soviet Union. In fact, as Buchheim explained, Nazi investment policy had favored the central regions of prewar Germany due to strategic considerations. Thus, during World War II, real industrial production actually increased slightly more in the territory later occupied by the Soviets than it did in the western zones of occupation. At first, even reparations payments did not reverse this situation. The recurring waves of dismantling up to 1948 did not reduce capital stock in the Soviet Zone to a point where it would have inhibited the recovery of industrial production. At the same time, Soviet demand for current deliveries actually stimulated industrial production in eastern Germany. Whereas central planning was good at mobilizing underutilized resources, it was unable to provide necessary incentives later on. Here lay the reason for the relative decline of East German productivity vis-à-vis that of West Germany, the latter surging ahead after the currency reform had liberalized prices and markets. Buchheim then demonstrated how the East German regime tried to establish the necessary incentives in the 1960s. However, activities of firms would be directed toward the achievement of economic goals set by the party. Thus economic reforms fell considerably short of the establishment of a market economy, not least because this would have ended the party’s economic control. The half-hearted reforms led to an economic crisis in 1970. As a consequence, the new leadership under Erich Honecker abrogated the reforms in favor of a new concept of “Unity of Economic and Social Policy.” Under this banner the GDR started a race with its more prosperous neighbor to the west in constructing a comprehensive welfare state, which proved to be an enormous burden on the state budget. Ironically, imitating consumption patterns of the west did not mitigate criticism; rather, it led to ever rising popular expectations. In fact, the economic policy of the Honecker era may well have accelerated the downfall of the
GDR. Buchheim concluded that the deeper reason for the GDR’s economic collapse lay in the systemic inability of the party to withdraw from directing the economy. In that sense “the East German socialist economy was doomed to become a frustrated experiment from the very beginning.”

In the second presentation Isolde Stark introduced the audience to the economic and social ideas of the East German civil rights movement in 1989-90. Although the first proclamations emphasized the necessity for reform within the framework of the GDR’s constitution, they also contained demands for different forms of economic ownership that threatened the power of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) over what was termed “national property” but had in fact been expropriated by the party. The sudden demise of the regime forced the revolutionaries to rush into action, and yet they had not been able to develop any long-term economic plans. Stark stressed that the question of control and disposition of national property was the central economic issue for the civil rights movement during this period. The movement protested the decision of the Council of Ministers of the GDR in December 1989 to transfer the rights of ownership of national property to the chairmen of the large industrial combines, who also belonged to the highest levels of the SED nomenclatura. When the Council of Ministers reaffirmed its decision, these chairmen felt free to fill management positions with former party functionaries and officials of the infamous Ministry for State Security (Stasi). Realizing that unification was increasingly probable and that the concept of national property did not exist in the West German Basic Law, one of the new political parties, Demokratie Jetzt (Democratic Now), proposed a trust organization (later called the Treuhandanstalt) to be charged with the privatization of East German industry. Although the new government under Hans Modrow adopted this proposal, it was implemented in quite a different form than envisioned by the revolutionaries. Aspects of the plan were socially inequitable, and the door was opened for the party nomenklatura to infiltrate the trustee organization, thereby establishing links between the old and new chief executives. The civil rights movement was not only critical of actions taken by successive GDR governments but also of West German plans for a rapid currency union. In a letter to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the Neues Forum (New Forum) warned that a premature currency union would de-
stroy whole branches of the GDR’s economy, lead to tremendous unemployment, and would cause further migration from eastern to western Germany. This position, however, no longer was shared by the majority of East Germans who expected the Bonn government to resolve their economic problems. In that sense, the East German civil rights movement suffered a tragic fate. As Stark put it: “At the beginning, the danger existed that the repression machine of the SED would silence them. In the end . . . they had attained freedom of speech, but the people did not want to hear them.”

In the second half of the workshop Regine Hildebrandt spoke about her experiences in the GDR, responding to questions posed by Gerald Livingston and Jonathan Greenwald as well as by the audience. Hildebrandt’s recollections included a fascinating account of the building of the Berlin Wall right next to her home on the Bernauer Straße, lively depictions of what it was like to live in the GDR, and a vivid portrayal of the problems she faced as the GDR’s last minister for labor and social policy under Minister President Lothar de Maizière. The following discussion touched on the law regulating access to files of the Stasi (Stasi-Unterlagengesetz), on the leeway the last GDR government had vis-à-vis its western negotiating partner, and on the importance of the Lutheran Church in the GDR as a shelter for oppositional groups, among other things. Hildebrandt’s remark that she discovered positive aspects of the GDR only after its demise met with objections from the previous speakers and triggered a general discussion that reflected the different perspectives that still exist on the history of the GDR and the process of unification.

Wilfried Mausbach


Panel at the annual meeting of the German Studies Association in Houston, Texas, October 5-7, 2000. Chair: Hans-Jürgen Schröder (University of Gießen). Presenters: Andreas W. Daum (GHI), Maria
Mitchell (Franklin & Marshall College), and Wilfried Mausbach (GHI). Commentator: Thomas A. Schwartz (Vanderbilt University).

Since the 1950s it has become common to describe the political relationship between Western Europe, particularly Germany, and the United States as an “Atlantic community.” This political, military, and security community—so the arrangement goes—is not only based on common values and a common understanding of democracy but also bound together by similar pragmatic national interests. The rhetoric of an Atlantic community continues to permeate the statements of the political elite in the United States and Western Europe. As a result of the growing self-assurance of democratic Europe, which increasingly defines its political agenda independent of that of the United States, this community faces important challenges. In fact, hidden by the popularization and ubiquitous use of the term community, the inner fabric of this supposed relationship has always been the focus of critical questions. Closer analysis reveals that its content has never been static; rather, the term has always been the result of complicated, sometimes even contradictory processes and complex international as well as national interactions in the post-World War II era.

The purpose of this panel was to explore the processes that have contributed to the formation of specific transatlantic identities and perceptions between 1950 and 1970. The panelists emphasized that the creation of an Atlantic identity, which has linked the United States and Western Europe, was a contested process. It never unfolded in a linear fashion and always involved a multiplicity of factors and influences, ranging from state and party interests, covert actions, and intellectual circles to mass media and popular consent. Moreover, all these factors and influences were framed by and imbued with specific Cold War assumptions. The panelists focused on those ideological and political efforts in the United States and Germany that contributed to the building of the Western Alliance, defining a Western democratic identity, and integrating Germany into an American-led community of economic and military powers. This approach concentrated on how Germany was drawn into the discourse of American culture after World War II and, vice versa, how U.S. policies were received and transformed in German debates. The panelists thereby not only addressed obvious successes resulting from
these processes. They also discussed the difficulties within the German political discourse and the relevant political institutions in creating a Western identity; and they explored the problems inherent in efforts to promote an Atlantic community.

In her paper “Das Abendland, Anti-Materialism, and Ideological Community: The Federal Republic and the United States” Maria Mitchell focused on the ideology and rhetoric of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), West Germany’s leading party from 1949 until 1969. Under the leadership of the CDU the Federal Republic established itself as a loyal American ally and the linchpin of the Western Alliance. Although the CDU stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States both militarily and politically, its founding ideology nonetheless posed significant rhetorical challenges to that alliance. In particular, the United States stood outside the CDU’s professed community of defense, namely, the antimaterialist Abendland, or Occident. In combining political Christianity with the concept of antimaterialism CDU leaders in the late 1940s outlined both an important base of confessional commonality and an explicit political agenda. Whereas both confessions embraced materialism as their fundamental referent, Protestants and Catholics in the Catholic-dominated party nevertheless construed its connotations very differently. Although Protestants generally used materialism to convey simply secularism, materialism for CDU Catholics implied all that they believed German Catholics had historically rejected—secularism certainly, but also capitalism, liberalism, militarism, nationalism, Protestantism, Prussianism, and socialism.

Reliance on the notion of Abendland struck a dissonant chord not only in CDU interconfessional relations but also in international relations. For many, especially Protestant conservatives, the Abendland conveyed a clear sense of cultural superiority over all non-Western Europeans, including Americans. Alliance with the United States was regarded as a necessary sacrifice to protect Western Europe from communism, but abendländische culture was to be protected at all costs from the American way of life. Indeed, because the party’s interpretation of the Abendland rendered all others as materialistic and antithetical to Christian democracy, the United States’s place in early Christian Democratic ideology was necessarily ambiguous. Whereas this discomfort existed on the ideological and cultural—not policy—level, it nonetheless troubled some within
the _abendländische_ camp enough to prompt them to address the issue directly. Beginning in the late 1940s the _Abendland_ underwent a wide-ranging conceptual reconfiguration, in part as an attempt to readjust its relationship to the United States.

Despite its unparalleled prominence in CDU discourse in the 1940s, the _Abendland_ rhetoric faded throughout the 1950s in both the party and the national discourse. Increasingly, CDU politicians adopted a new rhetoric of antitotalitarianism, the West, and the Free World—language far less distinctly German Catholic. As the CDU began to distance itself from the concept of the _Abendland_, however, materialism returned in a new guise in the mid-1950s with the emergence of West Germany’s consumer society. But from the Christian conservative point of view all materialist ideologies possessed the same fundamental flaw: They were anti-Christian. Materialism emerged as a significant theme, particularly for Konrad Adenauer, who repeatedly raised the issue in his discussions with other party leaders. What does not appear in this rhetoric is an explicit linkage of materialism to the United States. Although leading Christian Democrats certainly expressed reservations about American society, their criticisms tended to be oblique. Although the tensions between CDU ideology and the cultural identity of the United States were never resolved, they were effectively side-stepped. Ideology did not threaten strategic alliance, and in the competition between Cold War politics and organic Christian Democratic ideology, ideology ultimately gave way to pragmatism.

The question of how different national traditions and distinct cultural identities could both coexist and merge in the creation of a Cold War German-American community also stood in the center of Andreas Daum’s presentation. He chose an anticomunist slogan from 1950 as the title of his paper: “‘To Rally to the Defense’: Berlin’s Freedom Bell, the Crusade for Freedom, and the Formation of a Cold War Community, 1950–1965.” The Freedom Bell was dedicated in West Berlin’s city hall, the Schöneberger Rathaus, on October 24, 1950. This dedication was embedded in a festive celebration of German-American friendship, with hundreds of thousands of Berliners crowding the square in front of the city hall. The festivities were also attended by high-ranking officials from Germany and the United States, including Chancellor Adenauer, Mayor Ernst Reuter, High Commissioner John McCloy, and General Lucius D. Clay, the former
military governor in Germany and chief planner of the Berlin Airlift of 1948-9. Until the early 1960s the Freedom Bell remained one of West Berlin’s most important political symbols and was heavily referenced all over the world as an icon of anticommunist propaganda. A half-century after its inauguration and after the end of the Cold War the Freedom Bell was all but forgotten (although its toll could once more be heard on the night of German unification, October 3, 1990). For many in the post-Cold War era this symbol of German-American solidarity and of Berlin’s struggle for freedom represents nothing more than a dusty relic of a vanished epoch. However, this dismissal neglects the fact that the Freedom Bell indeed embodies, in a unique way, the peculiar interaction of politics, culture, and ideology that marked the creation of the German-American community in the 1950s. Its story illustrates many of the challenges and opportunities but also the difficulties inherent in this process. In particular, the bell’s history demonstrates that Cold War symbols were not static in themselves but rather underwent subtle changes in terms of their ideological message and several different political objectives at different times.

The idea for the Freedom Bell originated in the activities of the National Committee for a Free Europe, which was founded in New York City in May 1949. Supporters initiated a spectacular fundraising campaign in the United States that was to be carried out with the help of a symbol that could appeal to patriotic Americans and to those still struggling for freedom: a bell, following the model of the American Liberty Bell enshrined in Philadelphia. A “Freedom Bell” was now designed for West Berlin, the city that more than any other place in the world symbolized the Cold War interface between freedom and totalitarianism.

Analogous to the original Liberty Bell, the National Committee ordered the casting of this new Freedom Bell in England. From there it was transported not directly to Berlin but via the United States. From New York the Freedom Bell began a six-week tour across the continent, to the Pacific Coast and back, visiting twenty-six cities. Public approval, undoubtedly spontaneous, was reinforced by a well-planned orchestration of the media and was guided by a strategic concept that covered all regions of the United States and involved the active work of numerous representatives of political parties, the private sector, and nonpolitical institutions. This concept was an al-
most natural part of the idea of “psychological warfare,” which had gained particular importance in 1950 following the National Security Council’s famous recommendation number sixty-eight (NSC 68).

During its tour through the United States the Freedom Bell appealed mainly to American traditions rather than highlighted the plight of Berlin. Using reminiscences of the American struggle for independence, allusions to the United States’ national history, and more than anything else—constant reminders of the war that American soldiers were fighting to secure the freedom of South Korea, the Freedom Bell was successfuly Americanized. Although the American aura of the Freedom Bell would never vanish, the bell took on new symbolic meaning when it finally arrived in Berlin in October 1950. The speakers transformed the bell into a symbol of German-American solidarity and the heroism of the Berliners.

The changing history of Berlin’s Freedom Bell demonstrates that political mobilization during the Cold War relied heavily on the use of symbols that could liberate emotions and allude to historical traditions while embodying a dichotomous vision of the world, on both the domestic and the international fronts. As such, Berlin’s famous bell not only embodied a peculiar “Cold War Freedom” (Eric Foner); its initial resonance and later popularization are also indicative of the convergence of voluntary support with a well-orchestrated mobilization of the political, private, and public spheres that transformed material symbols into public icons. As such, the Freedom Bell is a mirror of the theatricalization of politics during the Cold War as well as a reflection of the role that the politics of memory can play in creating a sense of transnational community.

The interplay of politics, ideology, and propaganda also stood at the center of Wilfried Mausbach’s paper, titled “‘A Test Case for the Free World’: America’s Vietnam Informational Policies in West Germany.” Mausbach delineated the various strands of cultural diplomacy and informational policies that have gained prominence in the U.S. government since the 1940s. Little attention, however, has been paid by historians to the role of informational policies as a “soft” means of political offensive during the mid-1960s, when the United States came under increasing pressure, both on the domestic scene and abroad, for its military and political stance in the Vietnam conflict. As early as 1961 the State Department Planning Staff called for an “educative diplomacy” aimed at bringing “the free world na-
tions to the point where they will stand steadily with us on the basic issues.” This strategy held particularly true for Western Europe, where America’s allies early on began grumbling about the United States’s involvement in Vietnam. Mausbach focused on Germany as a test case for the opportunities to influence public opinion in favor of American foreign policy.

Mausbach emphasized that the United States offered important ideological tools for a renewed political identity in postwar German society — such as the concept of the “free world” and the free “West” — but had to merge these offerings with existing German traditions. When the war in Vietnam intensified, the United States went to great lengths to turn Vietnam into a symbol of the will of the free world to resist totalitarianism, parallel to the case of Cold War Berlin. The United States Information Service (USIS) posts in Germany began to organize events and lectures dealing with Vietnam in the local American Information Centers (Amerikahäuser), a campaign that reached its zenith in 1966 with an average of one event on Vietnam per day being organized somewhere in West Germany.

Nineteen sixty-seven marked a decisive break in the West Germans’ attitude toward the Vietnam War. Whereas the media had previously portrayed the American efforts in Asia as necessary to secure freedom, criticism now began to mount — obviously, the Berlin-Vietnam analogy no longer worked. But why did American informational policies lose their appeal and eventually fail? Undoubtedly, the dynamics of modern television technology, which transported the war into the living rooms of West Germans and shook the viewers’ emotions, surpassed any official efforts to control the flow of images from Vietnam. The disintegration of German support was further accelerated by the massive attack launched by the so-called nonparliamentary opposition (außerparlamentarische Opposition) against American efforts to rally Europeans behind a dubious political regime in South Vietnam. From now on, Germany’s own past and the horrors of the Nazi regime moved to the forefront of its ongoing effort: to define a new postwar identity. Vietnam ceased being a test case for the defense of the free world. Rather, in the minds of many who protested U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the West German parliamentary system became a screen onto which the dangers of the past were vividly projected.
Comments by Thomas A. Schwartz and the discussion following the presentations underscored once more that questions of American patriotism and U.S. foreign policy after World War II cannot be separated from the development of West Germany’s political life. Instead, both sides are intertwined in a way that make politics, culture, and ideology factors that mutually influence and inform each other.

Andreas W. Daum

BUSINESS AS USUAL? CONCEPTIONS OF GERMAN-AMERICAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS UNDER HITLER


Recent class-action lawsuits have made American business dealings with the Third Reich front-page news. Sensational “disclosures” emerged two years ago: American auto manufacturers in Germany collaborated in the use of slave labor to build the Nazi war machine, and American banks were among those plundering Hitler’s Jewish victims. With legions of attorneys deployed to establish the cost of restitution, historians also began to re-examine how Nazi rule shaped German-American economic relations. Whereas earlier historiographical debates centered on whether “big business” financed Hitler’s rise to power, many now question whether Nazi society nurtured transnational capitalism. Informed with the perspective of contemporary “globalization,” might not the presence of multinational corporations in the Third Reich be deemed “business as usual”?

The GHI sponsored a panel considering such questions at the 24th Annual Meeting of the German Studies Association held in Houston. The papers presented three case studies that spotlighted different conceptions of “normal” German-American business rela-
tions during the 1930s and 1940s. The first explained how small German entrepreneurs helped make Coca-Cola, that “most American” of consumer products, a “genuine German product” within the Third Reich. The second paper revisited the infighting among the Nazi agencies that wanted to control American business interests caught in Germany during World War II. The third examined how American policy makers thought reformed economic relations could help secure peace once Nazi Germany was defeated. Each paper engaged with distinct historiographical debates, however as a group they illuminated the need for further study of the development of transnational capitalism within Nazi society. Commentary to all three papers was provided by Mary Nolan (read by Waltraud Schelkle).

In the first offering, “Coca-Colonization in the Third Reich? The Americanization of Germany and the Germanization of Coca-Cola,” Jeff Schutts recounted how the Atlanta-based Coca-Ceola Company succeeded in establishing its soft drink as a Volksgetränk (people’s beverage) palatable to the increasingly chauvinistic tastes of Nazi Germany. Rather than considering this as an example of one-dimensional Americanization, Schutts argued that Coca-Cola was itself “Germanized” within the Third Reich. His presentation highlighted how the company’s system of franchised independent bottlers was adapted to the economic and cultural conditions of interwar Germany. As a consumer product produced and distributed by local German entrepreneurs, Coca-Cola was integrated into the indigenous beverage industry and German culture. Effectively transcending national and ideological borders, the Coca-Cola Company was thus positioned to “refresh” both German and American soldiers during World War II. Questions after the presentations encouraged Schutts to expand upon his case study, while Nolan cautioned that Coca-Cola Company records required a more critical reading.

Philipp Gassert’s paper, “Keine rein geschäftliche Angelegenheit: Die amerikanischen Investitionen im Dritten Reich,” also discussed American corporations in Nazi Germany. His focus, however, was not on the firms themselves, but on how Nazi authorities handled these potential “Trojan horses” within their economy. Whereas much of the current media controversy has emphasized the collaboration between American companies and Hitler’s regime, Gassert’s presentation highlighted the Third Reich’s bureaucratic infighting to
suggest that American subsidiaries led a precarious existence under Nazi rule. Threatened with outright seizure, American-owned firms were formally held in escrow as “enemy property” while their German managers accommodated production to fit Germany’s wartime needs. Gassert acknowledged that this situation made the companies exceptionally profitable but argued that American firms were “prisoners of their large investments,” unable to pull out of prewar Nazi Germany and then unable to exercise control over their affiliates once the United States had declared war. In her commentary Mary Nolan took issue with Gassert’s framing of the issue, questioning whether his narrative overstated the “apolitical” and marginalized nature of American businessmen. She noted: “Both sides accommodated themselves to a less-than-optimal situation during the war on the assumption that this would position them more advantageously for the postwar economy; however, they envisioned that...[j]ockeying for advantageous position in the medium run is a form of business as usual, just as adjusting to the terms of authoritarian regimes was and is a key to business survival and success.”

The final presentation shifted the panel’s focus from Nazi to American policy makers. In her paper, “The Morgenthau Plan Reconsidered: On the Limitations of American Prescriptions for German Economic Disarmament,” Regina Grämer recontextualized Henry Morgenthau’s discredited 1944 proposal to deindustrialize postwar Germany. Complementing recent historiography that emphasizes the treasury secretary’s success in establishing a formal link between economic controls and policies to curb the potential of future German militarism, Grämer argued that “Morgenthau’s intervention was not intended so much to harm Germany as to rejuvenate a faltering New Deal debate on reforming Germany’s industrial structure in specific, and on the role of economic disarmament in general.” Highlighting links between New Deal antimonopoly initiatives and American postwar planning for Germany, Grämer’s presentation reviewed how different U.S. government agencies embraced contradictory interpretations of the complicity of big business with Nazi aggression and the existence of “an increasingly supranational as well as global cartel threat.” In her commentary Nolan noted that Grämer “adds a vital structural dimension to the question of business as usual” and urged her to investigate further how
American policy makers were shaped by their own involvement with transnational capitalism.

Rather than offering a cohesive conception of "business as usual," these three studies illuminated the need to further contextualize German-American economic relations under Hitler. In Nolan's words,

If these papers are individually stimulating, they are collectively frustrating. Gassert's Nazi officials and American business leaders, Schutts' Coca-Cola executives on both sides of the Atlantic, and Gramer's American policy makers and politicians do not speak to the same sets of concerns.... Each paper suggests how difficult it was for contemporaries to determine what did or should constitute business as usual. Until that issue is posed and researched more directly... we can only hint at the competing conceptions circulating and the support they received.

Indeed, with each case study pulling at different historical threads, the panel was not able, or expected, to untangle all the controversies surrounding American business relations with the Third Reich. Instead, the panelists demonstrated that new and diverse perspectives must be developed further before a comprehensive appraisal of the Third Reich's transnational economic relations is possible. Until then the question remains open: What is the usual business of business as usual?

Jeff R. Schutts

**German-Jewish Identities in America: From the Civil War to the Present**

Conference at the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, October 26-28, 2000. Co-Sponsored by the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies and the George L. Mosse & Laurence A. Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies, as well as the Department of German and the Center for Humanities, both of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Con-
A century ago the major issue for those who wrote about the history of German Jews in America was the identification of ancestors, the tracing of family roots overseas, and focus on individual biographies. During the course of the twentieth century, when scholars discussed social issues of immigration, they refined and redefined the older concepts of the “melting pot” and “automatic assimilation.” The original models were replaced by more sophisticated ones that concentrated on political, social, and cultural factors, especially on “ethnic identity” and “ethnicization.” Since then, studies on regions, cities, and neighborhoods have provided historians with insights into the complex mechanisms that made it possible for immigrants to shape their fate, transform their social environment, retain some autonomy, and define and stabilize their identity. This conference on “German-Jewish Identities in America” profited from such trends in research. Participants focused on the creation, recreation, and negotiation of a complex set of interlocking linguistic, national, regional, religious, and ethnic identities. Although the conference had a historical focus it benefited from insights gained by immigrant, ethnic, and urban studies. Many papers focused on regions and time periods that have rarely been studied in the past.

Henry Feingold gave the keynote lecture on “German Jewry and the American-Jewish Synthesis.” Feingold argued that American-Jewish history has been much misunderstood. Contrary to accepted belief, there was much more continuity and convergence between German Jews who had emigrated earlier and Eastern European Jews...
who followed later. Feingold pointed out that the commonalities and tensions between German and Eastern Jews show up in the humor sparked by meetings between the two. German Jews were the first to arrive and therefore the first to confront the challenges of the American milieu, which posed a threat to the Jewish ethos. The German Jews contributed to the permissiveness and liberal political culture of twentieth-century America. Eastern European Jews, who arrived at the turn of the century, adopted and redefined the German Jews’ path, leading toward further secularization of Jewish culture. It was only after the Holocaust that the terms of the German-Jewish interaction with America came to be questioned. Feingold pondered the fact that the Holocaust left American Jewry with a demographic cultural gap that has not been filled. In the nineteenth century, Jews from central Europe contributed greatly to America’s culture but “no one knows,” as Feingold concluded, “where the next biological infusion is going to come from.”

In her paper on Jews and Gentiles in the American South, Leah Hagedorn described the emergence of a complex type of anti-Semitism that had its roots in localism and in the Confederacy’s traditional values (in some cases misconceptions) of duty and social order. During the course of the Civil War the term Jewish became increasingly associated with parasitic economic activity and with itinerancy (the Yankee peddler and the Wandering Jew). Newspapers emphasized the otherness of Jews and questioned their loyalty, and by the spring of 1863 Southern attitudes toward Jews took on an even more threatening character when Southern women raided Jewish stores in a Georgia town. Most Jews thought it best to remain silent. By the end of the war, however, the meaning of the word “Jew” had changed so much that Southern Jews avoided it as a self-reference for the remainder of the nineteenth century.

The focus of Anke Ortlepp’s paper was Jewish charities in the Midwest. Ortlepp studied the mission and activities of societies such as widow’s and orphan associations as well as relief societies, founded in the second half of the nineteenth century with the goal of providing financial and material help to Jewish newcomers in Milwaukee. She emphasized that, by the turn of the century, these societies grew from the small voluntary groups of the mid nineteenth century into larger agencies with professional fundraising methods and a college-educated staff of social workers. While retaining their
unique religious identity these charities played a major role in the integration of a steady stream of Jewish immigrants from Germany and other European countries. Ortépp’s study was complemented by Karla Goldman’s comparative paper on “Patterns of Philanthropy” wherein the activities of nineteenth-century women’s societies in both Germany and the United States was discussed.

In his study on German-speaking Jews in the Arizona of the second half of the nineteenth century, Gerhard Grytz argued that German-Jewish merchants and German-Gentile artisans were not as divided as had been assumed. Together, they formed a group of Germans—though only a three percent minority—that enhanced the early socioeconomic development of the Arizona Territory with their skills and economic ability. Along with other ethnic groups the “Arizona Germans” played a substantial part in creating a unique regional form of “Creole Culture” in the American Southwest that was neither the product of a Turnian confrontation between the individual and the frontier environment nor the result of assimilation to “dominant” Anglo-American values.

In his paper on German Jews in Chicago, Tobias Brinkmann traced the history of Jewish community building between 1847 and 1923 in America’s fastest growing city. Brinkmann contended that after 1847 Jews in the United States organized their communities increasingly around ethnic rather than religious terms. Jewish immigrants lamented the loss of close-knit Jewish Gemeinschaft and praised, sometimes in the same breath, the unique possibilities in the United States to form new Jewish communities. Brinkmann’s paper analyzed both the “centrifugal” and “centripetal” forces that influenced community-building in the city. Jewish immigrants had close relationships with other German-speaking immigrants and some of them helped organize the short-lived German “umbrella” community. But the Jewish community was never a part of the German one. Brinkmann questioned the bipolar model of interpreting modern Jewish history. He asserted that “assimilation” led not to the disintegration but rather to the transformation of Jewish “community” into what Arthur Ruppin characterized as a “new milieu.”

Cornelia Wilhelm analyzed what constituted the first and largest national American-Jewish organization in the nineteenth century in her paper on the Independent Order of B’nai B’rith. This organization provided a platform for socializing and support as well
as a network of communication for American Jews. Created in 1843 as a fraternal lodge, B’nai B’rith reached out to people from different backgrounds of race, class, and ethnicity, while at the same time preaching practical Judaism and a message of universalism. Wilhelm interpreted B’nai B’rith as a modern organization that helped replace old-fashioned ideas of community by establishing a new corporate framework and an identity that combined elements of Jewish with American symbolism and rhetoric. Thus, B’nai B’rith became the vehicle for a new self-awareness and civic Jewish identity and contributed to the establishment of a new brand of civil American-Jewish religion.

In a paper titled “Brahmin Philanthropists” Derek Penslar assessed the leadership style, operating methods, and goals of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), particularly in the interwar period. The JDC was the most powerful Jewish philanthropy in the United States and the second wealthiest in the world (a close second to the London-based Jewish Colonization Association). Penslar argued that, although the JDC’s hierarchical managerial style caused friction with American Zionists, the goals of the JDC and American Zionism overlapped considerably. His examination of the JDC’s activities in Palestine and Eastern Europe revealed that the JDC was viscerally linked to the Zionist project.

German scientific literature, and the theme of America as the place of Jewish regeneration—both physical and spiritual—was the topic of a paper by Mitchell Hart. Whereas American-Jewish social scientists largely accepted the standard contemporary image of the modern Jew as “degenerate,” they sought to prove through science that the American environment would have a “civilizing” effect on the Jewish body and mind. Jews would literally thrive in New York and elsewhere, if allowed to enjoy the political and social freedoms associated with the New World. Hart focused on the reciprocity between scientific studies produced in Germany and the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century, the role of German science in shaping a particular kind of American-Jewish social science, and the politics that drove it. Hart’s paper was followed by Bobbie Malone’s a presentation on the role of Russians and of the Reform movement within the framework of Southern Zionism in 1890s New Orleans.

The papers by Harley Erdman and Thomas Kovach focused on literary and cultural studies. Kovach analyzed a theater play, and
Erdman discussed the disproportionately large contributions of Jews to the growth and development of modern American theater and show business. He demonstrated that the Jewish presence in American show business has developed a corollary narrative: its impact and influence was largely Eastern European in origin, tied to the massive wave of Jewish immigration to the United States between 1881 and 1917. Although this understanding might make sense at first glance—numerous charismatic performers came from Eastern Europe—Erdman argued that this interpretation overlooks the historical contributions of the German-Jewish community. He showed that from the mid-1890s, Germans Jews had already become a central force in theater-related enterprises, including songwriting and song publishing. Around the turn of the century a generation of German Jews transformed the American theatrical landscape into what we today call "Broadway" or "show business." Erdmann concluded that "Germans" were vital to the theatrical life of late nineteenth-century New York, with their ethnic theaters, variety halls, and cabaret-like beer gardens. They had a broader impact on the Jewish cultural life of twentieth-century America than has usually been acknowledged.

Thomas Kovach evaluated Alfred Uhry’s Tony Award-winning play "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" in light of historical research on Jewish life in the South. The play mirrors the tensions between older German-Jewish families in the South and more recent arrivals. Kovach argued that the tensions between German Jews and Ostjuden replicated the tensions between eastern and western Jews within Germany and Austria during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In a paper that triggered a lively discussion Monika Schmid presented the findings of her study on language use and language loss of Jews who left Germany during the Nazi regime and afterward lived in England or the United States. Schmid’s research was based on interviews with Düsseldorf-born emigrants who were between six and thirty years old when they left Germany. Her work showed that the breakdown of identity (whether Jewish or German) suffered by some immigrants was so deep that it led to the complete adoption of British or American English as their own language. Schmid linked the loss of the first language to life-threatening experiences, although the breakdown of a language system after sixty years of non-use or restricted use, was to a large degree determined by personal attitudes.
Among the highlights of the conference were two film screenings by independent filmmakers Ruth Goldman of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Manfred Kirchheimer of New York. Goldman presented her documentary in progress “And These Were Jews,” a portrait of the highly assimilated, upper-class German-American Jewish Community of Cincinnati in the interwar period. On the last night of the conference Kirchheimer showed his film “We Were So Beloved: The German-Jews of Washington Heights, New York,” a much-acclaimed documentary that examines the experiences of German-Jewish refugees who fled their country in the 1930s and settled in the Washington Heights area of New York City. Having been assimilated in Germany, the refugees found themselves suddenly living exclusively among Jews for the first time and were called “more German than Jewish.” The film clearly showed that these people who had lost so much became secure and patriotic Americans. In frank conversation they discussed the trauma of leaving their homeland, the difficulties of adapting to life in the United States, the relief and remorse of having escaped the Holocaust, and the moral and emotional implications of that survival.

In sum, the conference, which was attended by a large audience of students, scholars, and the interested public, shed new light on the confluence of Jewish, German, and American cultures, and added immeasurably to our understanding of how America’s open and relentlessly secularizing society transformed both traditional Jewish existence and America’s self-understanding—a process that is still very much underway.

Christof Mauch

MAGIC MEETS ENLIGHTENMENT? NEW TYPES OF DISCOURSE IN AMERICA AND GERMANY IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Workshop at the GHI, October 31–November 1, 2000. Conveners: Johannes Dillinger (GHI/Georgetown University) and Sabine
Doering-Manteuffel (University of Augsburg). Participants: Stephan Bachter (University of Augsburg), David Copeland (Emory College), Johanna Geyer-Kordesch (Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, Glasgow), Andreas Hartmann (University of Münster), Christof Mauch (GHI), Heinz Schott (University of Bonn), Erik R. Seeman (State University of New York at Buffalo), Carole Silver (Yeshiva University, New York).

The workshop, which took place on Halloween and All Saints’ Day, addressed a topic that, until then, had never been on the GHI’s agenda: the belief in magic. Cultural historians in the United States and Germany have focused primarily on early modern witch trials. By contrast, the workshop explored the much-neglected topic of magic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This effort represented the first interdisciplinary discussion among physicians, literary scholars, folklorists, and historians on the ways in which concepts of magic survived in the age of the Enlightenment.

In her keynote speech Johanna Geyer-Kordesch critically re-examined and questioned our concepts of nature, the “supernatural,” science, and magic. Using the basic problems of illness and healing as examples, Geyer-Kordesch explored the development of the scientific definition of nature in the eighteenth century. Mechanomorphic concepts of nature and the dualism of body and mind that have come to dominate medicine were presented as just a small fraction of a broader, more complex discourse. Holistic concepts that emphasized the unity of body and soul and cyclical rather than linear developments competed with rationalistic notions. In this context magic was a way of speaking about nature through the use of symbols and rituals. It did not aim at mastering nature. Although resembling the older “natural magic” in some respects, these alternative concepts cannot be denounced as mere relics of an unenlightened past. Rather, they demonstrate the complexity and heterogeneity of the debate about nature, science, and magic that informed the eighteenth century.

In the first panel on “Contacts and Contrasts: Magic, Folklore, and the Sciences” some of the new discourses brought about by the intermingling of traditional and enlightened thinking were investigated. The older notion of a decline in magic’s significance was shown to be misleading: Magical thinking did not vanish when ra-
tionalism and Cartesianism became the dominating discourses. Rather, it took new forms that enabled it not only to adapt to new ideas and new social environments but also to actively influence them. Magic was not just a renitent die-hardism; in a way, magic accompanied the Enlightenment and even commented on it. Heinz Schott addressed these "dialectics of enlightenment" (Horkheimer/Adorno) in his talk about magical elements in eighteenth-century medicine. In early modern times natural magic (magia naturalis) was essential to Paracelsian medicine, which was based on natural philosophy, alchemy, and astrology. But even after the Cartesian shift presented the human body as analogous to a machine, the tradition of magical medicine continued and was expressed in new concepts. The study of electricity and its medical applications is the most prominent example. With its fascinating imagery of lightning and sparks, electricity impressively symbolized the zeitgeist of the Enlightenment. Electricity seemed to reveal the miraculous powers hidden in nature. The most important magical byway of electrical research was Franz Anton Mesmer's (1734-1815) "animal magnetism," later called "mesmerism." Mesmer combined the medical application of electricity with that of steel magnets and created a so-called magnetic cure. Mesmer became a famous healer in Paris in the years leading up to the French Revolution. Although he deliberately drew on the older imagery of the wizard or the miracle worker Mesmer himself was an enlightened doctor who rejected the mysticism and spiritual beliefs of his time. Nevertheless, his ideas on animal magnetism inspired many doctors and scientists in the early nineteenth century who were influenced by the natural philosophy of romanticism and admired the psychic phenomena of mesmerism as a revelation of the divine in nature. Schott illustrated his point with Johann Friedrich von Schiller's much-neglected fragment Geisterscher (1787-8), wherein electrical tricks play an important role.

Erik Seeman presented the emergence of enlightened "civil religion" in eighteenth-century New England as a slow and often conflicted process. Lay piety not only sustained but also developed and adapted elements of ecclesiastical tradition that the Enlightenment had discredited in educated circles, especially among the learned clergy. A range of ideas—magic and early Reformation providentialism—persisted among New England's uneducated majority. Elite response to these two belief systems varied enormously: Magic con-
continued to be the target of elite condemnation, whereas providentialism, only more recently unfashionable, was quietly ignored by ministers and educated laypeople. For the most part magical practice became confined to society’s lower orders during the eighteenth century. This does not mean that the belief in magic lost its relevance for society. As a matter of fact, magic was the basis of a number of power struggles between the clergy and laypeople throughout the century. Ordinary people’s attention to magic in the eighteenth century reveals not their powerlessness but rather their ability to shape religious culture.

Many New Englanders persisted in interpreting extraordinary meteorological and astrological events as signs of heavenly displeasure. This providential worldview had been an important part of Anglo-American learned culture in the seventeenth century. But by the eighteenth century the Enlightenment view of the universe as rationally ordered made searching for religious meaning in comets and earthquakes decidedly unfashionable among the educated. Seeman demonstrated that, on the popular level, providentialism even helped to define the significance of the new enlightened state formed in 1776. He analyzed the diary of an uneducated farm woman who interpreted the war against the British as the fight of David against the Philistines. The idea that God granted the revolutionaries’ victory thus based American exceptionalism on traditional lay piety. Secularized millenarianism was integrated into American political thought.

Occult elements in climatology were the topic of Andreas Hartmann’s talk. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the notion that ethnic groups shared common cognitive and emotional as well as common health dispositions was widely accepted. “National character” and “ethnopathology” were considered to be influenced by climate. Temperature and moisture were supposed to affect the humors of the human body, which allegedly informed the behavior and well-being of individuals and peoples alike. In the writings of pre-Enlightenment thinkers such as Athanasius Kircher (1601-80) this idea of climatology mirrored the clear-cut and static magical worldview of correlations and “sympathy.” Climate theory was informed by the pattern of macrocosm and microcosm. While accepting the idea that the climate influenced peoples, Herder emphasized the nation itself, its life and experiences as an interpretive category for history and politics.
Carole Silver addressed what seems to be a significant lack of magical folklore in America. In colonial America and the United States, a belief in witches and ghosts, both figures regarded as sanctified by the Bible, was retained, as was some faith in the existence of vampires and, among Irish-Americans, of Banshees. However, according to many folklorists, the belief in fairies, the spirits of nature and rural households so prominent in the traditional popular culture of Germany, Britain, and most of Europe, never reached the United States. Silver disputed this notion: Vestiges of fairy beliefs can be found in America even though they are relatively sparse. There are several reasons for the paucity of fairy lore in the United States: the heterogeneity of the immigrants to this country, the Puritan theology that tended to identify all supernatural beings as demons, the later enlightened tendencies to render occult phenomena scientifically verifiable, and the rapid urbanization and industrialization of society. In addition, even on the popular level the American discourse seems to have had a tendency to rationalize, reduce, or reject supernatural beliefs not sanctioned by the Bible or by ancient learned “authority” — a tendency that was easily compatible with enlightenment ideas. The first significant vestige of fairy beliefs in America is the rather widespread collection of legends about mermaids, mermen, and water monsters. One of the reasons for this might be that for some time even enlightened science considered the existence of such creatures possible. The most important piece of fairy lore in the United States is the belief in changelings - the possibility that children might be transformed into or abducted by and exchanged for fairies. Although in abbreviated and attenuated form, the anxiety about children’s magical transformation or substitution is encapsulated in a number of memorates and enshrined in a series of instructions on how to protect infants from fairy or other supernatural harm. Related traditions and stories can be found all over America. Silver emphasized that accounts of changelings constitute one of America’s contributions to world fairy lore. Its other contribution lies in Spiritualism, which in its early years and more exotic subsects integrated elfin creatures into religious systems. In short, Spiritualism institutionalized and rationalized traditional beliefs in magical beings. Transformed into UFOs, fairies had a more powerful impact on twentieth-century America than they did on nineteenth-century America.
The second panel, “Communications and Comparisons: The Media of Magic in Comparative Perspective,” dealt with the material and institutional basis of magic in America and Germany during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Enlightenment took full advantage of and, in a way, was made possible by the revolution in information flows that had started in the seventeenth century. Relatively cheap, mass-market books and pamphlets, news sheets, and daily newspapers reshaped the culture of communication. These media have long been recognized as important vehicles for the new Enlightenment ideas. In her lecture Sabine Doering-Manteuffel pointed out that the new media spread not only the concepts of progress and rationalism; business-minded publishers also exploited the belief in miracles, magical skills, and fortune-telling. Doering-Manteuffel’s arguments rendered older concepts concerning the positive role that the media played for the Enlightenment as naive. The more general literature that was printed, the more magic and occult literature that also was published. There was a mass production of literature on magic and the occult at the end of the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century this literature attracted an occult underground scene in a number of European countries. The decline of church and state censorship and the modernization of mass communication created a market for printed materials that was far from being preoccupied with the spread of Enlightenment ideas.

Thus, a new, “modern” kind of superstition emerged in the eighteenth century that took its full form in the next century. It served the new book and newspaper market and was affordable. This new magical culture, Doering-Manteuffel emphasized, was different from old folk beliefs. It was transmitted not by oral tradition but by mass publication and was aimed at the urban rather than the rural population. The new magic spread from the cities to the suburbs, and then to the countryside.

The stereotypical reports on miraculous signs that appeared mainly in the sixteenth century played a central role in the transmission of superstitious concepts. They provided material that later became easily marketable. However, the new superstition of the age of Enlightenment found its most important form in numinous literature, which promised “practical” help to the advice seeker. It taught amateur fortune-telling and provided matter-of-fact instructions for the invocation of demons, love magic, or protective magic.
against harmful spells. This form of superstition no longer spelled a consistent worldview such as traditional folk belief and early modern popular religion had done. It was at most faintly reminiscent of the complex systems of conduct and rituals of erudite magic in the Middle Ages.

Stephan Bachtel illustrated and underscored Doering-Manteuffel’s points with a detailed history of various German magical books, some of which were brought to Pennsylvania by German settlers. These books were the product of a modern, highly commercialized market. The most influential was the *Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses*. Although this book, like most other magic manuals, claimed to present ancient traditions, it was probably written in the eighteenth century. The oldest surviving copy was bought by Goethe for the ducal library at Weimar. The demand for magical books seems to have been greater in Protestant areas than in Catholic ones. This was probably due to the fact that Protestantism denied the faithful rituals that enabled them to deal with personal crisis or provided them the illusion of being able to influence fate. By contrast, the traditional Catholic cult provided quasimagical coping mechanisms of its own.

David Copeland dealt with articles about witchcraft in colonial American newspapers. In contrast to the earliest American newspapers, eighteenth-century American “journalism” had very little to say about charges of witchcraft or supernatural occurrences in the British colonies. The development of newspapers as a means of mass communication not only coincided with the introduction of Enlightenment thought in America: Most printers actively embraced the rationalism of John Locke and Isaac Newton. As a result, newspapers almost always explained away any news stories about the supernatural. Printers followed what Benjamin Franklin did in 1730 when he created the story of a mock witch trial that poked fun at the pseudorational methods the unenlightened used to prove the suspected witch’s guilt. When stories of the supernatural did appear, they usually occurred in places other than America, principally in Europe, as a way to demonstrate that America was a new and enlightened place different from the Old World. The other main purpose of these stories was simply to entertain the audience.

However, some elements of traditional folk belief can be traced in eighteenth-century newspapers: Natural disasters such as earth-
quakes were still presented as divine intervention aimed at admonishing or punishing humankind. Religious explanations of unusual events were accepted by journalists and readers alike. Although the newspapers criticized the belief in witchcraft, they still shared and spread one of its basic elements: misogyny, which informed many articles in colonial newspapers.

Finally, Johannes Dillinger compared the Fox sisters, the first professional mediums and “mothers” of American Spiritualism, with an early modern Württemberg sect that had worshipped ghosts. (See Johannes Dillinger, “American Spiritualism and German Sectarianism: A Comparative Study of the Societal Construction of Ghost Beliefs,” on page 55 of this issue.)

The workshop showed that discourses developed on both sides of the Atlantic during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that might be called magical cultures of the Enlightenment. The emerging bourgeois society, science, mass communication, and market economy were shaped by mechanistic and rationalistic ideas but developed their own modes of magical thought. When magic and enlightenment met, new beliefs and doctrines came into existence that were neither mere survivals of the past nor just the embryonic forms of the future but rather specific cultural patterns in their own right.

Johannes Dillinger

EXHIBITING THE OTHER: MUSEUMS OF MANKIND AND THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

Conference at the Centre Allemand d’Histoire de l’Art (CAHA), November 2-5, 2000. Conveners: Thomas W. Gaehgens (CAHA) and Cordula A. Grewe (GHI). Participants: David Carrier (Carnegie Mellon University), Michel Colardelle (Musée national des arts et traditions populaires), Raymond Corbey (Leiden University), Sarah F. Delaporte (University of Chicago), Ludger Derenthal (University of Bochum), Nélia S. Dias (University of Lisbon), Gabriele Dürbeck (University of Rostock), Eberhard Fischer (Museum Rietberg, Zurich), Uwe Fleckner (Free University of Berlin/CAHA), Wendy Grossman (Smithsonian Institution), Curtis M. Hinsley (Northern
Arizona University), Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (New York University), Ikem S. Okoye (University of Delaware), H. Glenn Penny (University of Missouri at Kansas City), Alice von Plato (University of Hannover), Reimar Schefold (Leiden University), Enid Schildkrout (American Museum of Natural History), James J. Sheehan (Stanford University), Elisabeth Tietmeyer (Museum Europäischer Kulturen), Germain Viatte (Musée du quai Branly), Andrew Zimmerman (George Washington University).

The last two decades have witnessed a boom in museum studies. Histories of the museum have broadly acknowledged the emergence of the “modern museum” in the nineteenth century as a dominant institution in Western culture. Generally speaking, scholars have devoted most of their attention to the legitimizing function of museums, long proclaimed by such figures as Michel Foucault and Theodor Adorno. In this context they have closely analyzed the connections among politics, aesthetics, and museum policies within national projects and within the institutionalization of historical consciousness.

Less recognized is the differentiation of the modern museum into specialized, often competing subcategories—such as museums for anthropology, natural history, folklore, or archaeology—and their respective relationships to mass culture and the production of knowledge. To deepen our understanding of the historical and contemporaneous processes the GHI and the Centre Allemand d'Histoire de l'Art (CAHA) invited twenty-three scholars from six different countries to a multidisciplinary conference that examined the ways in which the emergence of new types of museums—devoted to the “human” as broadly conceived—responded to fundamental shifts within the overall composition of Western societies: the rise and fall of imperialism and colonialism, the appearance of mass society and consumerism, and economic dislocations brought about by the second industrial revolution. The most recent of these shifts is the breakdown of thinking along national lines, that is to say, globalization, and the necessity to reconceptualize these museums of “mankind.”

Focusing on England, France, Germany, and the United States in the period between the midnineteenth century and World War II, the conference looked at the changing function of the museums of mankind in their twofold capacity as progenitors and manifesta-
tions of their own differentiation. Sixteen papers were presented that investigated a wide range of topics, from the relationship between the new museum forms mentioned to new academic disciplines such as anthropology and then on to (novel) practices of popular mass culture, such as new forms of voluntary scientific societies, popular ethnographic spectacles and freakshows, as well as world and colonial fairs, arcades, and the art market.

The first section, "Art or Artifacts? Ordering Things," examined the relationship of "art" to "artifact," especially the evaluation of non-Western objects in relation to Western culture. In his paper titled "Learning to See? Representations and Receptions in Germany’s Ethnographic Museums, 1900–1914" H. Glenn Penny looked at the shift within museums from "creating reliable scientific institutions to fashioning popular displays." Penny traced the various shifts at the turn of the twentieth century: from a unitary notion of humanity to one of differentiation, from the pursuit of science to the satisfaction of social demands, from the simple display of objects to a narrative approach, from seeing museums as arenas for self-exploration to refashioning them into spaces for the promotion of an educational mission. Penny attributes these shifts to the popularization of museums as well as the professionalization of anthropology, and to the museum personnel themselves. Andrew Zimmerman, in his talk on "Art and Artifact in the Berlin Museum of Ethnology, 1870-1921," discussed the relation of anthropology to colonialism and how Western views of non-Western peoples changed within the context of the colonial project. Zimmerman looked at how "ideas" about non-Western places and peoples negotiated the encounter with the "reality" of the German colonial/imperial experience. He showed that the history of the classification of objects from outside the West paralleled the history of colonialism itself and served to sustain broader views about the nature of human difference.

In "Material or Culture: The Uses of Collections in American Museums of Anthropology" Sarah F. Delaporte critiqued the tendency in contemporary museums to represent "culture" instead of display "objects." She argued for a new approach, namely, returning to the "object-oriented context both in the archive and in the exhibition." The panel was rounded out by a paper on "Popular Ethnographic Spectacles Around 1900: Popularizing South Sea Cultures in Germany" by Gabriele Dürbeck. She emphasized that the
popularization of non-Western cultures often meant simply “arranging stereotypes and traditional images of the other as a perfect illusion with multimedia.” Dürbeck looked at how “education” and “entertainment” began an uneasy partnership at this juncture.

The second section was titled “Nature or Culture? Placing the ‘Other’ into the Western Context.” In “The Burden of Science in the Presentation of Culture: A Brief History of Museums of Natural History in the United States” Enid Schildkrout addressed the culture war between the arts and the sciences, with ethnology as “the orphan in the middle.” She emphasized that the institutional structures in the United States are quite different from those in Europe; for example, there are no American museums of mankind as such. She also sketched the current dilemma of ethnographic museums, which are burdened with the mandate to present the “truth” yet faced with a situation wherein truths about “culture” are increasingly contested. As a result, their authority is under threat, and curators are learning to become risk averse. Caught in the culture wars, such museums are trying to straddle the fence—satisfying few in the process. That the Other may also lie within was the focus of Alice von Plato’s “World Fairs, Folklore, and the Display of the Other.” Plato showed that the concept of “folklore” arrived in France rather late, in ca. 1910 when the nation was overcome by a wave of nostalgia for representations of past selves, seen most vividly in the provinces. She discussed the (re)discovery of French folk culture as the Other within the French nation; one main venue for the articulation of French folklore was exhibits at world fairs.

In “Documenting Non-European Masters” Eberhard Fischer criticized the traditional narrative of anonymous non-Western art and argued for the importance of connoisseurship, much like the treatment of Western art. In earlier centuries Westerners recognized “masters” in West African and Indian art; this knowledge, however, became lost over time, while Europeans increasingly focused on technical proficiency divorced from individuality. Moreover, many of these works of “primitive” art had a functional component—ceremonial masks or housing decoration—that rendered them less esteemed or eminently replaceable. Reimar Schefold augmented Fischer’s theme in his paper “Stylistic Canon, Imitation, Distortion: The Case of Siberut (Western Indonesia).” Schefold discussed the lack of expertise on the part of Westerners, on whom distinctions
among original artworks, objects produced for the tourist market, and fakes were often lost. He strongly urged more analysis of individual pieces to discourage trafficking in fake non-Western art—a situation partly resulting from insufficient connoisseurship.

The third session juxtaposed “Ethnology and Modern Art.” In “Photography at the Crossroads: Strategies of Representation in Ethnographic Museums” Wendy Grossman explored the convergence of museological and photographic practices that marked epistemic shifts in the aesthetization of African material culture as art. Focusing on two key junctures in the modernist narrative—the anonymous photographic production surrounding Carl Einstein’s 1915 book, titled Negerplastik, and Walker Evans’s photographic portfolio of objects from the Museum of Modern Art’s 1935 “African Negro Art” exhibition—she demonstrated that these photographs occupied an ambiguous and often contradictory place at the crossroads between document and art, fact and fiction, presentation and (re)presentation. In doing so, she deconstructed prevailing notions of the allegedly unproblematic documentary character of such images as well as their underlying premise, namely, that a universal affinity between the “tribal” and the modern exists. Grossman convincingly argues that the modernist, formalist approach of the photographs in Negerplastik and in Evans’s portfolio not only mediated Western perceptions of non-Western objects and contributed to the construction of a canon but also were “integrally linked to practices in the collection and marketing of African artifacts as reified and commodified forms at this pivotal juncture in an evolving modernist narrative.” Whether implicated in colonial enterprises or employed as a powerful weapon of critique, photography has clearly played a key role in constructing ideas about non-Western art and, conversely, non-Western objects have participated in the legitimization of photography as a modernist art form.

Taking up Grossman’s analysis of the modernist nature of Einstein’s Negerplastik, Uwe Fleckner traced the development of Einstein’s appreciation of non-Western art from a purely aesthetic comprehension to a more inclusive and interdisciplinary viewpoint, linking ethnological and art-historical methods in the 1920s. In his paper “The Death of the Work of Art: Carl Einstein and the Berlin Museum of Ethnology” Fleckner reflected on Einstein’s insistence on a balance between the aestheticism of museum displays that em-
phrased the formal beauty of individual artworks and an ethno-
graphic contextualization. In 1926 Einstein advocated the collabora-
tion of museum ethnologists with research and teaching facilities
“so that visitors can gain an adequate picture of the elements that
make up the cultures and the population districts.” Einstein asserted
the need for such a “living educational whole” because the entry of
an artwork into the museum meant to him its “natural death” and
“the attainment of a shadowy, very limited, that is to say an aes-
thetic, immortality.” Fleckner interpreted Einstein’s two essays on
the Berlin Museum of Ethnology—despite their rather journalistic
nature—as a new museum concept and an ethnological program in
nuclear form. Einstein’s position was grounded in the belief that—
through a direct confrontation with the art of his time—the works of
extinct cultures could be brought back to life.

Ludger Derenthal continued this theme in his paper on “Max
Ernst and the Indians.” Tracing the appropriation of non-Western
cultures in Surrealist art that emerged out of its need for a “New
Myth” (André Breton), his discussion centered on Ernst’s “Capricorn” (1947) and its use of Native American art as a source of inspira-
ation. As Derenthal showed, Ernst embedded his sculpture, origi-
nally placed at the edge of his garden in Sedona, into the context of
original Native American art, such as two crest poles from North-
west Coast tribes. His statue thereby achieved an encyclopedic char-
acter, being “neither realistic nor abstract but emblematic,” as Patrick
Waldberg has observed. Ernst’s contextualization of his modern myth
within ancient mythology also incarnated a line of identification
between Surrealist and Indian art that Breton had first recognized.
The latter connected the artist’s private mythology with the survival
of myths in communities resisting the oppression of modernity and
rationalism. For Breton, the savage could preserve a psychic con-
tinuum by not splitting his life into a real and a surreal part. Accord-
ingly, the art of the savage, as a concretization of desires and latent
life, could serve as a model for Surrealist art. Because the savage
myth assures the coherence of the community, it makes it possible
to prevent the dessication of cultural identity.

The conference’s final session dealt with “Ethnology, Art His-
tory, and the Contemporary Museum.” In his presentation of the
“Projet muséologique Musée du Quai Branly,” its director, Germain
Viatte, outlined the history of this project, begun in 1996 as a collec-
tive effort between the Musée de l’Homme and the Musée national des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie, and delineated the current state of its development. Involving the construction of a new building, the opening date is scheduled for 2004. Viatte emphasized the double nature of the Musée du Quai Branly encompassing research and museography. This twofold approach strives to overcome the longstanding tendency to separate natural history, ethnographic, and art collections. While Maurice Godelier is responsible for the scientific (research) component of the project, Viatte himself is in charge of museography.

Like the Centre Georges Pompidou, the Musée du Quai Branly aims to create a network between the collections in their material form and the knowledge they contain and engender. As Viatte emphasized, this knowledge needs to be multidisciplinary and multi-generational, and should not be reserved only for school children. In his opinion, it is the museum’s duty to recognize and to show the historical significance of its particular collections, and their equality to other types of collections. At the same time the collections must be considered an accessible resource, while addressing the question of responsibility to the heirs of those cultures, whose heritage became transferred to and de-contextualized by the museum. In Viatte’s eyes, a key function of the Musée du Quai Branly is to create a space in which contestable knowledge can be shown, thereby stimulating a discussion of this knowledge.

In “The ‘Other’ and the ‘Self’: History, Profile, and Perspectives of the Berlin Museum of European Cultures” Elisabeth Tietmeyer asked the pertinent questions: What is the “Other”? What is the “self”? And how does one display difference? Tietmeyer developed a theoretical framework for the history of Berlin’s “ethnographic” museums by linking their development to the distinction between Völkerkunde (ethnography) and Volkskunde (folklore) that marked German intellectual culture since the late nineteenth century. Arguing against this tradition, she described the new philosophical implications of the Museum Europäischer Kulturen (Museum of European Cultures), which aims to fuse these different scientific approaches. The use of the plural, that is, of “cultures” in the museum’s name implies not only the diversity of each country’s or nation’s cultural expression but also the need to take into account their interweaving, interdependency, and cross-fertilization. As an example for the
new approach taken by the Museum of European Cultures, Tietmeyer presented the concept of the museum’s inaugural exhibition “Cultural Contacts in Europe: Fascination Picture,” which, instead of focusing on individual artworks or employing traditional categories such as art versus artifact, highlighted the cultural function of images, for example, their adoption in daily life, use in religious practice, or magical connotations. She concluded with a call for more interaction among European and non-European collections, whose physical separation seems unjustifiable: “Last but not least, we must not lose sight of two facts: First, exhibiting other cultures always implies exhibiting one’s own. Second, much of our own culture may appear strange to us. What, then, is the ‘Other’? It remains a construct, like the ‘Self,’ and is hence subjective.”

The discussion of constructing binaries, creating categories, and implementing classifications continued in the next paper. Asking “What’s in a Name? Anthropology, Museums, and Values,” Nélia Dias explored the connections between categorization and classification, the links of these two processes and museums’ designations, as well as their underlying political and moral values. Delineating four different main phases she related the history of anthropology to the changing museum landscape in Paris from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century. With regard to contemporary issues, namely, the planning of the Musée du Quai Branly, she argued that the newest ethnographic museum in Paris has to manage two key concerns, both of which are part of its historical heritage: (1) the boundaries between art history and ethnography, and (2) the delicate question of which geographic areas will be excluded. Moreover, the Branly museum also has a moral agenda because it, like its predecessors, is value laden. The museum organizers’ accent on cultural equality — more precisely, on equality of creations — and on tolerance and respect demonstrates that the question of values is inherent to any museum containing non-European objects. Finally, Dias asked: Is the designation ethnographic museum obsolete and consequently the categories art object and ethnographic one? Do we need to forge new terms because the objects in their materiality have changed or because they have ceased to respond to the theoretical questions of the new disciplines and subdisciplines? And she concluded: “Either answer could be correct. It is surely not fortuitous that nowadays several ethnographic museums are being refurbished
or radically transformed. Placing new museum foundations in a historical context that stresses how categories are multilayered can be an illuminating exercise, or a defamiliarizing one.

The theme of how to contextualize objects instead of treating them as isolated aesthetic items also formed the core of the next paper, “Verso: Architecture Enters the Interior at the British Museum,” by Ikem Okoye. Okoye the planning and reception of the early 1980s exhibition, “Ashanti: Kingdom of Gold.” He argued that the contradictory images conjured by British imperial ideology of the precolonial West African state of Asante (Ashanti) were not only active in the nineteenth century but still underlie twentieth-century perceptions. Okoye linked the specific form of representing historical Asante as well as the impressions, reactions, and responses created by it to a reemergence of the politics of race in the Thatcherite era. This connection became clear not just in particular incidents of racialized responses in the manufacturing industry but also in the crystallization of a certain frustration (and claim to rights) that resulted in several riots in Britain – especially in urban areas with high black populations, such as in Brixton and Handsworth. This politics greatly affected how the architecture in the “Ashanti” exhibition was fabricated (in both senses of the word). Okoye demonstrated that certain kinds of knowledge, which, for the sake of historical truth and the useful debates they might engender, the museum should display, seemed unbearable in the cultural context of the “Ashanti” exhibition.

In his passionate account of the reorganization of the Musée National des Arts et Traditions, Michel Colardelle addressed the new political and economic agendas that he views as vital for contemporary “folklore” museums. In his paper “Que faire des musées de société dans la civilization du XXIe siècle?” Colardelle enumerated as examples of these agendas the struggle to “democratize” culture against exclusion across class lines, the academic rejection of material culture as a minor element of culture systems, and the advent of new technologies that displace objects. Colardelle pointed out that the presentation of objects always has a double context, that of fabrication and use as well as that of selecting objects for a museum collection. Thus, it is difficult to reconcile museographic requirements with the complexity of ethnographic themes. In order to make ethnographic museums work, Colardelle proposed (a) to base them on long-term educational goals, (b) to create a modern ethic based on
the materiality of objects, and (c) to unite scientific study with material objects. Overall, he demanded that museums should be multidisciplinary and oriented toward the public. Their displays should take into effect the modern "zapping effect," which destroys a holistic approach to exhibitions. "Permanent" exhibits thus should be changeable because a museum is a whole whose parts are in constant dialog. In true French fashion, the museum should present a varied, balanced, and nourishing museological repast to its public. To accomplish this goal Colardelle proposed a mediation personnalisée or live interpretation of exhibits, which could "unvirtualize" the museum and teach visitors to "read" objects themselves. Moreover, the necessary outreach to a broad audience has to take the museum beyond its own walls to a larger public. In sum, museums should combine entertainment and education.

In one of several final comments on the whole event, Raymond Corbey criticized the absence from the conference of dealers and private collectors, two groups central to the history, structure, and endurance of ethnographic museums. Corbey stressed that these groups need to be included because they are part of the social life of the ethnographic enterprise. In particular, he regretted that dealers were not present precisely at a time when they are deeply involved in the current cultural and political struggles over the future of the ethnographic collections in Paris. The participation of art dealers in the building of museum collections creates an ambivalence: Although museums depend on the art market and often also dealers' expertise, they resist acknowledging the commodity character of the items in their collection.

The conference concluded with visits to the Musée National des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie, the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaire, and the new exhibition of so-called Art Premier in the Louvre museum. Our guides for these three outings were Germain Viatte, Michel Colardelle, and Maurice Godelier, respectively. The tours allowed the conference participants to reflect on the theoretical issues previously discussed in conjunction with the practical environment of actual museum spaces. The museum visits were a thought-provoking and entertaining ending to a stimulating and rewarding four days at the Centre Allemand d’Histoire de l’Art in Paris.

*Cordula A. Grewe and Daniel S. Mattern*

Conference at the Internationales Wissenschaftsforum, Heidelberg, November 9-11, 2000. Convener: Detlef Junker (University of Heidelberg). Participants: Donna Alvah (University of California at Davis); Anni P. Baker (Wheaton College); Günter Bischof (University of New Orleans); Dewey A. Browder (Austin Peay State University); Howard J. De Nike (San Francisco State University); Jennifer V. Evans (SUNY at Binghamton); Gerhard Fürmetz (Bavarian State Archive, Munich); Hans Gebhardt (University of Heidelberg); Uta Gerhardt (University of Heidelberg); Petra Goedde (Princeton University); Robert P. Grathwohl (R & D Associates, Washington, D.C.); Hans-Joachim Harder, (Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Potsdam); Maria Höhn (Vassar College); Werner Kremp (Atlantische Akademie Rheinland-Pfalz); Wolfgang Krieger (University of Marburg); David Clay Large (State University of Montana at Bozeman); Thomas Leuerer (University of Würzburg); R. Gerald Livingston (GHI); Gen. Montgomery G. Meigs (U.S. Army); Donita M. Moorhus (R & D Associates); Klaus Naumann (Hamburg Institute for Social Research); Theodor Scharnholz (University of Heidelberg); Wolfgang Schmidt (Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Potsdam); Susanne Schrafstetter (University of Glamorgan); Dennis E. Showalter (Colorado College); André Gingerich Stoner (Stone Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind.); Bruno Thoß (Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Potsdam); Reinhard Treu (Altenmünster); Christian Tuschhoff (Aspen Institute, Berlin); Hubert Zimmermann (University of Bochum).

From November 9 to 11, 2000, the University of Heidelberg’s Department of History in conjunction with the GHI hosted a conference on the role of the American armed forces in Germany since 1945. Until now this topic has received relatively little scholarly attention, which is surprising given the wide range of issues in postwar German-American relations in which the American military played a role. Initially present as occupiers, within a few years the
GIs, along with their British and French counterparts, had become allies of the new West German state and the protectors of West Berlin. Not only were these American troops on the front lines during the Cold War, but their very presence influenced the development of NATO strategy. They also had a considerable economic impact on the regions of the Federal Republic in which they were stationed, and the question of who was to pay for their costs proved to be a contentious point until the mid-1970s. Last but not least, the estimated sixteen million U.S. servicemen, military employees, and dependents stationed in Germany after 1945 were an important medium for intersocietal and intercultural contact. They took part in what might be described as one of the twentieth century’s greatest cultural exchange programs. The interaction between the American military community and its German neighbors also reflected the overall state of relations between the two countries. The conference brought together historians, political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists, and several contemporary eyewitnesses from the United States, Great Britain, and Germany in an attempt to weigh the significance of the American military presence in its varied facets.

General Montgomery G. Meigs, commanding general of the United States Army, Europe (USAREUR) and of the Seventh U.S. Army, started off the symposium on the evening of November 9 with a well-attended public keynote lecture in the University of Heidelberg’s Alte Aula. Meigs, who earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1982, attempted to periodize the history of the U.S. military in Germany, where he had spent much of his active-duty career. The lecture and the question-and-answer period that followed were notable for the general’s frankness about the U.S. Army’s problems as well as for his promise that he and his staff would do all they could to speed the declassification of materials from USAREUR’s archives and library in Heidelberg. This task has been slow primarily due to insufficient staff.

The next day the conference reconvened at the Internationales Wissenschaftsforum with two panels devoted to the interaction between the GIs and the German population. The first dealt with the history of U.S. military communities. Donna Alvhaz spoke about military families in Germany and their evolving function as “unofficial ambassadors” between the late 1940s and mid-1960s. When servicemen’s families initially arrived in Germany in the spring of
1946, military officials expected them to serve as models of American domestic life and its virtues. Moreover, they were to assist in the establishment of democracy and in making clear to the locals that the occupation forces were actually there to help. Led by officers’ wives, the families tried to achieve these goals through a wide range of activities. By 1948 yet another major task began to emerge: In their public-relations work and occasional writings, servicemen and their families began to emphasize the common German-American struggle against communism, to downplay the Federal Republic’s economic and military dependence on the United States, and in general to promote an image of West Germany’s equality with its American ally. In doing so, they presented an idealized view of relations with the German community, which frequently had a negative impression of the condition of military housing, racism within the armed forces, the occasional boorish behavior of American military wives and children, and other issues.

Hans Gebhardt presented the results of a study co-authored with his colleague Petra Jung in which they surveyed approximately four hundred American military employees and their dependents living in Heidelberg about their present-day interaction with local Germans. Gebhardt and Jung concluded that although relations between both communities were characterized by a high degree of normal contact and routine, they lived more alongside than with one another.

Heidelberg also was the subject of a paper by Theodor Scharnholz, who analyzed relations between the army and the city and its inhabitants between 1948 and 1955. Two of his conclusions deserve special mention: First, whatever the administrative, social, and psychological burdens associated with the American occupation, the city profited rather handsomely not only from direct military expenditures but also from tourism and private spending by soldiers. Second, the initially controversial creation of “Little Americas,” or separate military communities, in the 1950s not only was necessary to fulfill official U.S. Army housing guidelines (for example, those governing space requirements) given the prevailing state of accommodations in Germany but also best fulfilled the wishes of American personnel in this regard. Thomas Leuerer concluded the first panel by presenting a wide-ranging overview of the history of military communities in Germany. They entered their heyday during
the Korean War due to a large-scale building program ordered by the Truman administration. The subsequent neglect of these facilities until the 1980s contributed heavily to the decline in morale in the U.S. Army in Germany during the Vietnam era. Leuerer also explained that the communities historically served a variety of purposes. For the U.S. military, the Little Americas stabilized the lives of servicemen and helped lessen disciplinary problems; for West Germans, they symbolized the United States’ commitment to defend the Federal Republic; and for the Warsaw Pact, they served as a reassurance that NATO did not contemplate aggressive action.

Whereas contacts between the American military communities and their German neighbors generally remained friendly, they were by no means always harmonious; the second panel devoted itself to the darker side of this relationship through the mid-1970s. In a paper titled “Aggressive Protectors,” Gerhard Fürmetz focused on the problem that lawlessness on the part of U.S. servicemen created for German (in this case, Bavarian) authorities in the early 1950s. During these years an apparent increase in GI delinquency received considerable attention in the local press. Until 1954-5 the German police had no right to apprehend or question military personnel who had violated local law and therefore remained heavily dependent on the cooperation of American authorities. Faced with these limits on their power to discipline GI wrongdoers, the police tended to focus instead on the Germans who associated with them.

Courts-martial involving U.S. servicemen and “ordinary” local women—women who were neither prostitutes nor prospective army brides—in Berlin during the immediate postwar years formed Jennifer V. Evans’s subject. These cases of sexual abuse and assault by U.S. servicemen provide considerable evidence of “fraternization gone wrong” and also posed a threat to the American policy of promoting cooperation with the local population. Maria Höhn then focused on the problem of German and American racism in the 1950s as it related to black GIs. African-American servicemen faced little open hostility from the local population, a fact they often compared positively to prevailing conditions in the United States. However, Germans were considerably anxious about single black soldiers and especially the possibility that they might enter into intimate relationships with local women. Paradoxically, although Germans now by-and-large rejected Nazi racist concepts, they could safely refer to
the American policy of segregation in support of their own opposition to interracial couples. Finally, Howard J. De Nike described the problems faced by the U.S. military in Germany between 1970 and 1975, the late stage of the Vietnam era. Growing dissent within the ranks due to the war and the draft, rising use of illegal drugs, and protests by minority soldiers against discrimination they faced both on and off base were just some of the major internal problems the military faced. This discontent was evidenced in the growing number of incidences of insubordination and violence involving servicemen. After initial hesitation, over the course of the next decade the military eventually addressed many of the complaints by issuing regulations guaranteeing freedom of expression for its servicemen, by effectively clamping down on racial discrimination, and by upgrading military housing. 

The conference’s first two panels focused on the role of the U.S. military in Germany as an intermediary between mainstream societies and popular cultures. As a counterpoint, the third panel dealt with the interaction of American and German military elites. One of its major themes was the extent to which the West German military, especially its leaders, underwent a process of “Americanization.” Wolfgang Schmidt delivered a paper on the Luftwaffe, the branch of the new West German armed forces most open to American influence. Due to the revolution in air warfare between 1945 and 1955 based on jet propulsion, the new air force remained heavily dependent on American materiel and principles of combat and training. Positively influenced by the Americans’ collegial treatment and the experience of pilot training in the United States, the Luftwaffe quickly oriented itself along the lines of its counterparts in other Western democracies. By contrast, Klaus Naumann concluded that “Americanization” of the Bundeswehr remained limited, even though the West German army initially seemed highly Americanized in terms of its uniforms, equipment, and logistics. More important, the United States influenced the central German military concepts of innere Führung (leadership from within) and Staatsbürger in Uniform (citizens in uniform) only in the broadest sense. In fact, American officers, in no small measure influenced by their admiration of the Wehrmacht’s performance in World War II, doubted that these concepts did much to promote military efficiency.

The day concluded with a screening of footage from “Crossing the Bridge,” a one-hour documentary on the fifty-year history of the
U.S. military in Germany being developed by Robert P. Grathwohl and Donita M. Moorhus. The conference participants used the opportunity to offer constructive criticism on how to improve the final version of the film.

Saturday began with a panel devoted to the strategic dimension of the American military presence in Germany during the Cold War. “Forward defense” became one of the central elements of the German-American security relationship because it strengthened West German confidence in the American commitment to defending the Federal Republic. Bruno Thoss analyzed the development of this strategy through 1968. In response to growing doubts about the credibility of the American nuclear umbrella, the Federal Republic succeeded in getting a NATO commitment to move its line of defense forward to the Iron Curtain in 1963. However, the interalliance crises of the mid-1960s, including the troop demands of the Vietnam War, ensured that forward defense would be implemented only at a reduced level.

Dennis Showalter discussed the dialectical relationship between American and West German perspectives on how best to defend NATO’s central front between 1954 and 1990. From the very start, the Bundeswehr’s clear preference was for a conventional defense using elastic tactics, such as those used on the eastern front during World War II, to counter an attack by the Warsaw Pact. Such tactics would perhaps make a general nuclear exchange a logical step in the escalation of hostilities but not the inevitable outcome foreseen by American military planners during most of the 1950s. West German generals did see the logic of the American emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons as a method of stabilizing the front. In part to keep German fingers off of the nuclear trigger, however, the Kennedy administration shifted to the strategy of “flexible response” in the early 1960s. German and American strategic concepts began to truly converge only with the development of the United States’s AirLand Battle doctrine in the 1980s. Hans-Joachim Harder described the various functions served by the American military presence in Germany. It was at times an occupation force, a means of containing the U.S.S.R., the major American contribution to NATO, a political symbol for the Federal Republic, a playing card in disarmament negotiations, and simultaneously the guarantor of West German security and German unification.
Finally, in a provocative paper titled “Why They Did Not Go Home” Hubert Zimmermann argued that the United States kept large-scale forces stationed in Europe during the Cold War largely due to an historical accident. Many factors spoke against it, including the American tradition of “no entangling alliances,” new technologies such as nuclear weapons and airlift capabilities, domestic opposition in the United States to paying for stationing, détente, and the initial expectation that the GIs would stay in Europe only for a limited period of time. Although a major reduction seemed quite likely in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Zimmermann argued that none occurred until the 1990s due to the West German government’s insistence on continued stationing and the Nixon administration’s unwillingness to allow the U.S. Congress to dictate its foreign policy.

The conference concluded with a panel on the American armed forces in Germany during the turbulent 1980s, an era in which their relationship with the local community became increasingly strained due to growing antinuclear and anti-NATO protests. This unrest also indicated that over the years the Federal Republic, not least in the eyes of its own citizens, had become much less dependent on the United States than it had been during the “Golden Era” of German-American relations in the 1950s.

Anni P. Baker spoke about the protests against the stationing of new American military aircraft at Wiesbaden Air Base. A local movement initially motivated by quality-of-life issues such as air and noise pollution and air traffic safety became increasingly critical of the Federal Republic’s political dependence on the United States, especially because the Kohl government consistently prioritized good relations with NATO over all other considerations. Pastor André Gingerich Stoner related his experiences as a member of the Military Counseling Network aiding American servicemen who sought conscientious-objector status during the Gulf War.

Finally, Reinhard Treu, editor of the journal Graswurzelrevolution, provided an insider’s perspective on the peace movement of the 1980s. He emphasized that it was inappropriate to talk about a “German” movement because these protests were an international phenomenon that actually began in the Netherlands. Treu also asserted that the nonviolent independent peace movement, unlike those parts of the movement associated with official organizations like the So-
cial Democratic Party (SPD), remained relatively free of nationalist sentiment or rhetoric in its activities.

In conclusion, the conference demonstrated that the history of GIs in Germany is a rich field that can illuminate important aspects of German-American political, social, cultural, military, and economic relationship since 1945. It also indicated the need for additional work in several important areas about which we still know very little, for example, the economic impact of the American military in Germany and the comparative experiences of British, French, and other NATO forces stationed in the Federal Republic. Expert commentary on the panels by Dewey A. Browder, Petra Goedde, Wolfgang Krieger, David Clay Large, and Christian Tuschhoff, as well as summary remarks by Günther Bischof helped place the papers in the proper perspective. The organizers are currently planning to publish a collection of essays based on the conference.

*Thomas W. Maulucci*

**Learning from Diversity in Federal Systems: Social Assistance in the United States, Germany, and the European Union**


In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the emergence of social welfare states was largely about “nationalizing social security in Europe and America.” ¹ Local charity and poverty relief became
negligible compared to the vast national programs of comprehensive social insurance. Since the late twentieth century, however, there has been a discernable trend toward the decentralization of responsibilities for social policy, removing it from the competence of national governments and ceding it either to subnational states or to private agencies. The U.S. Welfare Reform Act of 1996 has been, above all, a manifestation of the so-called New Federalism in intergovernmental relations, that is, the willful devolution of operational competencies for welfare provision to the states and municipalities. In Germany the national government’s monopoly on providing social services, such as employment exchange and job placement, is being increasingly challenged by the regulatory competencies of the European Union (EU).

In his keynote lecture Robert Kuttner discussed this trend with respect to the long-term development of social welfare institutions in the United States. Even in the American case he observed centrifugal forces working not only toward the subnational (state) level but also toward the supranational (global) level. Both forces seem to limit the national government’s ability to finance and operate redistribution programs. This limitation of national capacity stands in stark contrast to the continuous popularity of a nationally uniform system of social insurance, as the election campaign of 2000 demonstrated: Subsidizing social security and providing health insurance for all seemed to be vote-winning agendas.

The workshop began with an effort to identify common problems and to discuss how they are intertwined with changes in the division of responsibilities among different tiers of government. One of the common problems discussed at some length was the increasing number of women in the labor force. The German system of cash assistance is still based on the male-breadwinner model. It ensures the living standard of a family almost irrespective of local circumstances, thanks to heavy top-down fiscal redistribution—a practice that seems to have reached its limits after unification (Stephan Leibfried). In the United States welfare reform bid “farewell to maternalism” and replaced the social right to assistance for caregivers with an entitlement to assistance when the poor go to work (Ann Orloff). Interestingly, this shift to an employment-based strategy of poverty alleviation is intertwined with competence devolution, presumably because it meets the specific interests of low-wage regions that also happen to be the regions of the highest incidence of poverty.
Another common problem is the multiethnic character of society due to continual immigration and, in particular, “race” in the American case (Joseph Schwartz). Typically, minorities and immigrant communities are geographically concentrated, which leads to the divergence of regional interests in terms of the generosity and universal character of social policy. Although there was consensus at the workshop that multiethnicity has and will continue to put political pressure on the social-welfare state on both sides of the Atlantic, there was a difference of opinion about whether this will inevitably lead to the notorious “race to the bottom” in a federal system.

The federal setup itself may be a common problem: Evidence was presented for a gradual descent to the bottom with respect to certain welfare programs in the United States (Mark Rom). But this finding inevitably encounters all sorts of methodological problems: For example, how does one evaluate the performance of privatized welfare services (Max Sawicky)? If welfare expenditures decrease, is it necessarily evidence of a (moderate) race to the bottom? Or is it evidence for maintaining the state’s role if private welfare providers require the same amount of welfare spending as public providers? What about the quality of social services or the effects on the representative household’s well-being?

The established theories of devolution and federalism seem to be inadequate because there are distinctly different responses to common problems among and within federations, in addition to the fact that no clear-cut evidence exists for downward convergence in decentralized social welfare systems. They leave too little room for the impact of organized interest groups and how they are empowered in a more decentralized setting (Margaret Weir). Nor do these theories take into account that there may be no federalist consensus, that is, the central level still must establish its credibility to fulfill a useful role (Waltraud Schelkle). This may explain effective countertendencies to retrenchment and the variety of responses.

The inadequacy of existing theories was a recurrent if not dominant theme in other presentations. The “household demand model” of federalism, which treats states like households that respond to a given supply of federal grants, leaves out important aspects of bargaining and strategic behavior of the different tiers of government (Michael Wiseman). The “imperative of subsidiarity,” which gov-
erns the legal framework of the EU (in line with conventional theory), severely limits intergovernmental policy coordination (Iain Begg). Conventional theory classifies policy coordination as a mode of representing the central (EU) level that might not be a meaningful way to describe its emergence in practice.

That the role of the central tier of government in federal systems is less understood was underscored by two case studies wherein the U.S. government either tried regulation from above or enabled regulation from below. Regulation from above, namely, the international sphere, was the goal of U.S. plans for postwar reconstruction during World War II (Michael Geyer). The Human Rights Declaration of 1948 and its spinoff, the Social Covenants, were meant to establish high standards of social welfare via binding international treaties that would serve as bulwarks against domestic opposition, especially from the states. Regulation from below is the pattern that has emerged from transport and banking legislation in U.S. metropolises since the 1970s (Margaret Weir). The federal role is predominantly one of providing levers for local activism. In both cases the federal government created new arenas of policymaking. And by giving up certain prerogatives or even sovereign rights the U.S. government tried to gain room for maneuvering around lower tiers of governments.

Finally, the various perspectives of the presentations contributed to a discussion of whether and how one can learn from diversity in federal systems. A case study of “workfare” in the United States and the United Kingdom showed that learning from diversity is already taking place (Robert Walker). Initially, the United Kingdom imported workfare elements from the United States (and the Netherlands), such as the work-first strategy and in-work benefits distributed via the tax system. At the same time, however, the British government safeguarded individual and aggregate security to a much higher degree than did U.S. welfare reform. Britain also tries to make sure that there is constant evaluation of experiences. In contrast, no reporting or federal collection of data about state practices is mandated in the United States. At the same time, there is now more than anecdotal evidence that state practice has become more diverse or polarized, for example, with respect to rules for access to assistance and benefit computation that states apply to working families (Michael Wiseman). But the opportunity to learn from this di-
versity is foregone. Thus, there arguably is a case for a “policy transfer loop” from the United Kingdom to the United States.

Missed opportunities and the learning that does not take place within federations but between nations may yield a disturbing prospect: On the one hand, federalization of a policy area may be a way to deal with uncertainty in a period of acute reform pressures because it allows spatially limited reforms (Waltraud Schelkla). This is one of the cases in favor of “soft” policy coordination among the states in the EU: It would provide a framework for systematic exchange to share experience and for exerting peer pressure to undertake reforms (Iain Begg). On the other hand, the interest of governments to evaluate and learn from each other’s experiences is less than keen. For instance, the diversity in how various states operate their welfare systems is due to the different degrees to which they outsource the provision of social services to private firms (Max Sawicky). There is anecdotal evidence that those who have established the programs, including such contracts, also are the ones who evaluate their own performance. This raises the possibility that missed opportunities for learning from diversity are not necessarily accidental. Rather, it might be deliberate refusal on the part of the middle tier of administration to provide even a basis for learning in an attempt to preclude regulation both from above and from below.

Waltraud Schelkla

Note


GREEN PROTEST: ACTIVISM TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND THE GLOBE

Workshop at Florida State University, December 1-2, 2000. Convener: Christof Mauch (GHI) and Nathan Stolzfus (Florida State University). Participants: J. Christopher Brown (UCLA), Raymond Bye Jr. (Florida State University), Jane Carruthers (University of...
South Africa), Sandra L. Chaney (Erskine College), Peter Ho (Wageningen University), Dan Klooster (Florida State University), JoAnn McGregor (University of Reading), Mahesh Rangarajan (The Telegraph, Delhi, India), Bron Raymond Taylor (University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh), Douglas R. Weiner (University of Arizona).

Throughout the twentieth century, environmentalists and their organizations have sought to transform society's interaction with nature—whatever their philosophical, ideological, or social orientation. Cosponsored by Florida State University, this workshop brought together a diverse group of environmental historians and social scientists to discuss the impact of scientific and political institutions as well as ecological belief systems on environmentalism around the globe. The conference focused on activism in Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe, as well as North and South America and the organizational forms it took to pursue its goals. Among the many issues debated were the impact of ideologies and political systems on environmental organizations; the different forms of regional, national, and international engagement; and the discussion of human ecological and cultural intervention. What set this workshop apart from other projects in the field was its focus on the historical perspective of environmental activism.

In the first session, Sandra Chaney and Nathan Stolzfus presented their views on environmental protection in postwar West and East Germany, respectively. Chaney discussed the case of a West German group of activists form the Black Forest who foiled the attempts of an electricity company to extract hydroelectric power from the Wutach River. Chaney pointed out that it was Heimatschutz and Heimathliebe—love for one’s homeland and the desire to preserve local nature and culture—that motivated the Black Forest activists. Whereas the electric company represented itself as a progressive element, claiming that conservation and technology can solve future problems, the conservationists emphasized the need to preserve the “primeval” landscape of the Black Forest (in reality, of course, a cultural construct).

Chaney showed that citizens’ initiatives prevailed because conservationists used every possible means available within a democratic system to express their political and environmental concerns: The activists formed a coalition supported by various political par-
ties and nature clubs, and it lobbied newspapers as well as local and state officials and key parliamentarians. Moreover, conservationists benefited from a new level of material comfort reached in West Germany by the late 1950s. Once a certain level of wealth had been achieved, Germans' interest in recreation and the conservation of nature increased.

In East Germany the situation was very different. Stolzfus reminded the workshop participants of the narrow course GDR activists had to steer between auffälligem Verhalten (behavior that attracts attention), which would almost certainly lead to their arrest, and other, less provocative actions. He pointed out that East German environmentalists were often active in other political groups as well. Activists were as concerned with expanding the small public space in which they could operate as they were with furthering environmental policies. In this context Stolzfus stressed the role of the Protestant Church, which protected political activists. The church served as a safe space for environmental activism and not as an active agent. In the discussion it became clear that the environmental concerns and the political culture of environmentalism in the GDR had more in common with movements in other socialist countries than with West German activism.

By focusing on the Soviet Union and China, respectively, Doug Weiner and Peter Ho contributed to a deeper understanding of the nature of resistance in socialist countries. Whereas Stolzfus emphasized the importance of public space for GDR environmentalists, Doug Weiner discussed a more private phenomenon — "coded" or "hidden resistance" to the regime — as the key to understanding environmentalists' activities in the Soviet Union. Weiner found that scientific and civic activists of the nature protection movements (many of them organized in the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Nature or VOOP) were fighting both for the restoration of nature reserves and for their social autonomy. He argued that the activists (or scientists) who led the movement felt deeply about the protection of nature for ethical and aesthetic reasons, but that they made sure to frame their concerns in scientific terms in order to provide legitimacy for their cause. They went so far as to make them appear eccentric and thereby harmless, within the context of a heavily policed society. This strategy enabled the activists to challenge the prerogatives of the secret police when, for example, they ordered
the logging of all cypress trees on the Crimean peninsula. But the movement lacked mass support since the activists were merely hoping to persuade bureaucrats to join their ranks. It is unclear whether the regime ever realized that the nature protection discourse was subversive. But it seems that the activists were tolerated because they were assisted by mid-level bureaucrats and because they showed no desire to overthrow the political system.

Peter Ho, an expert on environmentalism in the People's Republic of China, broadened the theme of resistance to an authoritarian regime by arguing that Chinese environmentalists, particularly those who are organized in voluntary organizations, have been successful in developing strategies that help them escape state control. Ho pointed out that Chinese environmentalists are generally organized into Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and often register under a name that hides their true nature. This tactic has allowed environmentalism to develop in a gradual way and has strengthened civil society in the People's Republic. The best-known example of environmental protest in recent years has been the opposition to the building of the Three Gorges Dam. The plans for this costly project (ca. $20 billion), which were first released in 1989, require the relocation of approximately 1.5 million people to a large area of land that had to be developed. Environmentalists have publicly expressed fears that the relocated population would far exceed the carrying capacity of the newly developed land and therefore bring about deforestation and soil erosion. Demonstrations by dissatisfied farmers in the proposed resettlement areas have since caused the central government to pay attention to the feared environmental consequences of the planned construction. As a result, a cautious academic debate on the effects of land reclamation has taken place. Recent historical developments seem to indicate that environmental organizations in China are increasingly courting government approval and influence in policy-making, rather than seeking the more dangerous confrontation with the central government.

In his survey of wildlife conservation in India, Mahesh Rangarajan emphasized the importance of colonial policies in the country's environmental history. By 1900 the vast preserves of the Forest Department covered no less than one-fifth of British India. Although the prime objective of the reserves was to generate forestry products, including timber, they also became a major refuge
for large fauna. Although contemporary critics pointed out that a nature park like the Kruger National Park in South Africa was impossible, since the Indian taxpayer would never stand for it, and although the great conferences of imperial powers to protect African fauna in the 1930s showed that India was lagging behind Africa, conservation moved to center-stage during and after the 1960s. At that time the idea of “ecological patriotism” was gathering force and the movement to protect the tiger (which replaced the lion as the new “national animal”) ushered in a new era of conservation. Protected areas of various categories were expanded and restrictions on extracting resources from the National Parks were tightened. Initially, grassroots activism in India often came from communities that questioned the concept of conservation rather than from environmentalists. At the root of such controversies lay the question of the extent to which nature should and could be protected from human intrusion. But environmental awareness has strengthened over time: Decisions are now more widely scrutinized and discussed in public, and some of the older institutions that are an outgrowth of imperialism (Reserved Forests, National Parks, etc.) are undergoing a slow process of democratization.

JoAnn McGregor, who discussed environmental protection in Zimbabwe, confirmed some of Rangarajan’s theses. Much like in India, state conservation in Zimbabwe had its origins in the colonial era. Consequently, popular activism and demands have focused primarily on rights of access to land rather than the protection of the land. Although the idea of conservation has played a part in rural protest movements and although peoples’ mounting hardship has been channeled into syncretistic, environmentally inspired belief systems, the underlying green concerns have not been central to the claims on land and its resources.

In the course of the workshop it became clear that “place” mattered as much as political and institutional factors. In her comparison of environmental activism in South Africa and Australia, Jane Carruthers pointed out that the need to develop structures for public participation in local communities had an impact on the character of individual sites. She argued that sites of environmental contest often promote the transformation of notions of “land” (as resource or commodity) into “place” (as constructions of cultural values). Her argument was based on the comparison of environmental activism in
Magaliesberg (Transvaal, South Africa), and Cooper’s Creek (Western Queensland, Australia). Although the two regions are quite different in topography and history, the dynamics of local and national environmentalism show many similarities. Both campaigns consisted of diverse, inchoate groups who began with a limited strategic goal. Eventually, however, they coalesced around the original objective and around larger concerns that change attitudes toward the environment, even on a national level. The success of environmental campaigns depends, as Carruthers argues, on the transformation of land into place. That is to say, on the predominance of cultural or environmental values as opposed to purely economic ones.

Carruthers’s fundamental insight—that green initiative is taken at the local level—was also emphasized by J. Christopher Brown whose research focuses on the mindset and the activities of Amazonian colonist farmers, particularly in Rondonia, Brazil. At the same time, Brown highlighted the eminent role of global environmental networks (in particular World Bank policy) and their influence on local communities. According to Brown, local groups have been shown to resist the development practices of multilateral banks—in particular, against the political, economic, and ecological structures that caused conflict with indigenous peoples and a subsequent deforestation in Rondonia. Brown stressed that the goals of local protest movements surrounding social and environmental issues always changed when these groups communicated with groups that operated on an international level. In such cases, colonist farmer production and markets received primary attention, whereas direct action and protest evaporated.

In Brazil, but also in Mexico, as discussed by Dan Klooster, the primary goal of local environmental action has always concentrated on creating an environment able to support livelihood—family and village life—and not the conservation of nature per se. Klooster, whose research focuses on forest survival and forest policies, pointed out that activists in Mexico have traditionally resisted concessions, logging bans or repressive forest bureaucracies whenever the policies implied that the villages might lose control over their forest authority. Klooster added to our understanding of environmentalism in Mexico in that he defined environmental issues basically in terms of distribution. On both the national and village level Mexican villagers demanded justice in the distribution of benefits, such as logging revenues, and in the distribution of costs, such as water-
shed changes and woodcutting restrictions. In a broader sense, rural environmental actions in Mexico are, as Klooster emphasized, closely linked to issues of social justice.

Finally, Bron Tayler gave a public lecture that was also attended by students of Florida State University on various radical resistance movements, their origins, ideas, and activities in the United States. He distinguished between radical environmentalists who promote direct action, and so-called deep ecology groups that hope to return the earth to a sacred place by means of (re-)inventing a “green religion.” Those latter groups have rejected Western, anthropocentric, and monotheistic belief-systems in order to reestablish harmony with nonhuman nature.

The diversity of the topics introduced at this workshop demonstrates that environmentalism around the globe is not—nor has it ever been—a universal or unified movement. It springs from different motives, histories, and traditions, and it is shaped—strengthened, weakened, or suppressed—by different local, national, and international concerns, politics, and social realities.

Christof Mauch

FIRST LADIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE: INSTITUTION AND IMAGE IN THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES


Hillary Rodham Clinton’s election to the U.S. Senate has opened a new chapter in the history of a venerable two-hundred-year-old
American institution: That of the office of first lady of the United States. Whereas many of Clinton’s predecessors were happy to leave the glaring light of the media behind after the end of their husbands’ tenure in the White House, Clinton embarked on a second political career. Her candidacy for the United States Senate continued the unprecedented political partnership between husband and wife that has become the hallmark of the Clinton presidency. In addition, the rise, fall, and resurgence of Clinton’s political fortunes since 1992 has attracted remarkable international attention. With the arrival of a new generation of political spouses in European capitals, political observers now ask whether the “Hillary Syndrome” has reached the Old World. What has been less well-perceived by the general public, however, is the historic dimension of the first ladyship and its long-term impact on the political life of the United States.

The workshop brought together scholars, journalists, and secondary-school teachers who share an interest in the history of first ladyships in the United States and Europe. Based on three recent books published by the participants and building on a rapidly expanding literature on the history of American first ladies (including a growing interest of gender historians in the role of women and the state), the workshop served to analyze the institutional, social, and cultural background that turned presidential spouses into important players in American politics. Christof Mauch opened the workshop with an overview of American first ladies from the founding of the republic to World War I. Whereas earlier studies often highlighted individual accomplishments of particular first ladies, recent scholarship underscores how the transformation of the first ladyship reflected change in society at large. Martha Washington’s highly publicized support for the revolutionary army was modeled on the ideal of “republican motherhood” (Linda Kerber). Abigail Adams’s candid admonition to “remember the ladies” probably had a limited impact on her husband, yet it served as a point of departure for the early women’s movement. During most of the nineteenth century first ladies were virtually absent from the public eye, opting to live outside Washington because of poor health or unwillingness to shoulder the burdens of White House entertaining. Reacting to contemporary ideals of beauty and sociability presidents often preferred as official hostess young daughters or nieces to their middle-aged wives. Except for Sarah Polk, Mary Lincoln, and some first ladies com-
ing to Washington in the last third of the nineteenth century presidential spouses were virtually unknown to the American people. Frequently descending from the higher echelons of society than the presidents, first ladies often provided much of the financial and social support that helped initiate their husbands' political careers.

In the second presentation Philipp Gassert analyzed the dramatic change that the relationship between president and first lady has undergone during the twentieth century. Because it combines the offices of head of state and chief of government, a rather unique feature in Western democracies, the American presidency requires a first lady. With the growth of the presidency to a national institution the private relationship between a presidential husband and wife has developed into a public (and highly publicized) partnership. In the modern media environment a successful presidency requires the presidential couple to engage in what Jan Jarboe Russell calls a "theatrical, courtly ritual"—witness the annual state of the union messages. The consecutive media revolutions, beginning with the arrival of a mass press in the 1890s, then of radio in 1920s, television in the 1950s, and finally the Internet in the 1990s, have driven the institutionalization of the first ladyship. Starting with Edith Roosevelt, whose carefully released family photographs complemented the energetic image her husband projected, the first family has played an expanding role in the making of the American presidency. The first lady acquired her own staff, with Congress approving more and more press secretaries and aides. The institutionalization of the first ladyship reached a high point during the "imperial presidency" in the decades after World War II and culminated during the late Cold War with Rosalynn Carter and Nancy Reagan. Following a general trend in Washington bureaucracies, the office of the first lady was scaled back during the Bush and Clinton presidencies. Hillary Clinton made up for the loss of personnel in the first lady's office by working with members of other government agencies and different sections of the White House. Furthermore, since Lady Bird Johnson all first ladies have played a more prominent role in their husbands' election campaigns. Finally, the public has begun to expect first ladies not to limit themselves to being a "mere" supporter of their husbands, even though the limits of first-lady activism remain highly contested. Since the 1970s, however, the general assumption has been that a first lady
should use her office to further a substantive social (and sometimes political) cause.

The next two presentations centered on individual first ladies. Sabine Freitag presented a paper on “The Consciousness of a Nation: Eleanor Roosevelt, 1884-1962,” and Marc Frey addressed the topic “Between Camelot and Crisis: American First Ladies During the Turbulent Sixties.” Freitag argued that Roosevelt, despite her aristocratic birth, very much fits the description of a “self-made woman.” Unlike her future husband Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor experienced a traumatic childhood. It is noteworthy that she only became the role model she nowadays is after the Roosevelts rearranged their marriage in the early 1920s following her discovery of Franklin’s extramarital affair. During the New Deal and World War II Roosevelt emerged as the “social consciousness” of her husband’s administration, speaking out against racial and social discrimination, issues that the president did not dare to address himself. As some historians have argued Roosevelt secured the support of blacks for the administration despite their disappointment over its timid approach toward race relations. It took almost two decades for a similarly active first lady—Lady Bird Johnson—to enter the White House. Johnson was preceded by Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy for whose husband Roosevelt had vigorously campaigned. As Frey argued in his contribution Kennedy was an immeasurable asset to her husband’s presidency. She “hated politics,” wanted first to be wife and mother and only second to be first lady, yet Kennedy’s taste and cultural sophistication created the glamorous White House that American (and international) audiences loved during the early 1960s. Whereas Kennedy underscored the enormous public-relations value of the first ladyship, Lady Bird Johnson became a formidable political activist more in the tradition of Eleanor Roosevelt. She markedly increased the institutional power of her office by hiring a professional team of advisers and playing a crucial role during the election campaign of 1964. Johnson also set a problematic precedent by having her husband support legislative efforts on behalf of the environment. Her mixed success with the Highway Beautification Act foreshadowed the catastrophic failure of the Clinton health care plan in the 1990s.

Because Clinton’s tenure as first lady has generated enormous interest outside the United States, two contributions explored the role of first ladies in a comparative transatlantic perspective. Dieter
Zimmer, a television journalist, presented an overview of the wives of German federal presidents and chancellors. Taking his cues from his personal knowledge of Hannelore Kohl's life and career, Zimmer underscored how the high visibility of their husbands and the building of personal contacts made possible and successful the social engagement of German first ladies. Often ridiculed by the general public these activities require energy and political clout, and they represent significant accomplishments. Eckard Presler then asked how the Hillary Syndrome has translated into European politics by comparing the latest crop of European first ladies – including Cherie Blair of Great Britain, Sylviane Jospin of France, Dagmar Havlová of the Czech Republic, Jolanta Kwasniewska of Poland, Ana Botella-Aznar of Spain, and Doris Schröder-Köpf of Germany. This new generation of European first ladies is routinely measured against its famous American counterpart. Yet they differ markedly from activist American first ladies, such as Hillary Rodham Clinton, and from their old-school European predecessors because they tend to continue their professional careers even after their husbands' election to high office. At the same time, however, they seem to follow the American model of partnership presidency in the "two-for-one" mold the Clintons originally presented to the voters. The discussion centered on divergent and convergent developments on both sides of the Atlantic. With the ceremonial aspect less prevalent in Europe than in the "royal" American case, European first couples more closely resemble modern working families than does the highly institutionalized first ladyship that has become one of the most peculiar hallmarks of American democracy.

The workshop concluded with Ute Mehnert's presentation "Between Politics and Popular Culture: Hillary Clinton." The paradoxical success story of the first couple from Arkansas has not ended with their tenure in the White House. For the first time in recent American history an – albeit indirect – continuation of a presidency beyond the two-term constitutional limit seems to be emerging. Clinton's recent electoral success and George W. Bush's victory in the 2000 presidential election have added to the frenzy of such political speculation. As Mehnert argued, by analyzing recent reports on the Clinton campaign in New York State, the bid for a Senate seat, like the Oval Office, was the common project of a political partnership. In many ways Hillary Clinton's latest career move is the
result of a growing personalization of politics. The many firsts and
superlatives with which she is associated are the fodder feeding the
media. So is the ambivalence that has been built into her image. The
"biographical approach to politics" proved successful because of
Clinton’s contradictory life experience—"between emancipation and
adaptation." It provides different possibilities with which the Ameri-
can electorate (and women in particular) can identify. She is por-
trayed as a strong political leader—and as "the most humiliated
woman in the world." She has attracted uncritical adulation as well
as unmitigated hatred. As a modern Lady Macbeth she stood in the
center of political scandal while she suffered as an "ordinary house-
wife and mother." The combination of contradictions, the calculated
ambivalence of presidential politics, the merging of pop and polit-
ics, of soap opera and statecraft, has proven successful in the
postindustrial late-twentieth-century media democracy. Ute Mehnert
concluded her talk with an appropriate phrase: "Fortsetzung folgt."

Philipp Gassert

Note

1 Philipp Gassert and Christof Mauch, eds., Mrs. President: Von Martha Washington
bis Hillary Clinton (Stuttgart, 2000); Eckard Presler, Europas First Ladies auf eigenen
Füßen (Leipzig, 1999); Dieter Zimmer, ed., Deutschlands First Ladies: Die Frauen der
SEMINARS

NINTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE FRIENDS OF THE GHI/FRITZ STERN DISSERTATION PRIZE

The ninth annual symposium of Friends of the GHI took place on Friday, November 10, 2000, in the Institute’s Lecture Hall. The event featured the awarding of the first two Fritz Stern Dissertation Prizes for the best dissertations completed during the 1998–9 academic year in German history, German-American relations, or the history of Germans in North America.

The program began with welcoming remarks by Acting Director Christof Mauch and Professor Konrad H. Jarausch, president of the Friends. Professor Jarausch thanked the prize committee, composed of Peter Fritzsche (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Dagmar Herzog (Michigan State University), and Mary Lindemann (Carnegie-Mellon University) for their diligence and success in selecting this year’s winners. Jarausch expressed the Friends’ gratitude to the German Marshall Fund of the United States for its generous grant, which made possible the establishment of the prize.

In the first half of the morning the winners of the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prizes presented their respective projects. The first presenter, Frank Biess, completed his dissertation at Brown University and is currently an assistant professor of history at the University of California at San Diego. His paper, printed in its entirety below, was titled “The Protracted War: Returning POWs and the Making of East and West Germany, 1945–1955.” The second presenter, H. Glenn Penny III, completed his dissertation at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is currently an assistant professor of history at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Also printed here is his talk, titled “Cosmopolitan Visions and Municipal Displays: Museums, Markets, and the Ethnographic Project in Germany, 1868–1914.” The morning ended with a conversation with Fritz Stern, which included a session of questions and answers from the audi-
ence. See this issue of the Bulletin for a transcript of the conversation with Professor Stern, p. 37.

In the afternoon Vera Lind, one of the Institute’s research fellows, gave a provocative talk on her major project, titled “Germans, Africans, and African Americans: Eighteenth-Century Encounters with Slavery, Race, and the Exotic.” The text of her paper is featured in the GHI Research section of this issue.

In order to secure funds for the annual award of the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize the Friends of the GHI have established the Fritz Stern Dissertation Fund. Accordingly, the Friends wish to thank all donors who have contributed to this fund thus far.

What follows are the texts of the presentations given by the dissertation prize winners, Frank Biess and H. Glenn Penny III.

Malve Burns
The Protracted War: Returning POWs and the Making of East and West German Citizens, 1945-1955

Frank Biess

My dissertation analyzes the reception, treatment, and experiences of returning POWs in East and West Germany after World War II. It focuses primarily on the approximately two million POWs who returned from Soviet captivity to East and West Germany during the first postwar decade, the last ones released after Konrad Adenauer's visit to Moscow in September 1955. The title of my dissertation seeks to capture the two major perspectives that I apply to the study of postwar Germany. First, I argue that the ending of the war in East and West Germany was indeed "protracted" in the sense that the issue of returning POWs forced both Germanys to grapple with the war and its immediate consequences during the entire first postwar decade and beyond. Second, my thesis demonstrates that the German-German context crucially shaped the war's protracted ending. By adopting a comparative approach, my project thus contributes to a new narrative of postwar German history in the aftermath of German unification and the end of the Cold War.

Returning POWs from the Soviet Union constituted one of the most important, long-lasting, and highly visible consequences of war and defeat in postwar Germany. In a rather unique fashion, returnees actively experienced violence as soldiers in the war of racial annihilation on the eastern front and passively experienced a different kind of violence as POWs in Soviet captivity.¹ Their delayed return from Soviet captivity literally transported these active and passive experiences of violence back to East and West Germany, and ensured the continuing presence of the war and its consequences throughout both societies' formative periods of postwar reconstruction.

These aftereffects of the war have not been a dominant theme in the historiography of postwar Germany. The history of the post-World War II period has often been written as the history of the successful transcendence of the consequences of war and defeat. "Bonn" (and for that matter "East Berlin") did not become "Weimar," and
the successful “integration” of former soldiers constituted one hallmark of a postwar success story shared by East and West Germans.2 The contrasts between the post-World War I and post-World War II periods were clearly considerable, and the pacification of displaced groups after 1945 constituted a major achievement in both East and West Germany.3 Still, one aim of this dissertation is to correct the dominant emphasis on overcoming the consequences of the war by highlighting the unresolved fissures and subterranean conflicts that continued to exist in both societies.

By focusing on these lingering consequences of the war, my study also complements such dominant paradigms of postwar historiography as modernization and Americanization for the West, or Stalinization and Sovietization for the East.4 Although these approaches have yielded a host of important new insights, they are less useful in capturing the lingering consequences of the war in both postwar societies. My project thus seeks to augment these perspectives by taking seriously the postwar nature of both German societies after 1945. It analyzes the first postwar decade not only as the fulcrum of a liberal democratic consumer society in the West and a socialist dictatorship in the East but also in light of the shared catastrophe from which both societies emerged.

Returnees from the Soviet Union represented one of the common problems that both German societies needed to face as a result of their shared past. I thus seek to contribute to a genuinely comparative history of the postwar period that would bring into focus the dialectics of “interweaving and demarcation” between East and West Germany.5 In particular my research reveals how East and West German responses to returning POWs were always closely interrelated, and how these responses actually shared surprising structural and functional similarities that were located below the surface of the rhetorical antagonisms of the Cold War.

My analysis proceeds on three different levels: It focuses first on official perceptions and representations of returning POWs. The experience of captivity became a central component of East and West German memories of World War II in the context of the Cold War. Second, these official representations translated into actual social and political strategies for returning POWs in both societies. East and West German officials sought to promote the transformation of former soldiers and POWs into East and West German citizens
through multifaceted and comprehensive efforts. Third, returnees’ own responses to the social and discursive contexts they encountered in East and West Germany reveal basic patterns of consensus, accommodation, and conflict in both societies. By incorporating these different levels of analysis my work can fruitfully combine the political history of reconstruction with the social history of returning POWs and the cultural history of war memories and gender identities.

I

East and West German perceptions of returning POWs from the Soviet Union underwent several crucial shifts during the first postwar decade. These shifts reflected the changing social and political configurations in both societies, and they responded to the symbolic and functional needs arising from the task of reconstructing two devastated societies on antagonistic sides of the Cold War.

During the immediate postwar period, public and private voices in East and West Germany arrived at surprisingly differentiated assessments of the first soldiers returning from the eastern front. Individual Germans demanded the repatriation of POWs according to their involvement with National Socialism, and West German social democratic officials discussed the exchange of antifascist POWs for compromised former Nazi officials. This antifascist moment derived largely from the influence of Allied and Soviet occupation authorities. Yet it also reflected an indigenous German response to the former soldiers of Hitler’s army that resulted, at least in part, from the population’s highly critical assessment of the conduct of the Wehrmacht during the last few months of the war.

In both postwar societies, however, more collectivist representations of returning POWs gradually displaced these differentiated perceptions and increasingly elided individual distinctions among returning POWs. The onset of mass repatriations of sick and utterly exhausted POWs from the Soviet Union led East and West German officials to portray returning POWs as liminal figures who remained fixed in their passage from soldiers in Hitler’s army to postwar citizens. Officials in both societies, however, defined returnees’ liminality rather differently. West Germans focused almost exclusively on returnees’ physical, psychological, and sexual problems, whereas East German officials were primarily concerned with returnees’ political and ideological deficiencies.
In the West the effort to determine returnees’ individual guilt and responsibility gave way to an overwhelming emphasis on their collective status as victims. By analyzing the responses of local officials, public commentators, and private citizens to returning POWs, my study demonstrates how returnees from the East became a central component of West German “narratives of victimization” from 1946–7 onward.9

An extensive medical and psychological discourse on the returnees’ transformation into victims in West German public discourse offers valuable insights for this project. The discussion of the medical and psychological predicaments of returning POWs started on the pages of medical and psychiatric journals but soon extended to welfare agencies, cultural commentators, and government offices. Returnees were diagnosed as suffering from a syndrome that contemporaries termed dystrophy, which primarily referred to the physical and psychological consequences of malnutrition in Soviet captivity. However, returnees also were diagnosed as having psychological symptoms such as apathy, lack of motivation, a reduced ability to perform, and depression.10

In contrast to the extensive literature on trauma after World War I (shell shock) or the growing literature on post-traumatic stress disorder in the aftermath of the Vietnam conflict, this medical and psychiatric literature after World War II has not yet received much attention from historians.11 But the mere existence of this literature well into the late 1950s runs counter to the assumption that the consequences of the war were quickly left behind in the postwar period. This literature, instead, indicated the extent to which war and defeat remained stamped on returnees’ minds and bodies long after actual combat had ended.

Although the symptoms described in this literature were undoubtedly real and the suffering of returnees considerable, this medical and psychiatric literature also needs to be historicized. Partly as a result of the numerous personal and conceptual continuities within the medical and psychiatric profession from the Nazi- to the postwar period, dystrophy literature exhibited clear patterns of eugenic thinking as well as of historically specific notions of health and illness. Doctors and psychiatrists continued a longstanding collectivist tradition in German psychiatric medicine that tended to portray individual psychological deficiencies as a threat to the national body
at large." In particular, writers on the topic of dystrophy showed concern about the alleged destruction of returnees' masculinity, and virtually all contributions to dystrophy emphasized the desexualization of German POWs in Soviet captivity. As a result, returnees exhibited what one observer described as a "eunuch-like lack of sexual desire." These issues were negotiated as late as 1957 when the German Society for Sexual Research devoted its annual meeting solely to the theme of "returnee sexuality." Participants' keen interest in returnees' sexual deficiencies illuminated the centrality of male sexuality in wider West German confrontations with war and defeat.

By portraying returnees as deficient and desexualized victims, dystrophy literature served an important function in the West German politics of memory. Dystrophic returnees represented the exact opposite of the former soldiers of Hitler's army, ideal representatives of the Nazi Volksgemeinschaft (people's community). Indeed, West German medical and psychiatric authorities often equated the physical and psychological consequences of Soviet captivity with those of survival in Nazi concentration camps. The dystrophy diagnosis thus lent a seemingly objective, scientific quality to the widespread West German equation of German victims with victims of the Germans.

East German perceptions of returning POWs during the early postwar years, by contrast, completely ignored the returnees' physical and psychological problems that so preoccupied their West German counterparts. Instead, East German state and party officials focused almost exclusively on the returnees' alleged political and ideological deficiencies. In fact, the imminent return of hundreds of thousands of former soldiers and POWs to the Eastern Zone prompted almost a sense of panic among East German Communists. As one report by a Communist Party official warned in December 1945, "One million anti-Bolsheviks are approaching. The democratic reconstruction is threatened by greatest dangers."17

As in the West, East German perceptions of returnees' liminality were closely linked to notions of deficient masculinity. Unlike in the West, however, the perceived East German crisis of masculinity did not refer to returnees' reproductive functions but rather to their alleged political indifference and apathy that stood in marked contrast to the public visibility and activism of East German women in
the years just after the war’s end. East German responses to returning POWs thus illuminated a striking reversal of Communist gender stereotypes, which since the 1920s had always held up male revolutionary fervor against female indifference and apathy. As in the West, the emphasis on returnees’ deficiencies served important, albeit very different functions in East Germany’s politics of memory. It enhanced the self-perception of East German Communists as a revolutionary vanguard that was destined to impose an educational dictatorship on a politically immature people. Despite the returnees’ useful functions for East and West German memories of the war, the emphasis on returnees’ liminal status was deeply problematic. Neither as debilitated victims (in the West) nor as unreconstructed fascists (in the East) were returning POWs capable of contributing to the reconstruction of two devastated societies on the forefront of the Cold War. Concurrent with their move into two antagonistic camps, both societies developed more redemptive social and discursive strategies that aimed at transforming returning POWs into East and West German citizens. This shift was more clearly discernible in the East, where it was largely mandated by party authorities. In West Germany, by contrast, responses to returning POWs were formulated by a less homogeneous roster of actors and institutions. Still, the dominant West German emphasis on returnees as victims was gradually tempered by their perception as survivors who would decisively contribute to postwar reconstruction.

I use the term *redemptive* rather self-consciously here, because East and West German efforts at transforming returnees into postwar citizens were based on notions of pseudoreligious conversions. In the West, the Christian churches actively promoted an interpretation of the returnee experience that closely followed the Christian model of redemption through suffering. The emerging returnee associations and public commentators also increasingly replaced the emphasis on the returnee as victim with an image of the returnee as a tough survivor of both Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism, as a strong but gentle father who would transform “incomplete” families into complete ones, as a repository of essentially German values who would provide a counterweight to the encroaching Americanization of West German culture and society. These representations became especially apparent in the West German response to the last returning POWs in 1955-6, who were collectively celebrated as he-
roic survivors of Soviet internment. At the same time, both domestic and foreign critics of the enthusiastic reception of the last POWs compelled West German officials to look more closely at the individual pasts of the last returnees. This initiated a renewed legal confrontation with the Nazi past beginning in the late 1950s.

Official East German responses to returning POWs exhibited a similar shift in emphasis from returnees’ liminality to their qualities as East German citizens. With the assumption by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) of dictatorial powers in the Eastern Zone by 1947-8 and the deepening of the German division, East German Communists began to pursue a more offensive strategy toward returnees from the East that emphasized their ideological conversion in Soviet captivity. In particular, East German officials concentrated their efforts on returnees who had attended antifascist re-education courses in Soviet captivity. These antifascist activists not only represented an important cadre resource for the SED, they also demonstrated to all East Germans how highly compromised members of the National Socialist Volksgemeinschaft could become citizens of the antifascist democratic republic. This symbolic function of antifascist returnees became especially apparent in a series of Heimkehrer (returnee) conferences during the summer and fall of 1949, where selected returnees reported about their conversion experience in Soviet captivity. These conferences coincided with the founding of the East German state and represented a constitutive act in the formation of the German Democratic Republic.

Redemptive narratives of the POW experience were, moreover, part and parcel of what Robert Moeller has called the “remasculinization” of postwar Germany. East and West German representations of returnees illuminated new conceptions of masculinity that differed from the militarized masculinity of the Nazi period, as well as from the images of completely emasculated men of the early postwar years. Yet while West German perceptions stressed primarily men’s domestic functions as fathers, husbands, and breadwinners within reconstructed families, East German representations highlighted returnees’ roles as producers and party activists. Unlike the West German emphasis on men’s civilian roles, the SED’s militant antifascism also suggested stronger continuities with the traditional link between militarism and masculinity.

Not all returnees to East and West Germany were granted access to redemptive narratives of their experience. In the West, a se-
ries of so-called *Kameradenschinder* (comrade oppressor) trials prosecuted those former POWs who had collaborated with Soviet authorities by assuming official administrative functions or by engaging in antifascist activities in the camps. These trials provided a unique test case for the rule of law and the extent of ideological pluralism in Adenauer’s Germany. They were strongly influenced by a powerful anti-Communist bias among the West German judiciary, yet they also revealed a strong tendency to lay to rest any legal confrontation with the past and thus often ended with a dismissal of the case or an acquittal of the defendant.

In the East, the offer for antifascist integration applied only to those POWs who had returned before the end of mass repatriation from the Soviet Union in May 1950. In line with official Soviet policy, East German officials condemned POWs held in the Soviet Union after 1950 as “war criminals.” Moreover, returnees from captivity in the West became a target of extensive purges between the late 1940s and early 1950s, even though some of these West returnees had a much stronger antifascist record than returnees from the East. These East German purges represented the functional counterpart to the West German *Kameradenschinder* trials. Despite the obvious differences between state-sponsored prosecution in the East and trials by an independent judiciary in the West, both the purges and the trials served a common purpose of excising behavior and experiences that could not be incorporated into the new ideological parameters of the Cold War.

Despite their different contexts, East and West German perceptions of returning POWs thus ultimately also exhibited considerable structural similarities. Both German societies universalized memories of the returnee experience for the reconstruction of collective identities on antagonistic sides of the Cold War. They did so not by resorting to the largely discredited language of the nation, but rather by employing the more universal languages of Christianity and of antifascism. The West German focus on the returnees’ psychological, moral, and religious predicament, moreover, tended to depoliticize and de-ideologize the consequences of a highly ideological war. East German perceptions, in contrast, located the returnee experience within a highly politicized Communist master narrative of antifascism with the Soviet Union at its center. The externalization of the fascist past in the autobiographical narrative of antifascist activists,
moreover, mirrored the externalization of the past in the national narrative of the newly formed East German state, which denied all continuities to the Third Reich and projected them onto West Germany.

II

East and West German representations of returning POWs were closely linked to social and political strategies. In West Germany the emphasis on the returnees’ status as victims served the dual purpose of exempting returnees from denazification procedures and of legitimizing social policy benefits created for them. In 1948, a specific returnee amnesty excluded from denazification procedures virtually all returnees who had arrived home after May 1947. The dystrophy diagnosis also allowed for the material compensation of psychological trauma among returning POWs by linking psychological deficiencies to somatic causes (for example, malnutrition in Soviet captivity). This practice stood in marked contrast to the post-World War II period, when the German medical establishment had considered psychological trauma as mere “pension neurosis.” The 1950 Heimkehrergesetz (returnee law) was one of the first laws passed by the new West German parliament and sought to facilitate returnees’ adjustment to postwar society. A 1954 law compensated every POW who had returned after 1947 for time spent in captivity. This law was specifically designed not as a social policy measure based on need, but as an entitlement for former POWs. Furthermore, the early 1950s witnessed a dramatic expansion of the bureaucratic category of “returnee,” which came to include virtually everybody who had returned from any kind of captivity, including, for example, convicted war criminals who had been interned by the Western allies.29

In contrast to the West, there were no specific social policy measures for returnees in the East. Instead of material compensation, East German communists focused on returnees’ political and ideological re-education. By doing so, East German state and party officials exhibited a striking optimism in the possibility of remaking the former soldiers of Hitler’s army and Soviet POWs into ideal antifascist citizens. SED officials drew especially on the social transformation of the Wehrmacht during the Third Reich, which had significantly increased the share of soldiers from working and petit bourgeois class backgrounds. According to SED officials, fascist ideology had simply led these returnees astray, and they needed to be
“led back to the proletarian class to which the overwhelming majority of them belonged.”

The SED also devoted remarkable organizational and personnel resources to this project. Party officials sought to accompany returning POWs from their entry into the returnee transition camp near Frankfurt an der Oder to their arrival in their home communities. The party also sought to establish specific returnee meetings in every East German local community, intended to facilitate the returnees’ entry into the new “antifascist-democratic” order. The flipside of the SED’s confidence in the antifascist malleability of returnees, however, was chronic concerns about possible outside interference that could undermine the project. The party therefore tried to exclude any rival organizations from involvement in the reception of returning POWs in the Eastern Zone. This was especially true for the welfare organizations of the Christian churches that sought to maintain an active presence in the reception and treatment of returning POWs. The gradual exclusion of voluntary and intermediate organizations from the official reception of returning POWs was part and parcel of the destruction of civil society and the establishment of dictatorship in East Germany. SED strategies regarding returning POWs were thus characterized—in Mary Fulbrook’s words—by a peculiar mixture of “paternalism and paranoia.”

In the aftermath of the June 1953 uprising the SED’s paranoia began to outweigh its paternalism. The return of the last POWs in 1953–4 and 1955–6 prompted the SED to mobilize the entire security apparatus of the East German police state in order to control the return of a few thousand POWs to East German communities. The last returnees in particular were subjected to intensive surveillance by the Stasi (state security police) and the regular East German police, which in some cases even lasted until the 1980s. Official strategies toward the last returnees thus demonstrated that, by the mid-1950s, the SED itself had lost its earlier confidence in the antifascist redemption of returning POWs and, by extension, all East Germans. Instead, the East German regime increasingly favored coercion and surveillance over ideological persuasion.

III

Finally, I analyze the interrelationship of the official receptions of returning POWs in East and West Germany and the POWs’ own
perceptions of themselves. Based on oral histories, autobiographies, and subjective testimonies in official sources, this study identifies various patterns by which returnees responded to their encounters with a radically changed homeland. It demonstrates how returnees’ homecoming experiences were influenced by the complex interplay of official discursive and social strategies and returnees’ own strategies of resistance, acceptance, or appropriation.36

The available evidence suggests that returnees drew primarily on those elements of official perceptions that allowed them to sustain continuity of the self in times of radical historical discontinuity. In the West it was primarily the ideology of anticommunism that allowed for the construction of such continuities.37 But the East German narrative of official antifascism entailed the possibility for continuities as well. Antifascist returnees, for example, could easily incorporate the ideas of militant masculinity that had shaped their socialization in Hitler’s army into their new role as socialist “fighters for progress.”38

At the same time, many returnees seem to have resented the transformative aspects of their reception in East and West Germany as they were included, for example, in Christian and antifascist conversion narratives.39 And rather than embracing overtly political narratives in giving meaning to their experience, returnees to both postwar societies frequently evoked another concept that seemed distinctly apolitical but also fundamentally German: the concept of Heimat (home or homeland).40 Heinz S., for example, described his homecoming to the East German town of Weimar in the fall of 1946: “These were the houses of peaceful German people, surrounded by gardens in which colorful sunflowers blossomed and ripe fruit hung on the trees. The soft waves of the Oder mountains and the dark green forests greeted us. It was the Heimat that welcomed us.”41 Particularly for returnees to the East, Heimat provided a more emotional and less obligating source of identification than the politically charged concept of the antifascist-democratic order. Heimat, moreover, also was a distinctly male fantasy. It promised the illusion of an intact environment with clearly delineated gender roles precisely at a moment when the war and the postwar period had turned gender relations upside down.

Returnees’ self-perceptions and homecoming experiences also took shape in the ostensibly apolitical spheres of the workplace and
the family. As a result, the political and ideological antagonism between liberal democracy in the West and dictatorship in the East may have lost some of its significance for the returnees' adjustment to postwar society. Instead, both German societies offered returnees the opportunity to realize delayed hopes for upward mobility and social advancement in a period of reconstruction. At the same time, the dominant emphasis on performance and productivity in both societies tended to marginalize those returnees who suffered more permanent disorientation or persistent physical or mental impairment. One returnee in West Germany complained to representatives of the Hessian interior ministry that "military service on all fronts and especially the period of captivity" had left him with "physical and psychological traumas that manifest themselves in depression and inferiority complexes.... The new conditions make me face the specter of unemployment. All this is tearing on my nerves."43

Such conflict-ridden individual transitions from war to peace also were often displaced from the public to the private sphere of the family. They were "privatized" and thus did not translate into larger social and political conflicts, as they did after World War I.44 Instead, German families, and German women in particular, seemed to have absorbed much of the tensions and frustrations that resulted from men's difficult adjustment to a devastated and radically changed homeland. This also meant that the consequences of war and defeat remained present within families for an extended period of time and continued to shape relations both between the sexes and between generations.

Whereas the return of the last POWs from the Soviet Union in 1955 signified the end of the public preoccupation with the direct consequences of war and defeat in both postwar societies, the private endings of the war lasted much longer. The generational conflicts of the 1960s, for example, can also be seen at least in part as a repoliticization of previously privatized conflicts. And the periodic eruptions in German public discourse—such as heated debate over an exhibition on the crimes of the German army—illuminate the persistent emotional investment in representations of the war and its consequences. The aftershocks of the protracted ending of World War II thus can be felt up to the present, and the long German postwar history may not yet have come to an end.
Notes

1 On German soldiers on the Eastern front, see Omer Bartov, Hitler’s Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich (New York, 1992), and Rolf Dieter Müller and Gerd Überschär, eds., Die Wehrmacht: Mythos und Realität (Munich, 1999), on Soviet captivity, see Andreas Hilger, Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in der Sowjetunion 1941-1956: Kriegsgefangenenpolitik, Lageralltag und Erinnerung (Essen, 2000).


3 On comparisons between the two postwar periods, see James M. Diehl, The Thanks of the Fatherland: German Veterans After the Second World War (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993).

4 See, e.g., Hannes Siegrist and Konrad H. Jarasch, eds., Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland 1945-1970 (Frankfurt am Main, 1997).


7 This critical response reappeared in memories of the war. See Klaus Naumann, Der Krieg als Text: Das Jahr 1945 im kulturellen Gedächtnis der Presse (Hamburg, 1998), 137-41.


10 For a list of symptoms, see Manfred Baldermann, “Die psychischen Grundlagen der Heimkehrer dystrophien und ihre Behandlung,” Münchner Medizinische Wochenschrift 93 (1951): 2187-90.


This is the main emphasis in Jeffrey Herf, Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germany (Cambridge, Mass., 1997).


For these representations, see, e.g., the material on the exhibit Wir Mahnen organized by the Verband der Heimkehrer, which toured West Germany during the 1950s, File Kulturarbeits, no.4, VdH Archive.


This was a parallel process to the universalization of female experiences during the early postwar period; see Elizabeth D. Heinemann, “The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany’s Crisis Years and West German National Identity,” American Historical Review 101 (1996): 354-96.

See Lerner, “Hysterical Men.”

On the conflation of POWs and war criminals in West Germany, see Norbert Frei, Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit (Munich, 1996).


34 See, e.g., the documentation in BA-Berlin, DO1/08/30801.
37 On returnees' anticomunism, see the study by the Frankfurter Institut für Sozialforschung, *Zum Politischen Bewusstsein ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener: Eine soziologische Untersuchung im Verband der Heimkehrer* (Frankfurt am Main, 1957).
COSMOPOLITAN VISIONS AND MUNICIPAL DISPLAYS: MUSEUMS, MARKETS, AND THE ETHNOGRAPHIC PROJECT IN GERMANY, 1868–1914

H. Glenn Penny III

Many people ask me how I arrived at this topic and what possessed me to devote so much time to nineteenth-century German ethnographic museums. The project began innocently enough: I arrived in graduate school with questions about identity formation and a strong interest in museums. I did some initial work on history museums in East and West Germany, but it soon became clear to me that if I was going to posit questions about German identities, particularly German national identity, then it would make good intellectual sense to begin in the middle of the nineteenth century rather than at the end of the twentieth.

As I shifted my focus back in time, Völkerkunde museums immediately caught my attention because of the ways they were distributed across Germany’s institutional landscape—and the fact that so many had been founded during a very short period of time. Indeed, the museums in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Munich (by far the largest and most well known) were all founded between 1868 and 1877. Local associations in each of these cities created them simultaneously and spontaneously; I found that intriguing. But even more intriguing was that no one could tell me why.

This and several other fairly simple questions pushed me forward: I wanted to know why the world’s largest ethnographic museum was in Berlin—where it was conceived before the creation of the German nation and founded more than a decade before Germany became a colonial power in 1884. I wanted to know why these museums grew at such an astounding rate that they quickly became the envy of scientists and museum directors across Europe and the United States. And, given the number and impressive growth of these institutions, I wanted to know why there was little mention of German ethnologists or their museums in the literature on the history of anthropology.
There are, I think, a number of different explanations for this absence, but primary among them is that the trauma of National Socialism and German anthropologists’ complicity in Nazi racial policies have made the history of late nineteenth-century German ethnology difficult for historians to reconstruct. The majority of scholars who have examined this period have generally either focused on locating antecedents to the racial and biological theories promoted by German anthropologists during the Weimar and Nazi periods, or they have sought to expose ethnologists’ complicity in colonialist policies. One can occasionally find references to nineteenth-century German ethnologists and their museums in the more general literature on the history of anthropology. We know from George Stocking’s work, for example, that E. B. Tylor in Britain was influenced by Germany’s leading ethnologist Adolf Bastian, and Curtis Hinsley has made it clear in his work on the Smithsonian Institution that Otis Mason’s conceptions of museum display were shaped in fundamental ways by his visits to Leipzig’s ethnographic museum; but for the most part, nineteenth-century German ethnologists and their museums have received surprisingly little attention during the period in which they were arguably the most influential.

Although the scholarship on German ethnology was—and still is—quite limited, there is a much larger historiography on ethnographic and other kinds of museums and displays, as well as a considerable amount of literature on the history of British and American anthropology; it was largely this literature, together with my background in European history, that helped me shape my initial questions. While preparing to do my research, for example, I read a lot about the roles museums played in the search for order in the late nineteenth century, the ways in which they had been used as part of a more general checking process to control rapid change and fortify and legitimate established orders and values. I learned how scientists often constructed their museums with the goal of disseminating values to their publics. I read that museums often became the tools of particular classes, that they promulgated gendered ideals as well as nationalist and colonialist goals, and that they had been used to help legitimate racial, social, and cultural hierarchies, and to fashion clearly recognizable “others” and “selves.”

As a result, I arrived in the archives ready to unveil the ethnologists’ links to colonialism, to read the displays, to discern the hierar-
chies, and to analyze the "others." Much to my surprise, however, I found disorder rather than order. I found a combination of older, cosmopolitan traditions and civic self-promotion rather than nationalist or colonialist goals governing the museums' founding, growth, and even the creation of their displays. I found that the directors and ethnologists in these museums eschewed Darwin and racial theories. I found an international market in material culture guiding ostensibly scientific decisions and creating scientific value, and I found a range of different publics shaping these museums rather than being instructed from above—all points that I have written about at length in my dissertation.7

Clearly I cannot collapse the entire dissertation into this essay or go into all these issues at great length. However, I think it would be useful if I at least explain the dissertation's title, "Cosmopolitan Visions and Municipal Displays," and discuss some of its implications. I will begin by quickly sketching out the ways in which the Humboldtian visions shared by Germany's first ethnologists combined with the cosmopolitan orientations of their supporters in a range of different cities to channel and shape German ethnographic museums and provide these institutions and the scientists in them with their impressive momentum. I will also discuss, just briefly, the transformation of these museums over time and, most importantly, what I believe their histories can tell us about both the development of German ethnology as a science as well as Germany's road to modernity.

In late nineteenth-century Germany ethnology was an emerging discipline led by intellectual newcomers in cities caught up in the throes of change. Ethnology began to emerge in the late 1860s as a scientific discipline in Europe, and consequently German ethnology benefited from the wave of civic associations that began forming after the Napoleonic wars and especially from the increasing numbers of natural scientific associations that were founded following the 1848 revolutions.8 Many of the people involved in these associations, and many who later championed ethnographic museums, were also inspired by the travel literature that began flooding Europe at this time. They were enchanted by Alexander von Humboldt's cosmopolitan vision, his challenge to pursue total histories of humanity and the world, and his penchant for massive empirical projects.8 His vision and method constituted the critical
intellectual backdrop for men like Adolf Bastian, the director of Berlin’s ethnographic museum from 1873 to 1905 and perhaps the leading ethnologist of the day, as well as the physicians, businessmen, professionals, and others who helped aspiring ethnologists such as Hermann Obst create their institutions.  

It was largely a result of this Humboldtian vision and their commitment to vast empirical projects that Germans developed a future-oriented ethnology centered around large collecting museums. Moreover, it also was because of this vision that they regarded their displays as working arrangements for exploring human nature, rather than (as in Britain and the United States) static explanations about humanity and the world. As Bastian envisioned it in the early 1870s, the ideal ethnographic museum would contain material culture from across the globe and throughout time, but it would not be constructed to articulate pointed narratives. Bastian favored open collections in which objects were arranged in cabinets made of glass and steel, flooded by natural light from large windows and glass ceilings, and positioned in such a way that the visitor could move easily through the geographically organized displays, gain an overview of the objects from entire regions, and make mental connections between the material cultures of people living in different times and places. Such arrangements were fundamentally different than what one might find in art museums or even in the colonial museums and exhibitions that became so popular later in the century. No particular object, grouping, or arrangement was supposed to stand out or be emphasized; there was no developmental series of artifacts such as one might find in the evolutionary arrangements in many British and American museums; and the museum’s goal was not to instruct its visitors with pedagogical exhibits. The displays were meant to function as tools of induction and comparative analysis, and they were expected to facilitate the location and exploration of the elementary characteristics of a unitary humanity and of the fundamental nature of “the human being.”  

This vision, this science, and the opportunity to create and fill these museums, emerged just as Germany’s cities were beginning a phase of unprecedented growth. This proved critical for the development of ethnographic museums. Organizations of citizens in a range of cities consistently embraced ethnologists and their institutions for the same reason: because this new, international science
provided the city that possessed a significant ethnological institution with cultural capital, and a means for exhibiting its citizens’ worldliness and thus for refashioning themselves. The Germans who founded and supported Germany’s largest ethnographic museums did so in four very different cities. Hamburg was a free city and mercantile harbor, Leipzig a landlocked commercial center, Berlin the national capital and an important industrial hub, and Munich the capital of Bavaria, which the historian Veit Valentine termed “the ‘classic state’ for antinational reaction.” Despite their differences, these cities shared several characteristics: They were the largest cities in Imperial Germany, and during the period from 1850 to 1910 they all experienced fantastic growth. Berlin grew from a provincial capital to a city of over two million people. The populations in Hamburg and Munich increased five-fold, and Leipzig’s population of 63,000 in 1850 grew to nearly eleven times that size by 1910.

The Germans who supported these institutions shared certain characteristics that provide us with critical insights into a nation that had only begun to be created in 1871. They were internationally as well as locally oriented; they were worldly despite their often-provincial origins; and they shared cosmopolitan outlooks, a strong civic pride, future-oriented worldviews, a powerful sense of optimism, and a willingness to take control, challenge older institutional structures, and refashion their environments to suit their needs. The actions and motivations of these worldly provincials reveal a Germany caught up in self-fashioning at the personal, local, and national levels. It was a Germany teeming with dynamic individuals and civic associations who eagerly embraced changes brought on by the second industrial revolution, the rising population, and the rapid growth of cities, and confidently viewed these changes as full of opportunities, something to be managed and negotiated rather than resisted.

The social life of these institutions also captures the tense interrelationship of regional, national, and international interests, as well as the avid intra-German competition that permeated Imperial Germany and the “German sciences.” Much of the history of the Kaisersreich has been based on analyses of actions and attitudes in Prussia, particularly in Berlin. But the tendency to focus on Prussia when contemplating questions about Germany, German identities, or the German cultural sciences during the Imperial period has often obscured critical details about the development of modern Ger-
many and the ways in which nationalism functioned as a stronger, more dominating form of particularism that ultimately proved much more stifling to Germans’ cosmopolitan visions than their regional and local loyalties.

Moreover, these regional and local loyalties were hardly a drawback. They provided this and other German sciences with much of their dynamism. Despite the political and economic unification of Germany in 1871, cultural affairs were left in the hands of the individual regions, and many of the people living in these regions refused to follow Berlin. Hand-in-hand with the concerted efforts at nation building in the late nineteenth century went the persistence of strong regional and international orientations and an energetic competition among the aggregate components of this young nation.\(^\text{16}\) It often was this competition that drove civic societies to sponsor museums, continually increase their budgets, and support ever greater expeditions in an effort to outdo each other. And in many cases, the scientists and their supporters in the provinces set the trends—a fact the Prussocentric historiography has left unexplored.

Indeed, a strong cosmopolitan orientation and competitive zeal were critical components in the drive to refashion the reputations and images of Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Munich during the period of this study, and they constituted the chief orientation for the clusters of scientists and supporters who developed German ethnographic museums. They constantly compared themselves with their counterparts in other “world cities” and took great pains to insure that they were not only keeping pace with these other cities but setting that pace in scientific and cultural achievements. Indeed, in many ways this competition on the world stage made them much more worldly than they otherwise might have been.

Moreover, Germans’ pressing desire to surpass the efforts of their counterparts in other German cities as well as to keep up with the latest international trends far outweighed any national interests behind the formation of these museums and continued throughout the Kaiserreich to guide the efforts of their supporters in fundamental ways—efforts that, if we accept Alan Beyerschen’s argument about competitive science and technology being hallmarks of modernity, were explicitly modern even though they were not necessarily nationally oriented.\(^\text{17}\) Modernization, in other words, does not necessarily mean the nationalization of everything.
These questions of nation and colonialism are particularly important, and I considered including a number of examples from my dissertation: the repeated proposals for a national ethnographic museum that were continuously shot down; the colonial museum that was exiled into Lehrter Bahnhof in Berlin where, without any state support, it teetered and tottered until it finally collapsed on the eve of World War I. I decided instead that it would make the most sense to simply make an explicit statement about the colonial question, because it is one that continues to come up again and again.

Many historians have characterized ethnology as the “foundational colonial discipline,” and a number of scholars have made repeated attempts to tie German ethnologists’ efforts at museum building during the late nineteenth century to colonial aspirations and nationalistic desires to raise Germany to world-power status.\(^{18}\)

My dissertation explicitly questions these assertions. Clearly, ethnology took shape within colonial contexts, and ethnologists often became intertwined in colonialist agendas.\(^{19}\) However, this is hardly news. Stressing this single point would strike me as akin to running through an open door; whereas overstressing it, as many scholars continue to do, is an action that shows little appreciation for the complexity of colonial situations or the particular cultural and intellectual contexts in which German ethnology took shape.

Given the relatively weak enthusiasm for colonialist efforts in Germany during much of the Kaiserreich, it would strike me as misguided to assume that they could explain the creation and rapid growth of these museums.\(^{20}\) Simply the timing behind the founding of Berlin’s ethnographic museum—by far the largest of its kind—should already give us cause to reconsider: The Berlin museum was envisioned before the creation of the German nation and founded eleven years before Germany became a colonial power in 1884. But this is only the first of many seemingly counterintuitive facts. The second-largest German ethnographic museum, for example, was not in Hamburg—Germany’s major harbor city, with its extensive connections to all regions of the globe—or Göttingen, where Georg Forster returned after his voyage with James Cook and where the term Ethnologie was coined in the late eighteenth century; rather, it emerged in the landlocked city of Leipzig, where the ethnographic museum was founded in 1868 by a local association comprised mostly of autodidactic physicians and businessmen and supported
throughout its existence as a municipal display rather than as part of a national endeavor.

A close analysis of the rhetoric and actions surrounding these museums makes it clear that when imperialism did begin to have a strong influence on ethnologists’ displays it was largely an imperialism that came from below, pushed into the museums by the increasingly broad and socially diverse audiences that began frequenting them around the turn of the century. These audiences arrived in the wake of efforts by municipal governments to link their scientific museums to more general trends in education and to use the museums’ visual displays to communicate with an increasingly large and diverse public. The directors of German ethnographic museums were drawn into these trends because of their dependence on municipal funds, and their movement was facilitated by their professionalization, which released them from their Humboldtian project as humanism went disciplinary in the late nineteenth century.

But if a new collectivity was formed with the rise of mass visual culture around the turn of the century, as scholars such as Vanessa Schwartz have argued, it was one in which the increasingly large and socially diverse audiences streaming into these museums, far from being “taught to see,” channeled and shaped the meanings of ethnologists’ displays and delimited what these scientists could do.

Furthermore, these visitors pushed the science in a dangerous direction. The putatively simple displays they demanded depended on an intertextuality of experiences that, when spread across these increasingly diverse groups of people, soon led to the oversimplification of ethnologists’ messages, reinforcing facile notions of polarity between Europeans and non-Europeans, and displacing the empathy at the heart of ethnologists’ Humboldtian visitors with a pointed focus on human difference. Democratization, in other words, undermined the liberal tendencies initially at the heart of this science.

Unfortunately, liberal humanism and democracy, two things that we in the West tend to cherish, do not always or necessarily coexist well. And what becomes clear through an analysis of the growth and development of Germany’s leading ethnographic museums is the degree to which an awareness of the world portrayed in these museums became more hierarchical as they became popular public institutions. The process of democratization and professionalization undermined German ethnology’s cosmopolitan character, divorced
ethnologists from their liberal convictions, and made these museums, and indeed the science itself, more didactic, more prescriptive, and unfortunately much more effective vehicles for communicating ideas about irreconcilable human difference, which dovetailed quite nicely with new theories about race. The link between democratization and the rise of race theory among ethnologists and anthropologists is a point I am still pondering.

Notes

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2 On the early history of ethnographic collections in Germany, see Kristian Bahnson, “Über ethnographische Museen, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Sammlungen in Deutschland, Österreich und Italien,” Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien 18 (1888): 109-64; for the founding dates, see Michael Hog, Ziele und Konzeptionen der Völkerkundemuseen in ihrer historischen Entwicklung (Frankfurt am Main, 1981).

3 One need only look at George Stocking's excellent series on the history of anthropology published since 1983 by the University of Wisconsin Press. Excluding the many pieces on Boasian anthropology that made cursory reference to Germany, only two of the articles in that series were devoted to questions of German ethnology or anthropology, and the volume on ethnographic museums neglected them entirely. In 1996 a volume focused on Boas and the German anthropological tradition attempted to redress this absence, yet here too the focus was more on Boas than the role of German ethnologists in the history of anthropology. Articles by Matti Bunzl and Benoît Massin were the outstanding exceptions. Similarly, revisionist work on the history of anthropology such as the volume edited by Peter Pels and Oscar Salemkirch that sought to take the history of anthropology out of confines of the academy have only repeated clichés about the Germans rather than following them into the field. See Peter Pels and Oscar Salemkirch, ed. Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1999; and George W. Stocking Jr. ed., Volkgeist as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition (Madison, Wis., 1996). See also James Whitman, “From Philology to Anthropology in Midnineteenth-Century Germany,” in George W. Stocking Jr. ed., Functionalist Historiography: Essays on British Social Anthropology, History of Anthropology, vol. 2 (Madison, Wis., 1984), 214-29; and Robert Proctor, “From Anthropologie to Rassenkunde in the German Anthropological Tradition,” in George W. Stocking Jr., ed., Bones, Bodies, Behavior: Essays on Biological Anthropology (Madison, Wis., 1985), 138-79.

4 See, e.g., Wilhelm E. Mühlmann, Geschichte der Anthropologie (Frankfurt am Main, 1968).

5 George W. Stocking Jr., After Tylor: British Social Anthropology, 1881-1951 (Madison, Wis., 1996); Curtis M. Hinsley Jr., Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institu-

6 For an introduction to this literature, see inter alia Tony Bennett, Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics (London, 1995).


10 By far the best work on Bastian is Annemieke Fiedermutz-Laun, Der Kulturhistorische Gedanke bei Adolf Bastian: Systematisierung und Darstellung der Theorie und Methode mit dem Versuch einer Bewertung des kulturhistorischen Gehaltes auf dieser Grundlage (Wiesbaden, 1970).


12 Jürgen Reulecke, Geschichte der Urbanisierung in Deutschland (Frankfurt am Main, 1985).

13 A number of smaller museums were also founded in smaller cities: Bremen, Cassel, Darmstadt, Freiburg im Breisgau, Karlsruhe, Lübeck, and Stuttgart, as well as more medium sized cities such as Cologne, Dresden, and Frankfurt am Main. The smaller museums, however, were generally regarded as less scientific, and those in the medium cities were founded much later; Dresden being the exception—the royal collections were refashioned into a zoological and anthropological/ethnological museum in 1879. Sierra A. Bruckner, “The Tingle-Tingle of Modernity: Popular Anthropology and the Cultural Politics of Identity in Imperial Germany,” Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1999, 97.


15 Jeffrey A. Johnson has argued something similar in his work on the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, but because he remained focused on Berlin, the tensions he identified were limited to the national and the international. See Jeffrey A. Johnson, The Kaiser’s Chemists: Science and Modernization in Imperial Germany (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1990).

16 The now standard work on regional identity during the Imperial period is Applegate, A Nation of Provincials; see also James Retallack, ed., Saxony in German History: Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830-1933 (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2000).
Alan D. Beyerchen has argued: “If competitiveness at the forefront of science and technology is one of the hallmarks of modernity, then Germany at the opening of the twentieth century was one of the most modern countries in the world” (Alan D. Beyerchen, “On the Stimulation of Excellence in Wilhelmian Science,” in Jack R. Dukes and Joachim Remak, eds., Another Germany: A Reconsideration of the Imperial Era [Boulder, Colo., 1988], 139).


There is an overwhelming amount of literature on this topic. See inter alia George W. Stocking Jr., ed., Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge (Madison, Wis., 1991).


I have chosen the term demokratisierung deliberately. In the history of science the term “popularization” generally implies the distribution of knowledge from on high. But what takes place in these museums is a dialogic relationship in which the distribution vectors went in both directions and visitors did become active participants in the production of knowledge, effectively changing the practice of anthropology in these museums. That said, I do not want to over emphasize the “equality” of these vectors. Clearly, the people with institutional positions retained the lion’s share of the power. The best attempt to deal with this problem is Andreas Daum’s use of the term Vermittler (intermediary), although it does not strike me as helpful within the context of these museums. See Daum, Wissenschaftsvermittlung im 19. Jahrhundert.

Thanks to Sue Marchand for her help and insights into this particular problem.
MEMBERS OF THE BUNDESTAG VISIT THE GHI

On September 20, 2000, the Institute hosted a small workshop on the tradition and practice of immunity, investigative commissions, and impeachment in the German and American cases. Representatives from three German political parties were the honored guests: Hermann Bachmaier (SPD), Andreas Schmidt (CDU), and Hans-Christian Ströbele (Bündnis '90/Die Grünen). Christof Mauch (GHI) provided the introductions and moderated. Dr. Helmut Winkelmann, head of the Commissions Secretariat of the Bundestag, and Dr. Christoph Eichhorn, from the political section of the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., among others, also attended. Professor Allan J. Lichtman, a specialist on American political history at American University, gave an informative presentation on recent political and electoral events in the United States. A lively and thoughtful discussion followed.

HEIDEKING FELLOWSHIPS

The Institute is delighted to announce the establishment of two new fellowship programs in honor of the late Jürgen Heideking (see issue no. 27 of the Bulletin). Sponsored by the Friends of the GHI, the Kade-Heideking Fellowship aims to support a German doctoral student working in the fields of twentieth-century international history, the early national period of American history, or the history of German-American relations. This twelve-month fellowship is residential in nature, and the fellow should plan to divide his or her time between the GHI in Washington and the University of Wisconsin—Madison. The stipend amount is $30,000. Applicants must be nominated by their academic supervisor, and they must submit an abstract of their dissertation project. The fellowship will be advertised in the spring of each year. The Friends and the Institute are
grateful to the Annette Kade Charitable Trust of New York City for its generous support of this fellowship.

The Thyssen-Heideking Fellowship is a one-year residential postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Cologne whose purpose is to fund American post-doctoral students working in the fields of twentieth-century international history, the early national period of American history, or the history of German-American relations. The stipend amount is DM 40,000 plus allowances. Applicants must submit an abstract of their research project to the director of the GHI. The fellowship will be advertised in the spring of each year. The Institute is grateful to the Fritz Thyssen Foundation of Cologne, Germany, for its generous support of this fellowship.

The Heideking Fellowships, made possible by grants from a leading American charitable trust and a leading German private foundation, permit us to further the careers of talented young scholars while honoring the legacy of one of Germany’s leading specialist in German-American history.

**Young Scholars Forum**

A new GHI program, the Young Scholars Forum was developed as a means of supporting American Ph.D. candidates and recent Ph.D. recipients working in the fields of German, German-American, or German-European history. It is planned as an annual weekend event at which young scholars will have the opportunity to present their work to their American peers and to distinguished scholars from both sides of the Atlantic. The Forum aims to provide a setting for critical debate and function as a source of inspiration for participants, and our hope is that it becomes a meeting place for junior scholars from across the United States. Each year participants will focus on a different topic, methodological approach, and time period. The theme for 2001 is “Gender, Power, Religion: Forces in Cultural History.”

The Forum was advertised last autumn in the American Historical Association’s newsletter, *Perspectives*, on several H-net mailing lists, and on the GHI’s Web site. In addition, more than three hundred invitations to apply were sent out to graduate students and recent Ph.D. recipients, and nearly two hundred letters and program...
announcements were distributed to university faculty members in German history. We were overwhelmed by the response to our announcement because the number of applications exceeded the number we could accept by a factor of four. With many exciting research topics and impressive proposals covering all periods since the Middle Ages, it was very difficult to reach decisions. In the end, twenty-two young scholars were invited to discuss their research at the GHI in Washington from March 29 through April 1, 2001. Their individual topics cover a wide range of subjects, including the control of sexuality in early modern Germany, the role of religion as a social force, Jewish life in the nineteenth century, new definitions of femininity and masculinity from the nineteenth century onward, the history of fashion, and postwar homosexual culture in Germany.

Lyndal Roper, a distinguished scholar of early modern German cultural history at the University of London, has agreed to deliver the keynote lecture on the first evening, broadly addressing the topic of the Forum. Several other senior cultural historians have been invited to participate. The final program will be announced on the GHI Web site.

We are pleased that the Young Scholars Forum, supported by the Friends of the GHI and generously funded by the Max Kade Foundation, is off to a promising start. The theme for the Young Scholars Forum in 2002 will combine military and social history, and is tentatively titled “War and Society.”

**Medieval History Seminar**

The GHI is pleased to invite applications for participation in our new annual seminar for German and American doctoral candidates in medieval history. Its purpose is to discuss common research problems and approaches, to encourage closer ties between German and American medievalists, and to foster intellectual exchange and collaboration. Each year, we plan to invite eight Europeans and an equal number of Americans to contribute seminar papers, which will be predistributed and discussed at a three-day meeting. The first seminar will be held at the Institute on October 25–28, 2001. Travel and lodging expenses will be covered by the GHI. Subsequent meetings will be in Europe and the United States.
Mentors for the seminar in 2001 will be: Michael Borgolte (Humboldt University), Caroline Walker Bynum (Columbia University), Patrick J. Geary (University of California at Los Angeles), and Johannes Fried (University of Frankfurt).

Participation is not limited to historians working on German history or German-speaking regions of Europe. However, since papers and discussions will be conducted both in German and English, the ability to read papers in both languages is necessary.

We are now accepting applications from doctoral students who will not have finished their degree by October 2001. Applications should include a short (ca. 3 pp.) project description, a curriculum vitae, and a letter of reference from the main advisor. Please send applications by May 1, 2001, to

German Historical Institute
Medieval History Seminar
1607 New Hampshire Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009-2562
E-mail: B.Thomas@ghi-dc.org

Seventh Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History

The Seventh Annual Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar for Ph.D. candidates in German history will take place at the GHI from April 25 to 28, 2001. The topic is “Germany in the Age of Total War, 1914-1945.” A detailed report will follow in the fall 2001 Bulletin.

Summer Seminar in Paleography and Archival Studies, June 17–30, 2001

The GHI is pleased to announce the participants in the 2001 Summer Seminar, co-organized by the German Department of University of Wisconsin—Madison. The participants will spend the period from June 17 to June 30 in Germany. Daniel S. Mattern from the GHI
will once again lead this year’s program. A complete summary of activities will follow in the fall 2001 issue of the Bulletin.


LIBRARY REPORT

The GHI Library’s new acquisitions include the Complete Correspondence between Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno, a critical edition of the complete works of Friedrich Nietzsche, the four-volume Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz, and the multi-
volume edition of Hanser Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur. We have also completed our collection of the series "Quellen zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien," an important resource for documents on postwar German political history.

In addition, we have once again expanded our list of journal subscriptions. The new titles include Zeitschrift für neuere Rechtsgeschichte, Rundfunk und Geschichte, Das Achtzehnte Jahrhundert, Journal of the History of Sexuality, and Social History of Medicine.

We would like to express our gratitude to the following people and institutions who have supported the work of the GHI Library by generously donating books: The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies; Johannes Burkhardt; Andreas W. Daum; Die Deutsche Bibliothek; Deutscher Bundestag; Georg-Eckert-Institut für Schulbuchforschung; German Embassy, Washington, D.C.; GHI London; GHI Warsaw; Library of Congress; Christof Mauch; Jürgen Miethke; Herman Nickel; Arnold Price; Helmut Schmersal; Brent Smith; DIE ZEIT; and Andrea Zielinski.

We would also like to inform our readers about our updated collection of databases in CD-ROM format. The following is a comprehensive list of CD-ROMs in the GHI library. As always please consult the Library’s Internet catalog (www.ghi-dc.org) for complete bibliographical information, or simply call the GHI directly.


Humanities abstracts. New York [u.a.]: Wilson, 2000.

Index to NIDS. [Alexandria, Va.]: Chadwyck-Healey, 1992 -


Jahresberichte für deutsche Geschichte Datenbank Jahresberichte für deutsche Geschichte / hrsg. von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1955 -

Krimdok, Krimmon: Dokumentation der deutschsprachigen kriminologischen Literatur / Kriminologische Institute der Universitäten Heidelberg und Tübingen. Tübingen, 1995


Statistisches Jahrbuch ... für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und für das Ausland / Statistisches Bundesamt. Stuttgart: Metzler-Poeschel, 1994.


Unser Parlament—Forum der Demokratie: 150 Jahre deutsche Parlamentsgeschichte in Bildern, Fotos, Videos, Texten und
NEW PUBLICATIONS


The Institute is delighted to bring to readers’ attention the publication of an essay collection edited by William J. Courtenay of the University of Wisconsin—Madison and Jürgen Miethke of the University of Heidelberg. This book began as a conference held at the GHI in September 1997. The collection brings together leading students of the history of learning and higher education in medieval Europe, with four parts devoted to German students and universities, university careers in Italy and France, pre-university school and schoolmasters, and the uses of university learning and writing. In addition to the editors, contributors are J. Hoeppner Moran Cruz, Martin Kintzinger, Darleen Pryds, Frank Rapproth, Rainer C. Schwinges, Thomas Sullivan, Helmut G. Walther, and Klaus Wriedt.

STAFF CHANGES

**Wilfried Mausbach,** Research Fellow, left the GHI in November 2000 to accept a position as assistant professor of history at the University of Heidelberg.

**Margit Moffitt,** Administrator, left the GHI on December 1, 2000, to accept a position at the Deutsche Luft- und Raumfahrtgesellschaft/ German Aerospace Center’s Washington office.
WALTRAUD SCHELKLE, Visiting Research Fellow, left the GHI at the end of 2000 and accepted positions as both a research fellow at the European Institute of Southbank University in London and as an adjunct professor in the Department of Economics at the Free University of Berlin.
EVENTS

SPRING 2001 LECTURE SERIES

The Third Reich in Historical Perspective

March 1  Gisela Bock (Free University of Berlin)
    National Socialism and Women

March 15  Peter Hayes (Northwestern University)
    German Industry Under the Swastika

April 5   Henry Friedlander (Brooklyn College, CUNY)
    The Arena of the Holocaust: Concentration Camps, Killing Centers, Killing Fields

April 18  Norbert Frei (University of Bochum)
    The Germans and Their Nazi Past: From Adenauer to Kohl

May 17   Susannah Heschel (Dartmouth College)
    When Jesus Was an Aryan: Protestant Theology During the Third Reich

GERD BUCERIUS ANNUAL LECTURE

It is a special pleasure to announce the institution of the Gerd Bucerius Annual Lecture at the GHI, made possible by a generous grant from the ZEIT Foundation (DIE ZEIT-Stiftung), located in Hamburg, Germany. The lecture, named for Gerd Bucerius—publisher and cofounder of DIE ZEIT magazine, endower of the ZEIT Foundation, politician, lawmaker, engaged citizen—will be presented annually by an internationally recognized scholar and will address topics at the forefront of scholarly debate that shed light on the German-American relationship. The inaugural lecture will be presented on June 5, 2001, by Lord Ralf Dahrendorf, on a topic to be announced.
ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE PRESENT: PHOTOGRAPHS BY GERHARD FALLER-WALZER

Together with the Goethe Institut and the WPA\Corcoran Museum, the GHI has organized an exhibition of the work of Berlin photographer Gerhard Faller-Walzer. In his photographs the artist interweaves a documentation of Berlin life after the fall of the Berlin Wall and his interpretation of what his camera lens excavates. The photographs thus paradigmatically embody the intersection of art, history, and the search for memory in contemporary Germany. In his artistic quest for the archaeological traces of our times Faller-Walzer focuses on a variety of objects, from disregarded mechanical parts to the deserted Potsdamer Platz, from the dead bodies of mice and rats to the symbolic monument of the Reichstag. Preserving images of the present, the photographer creates pieces of historical memory. The double nature of Faller-Walzer’s photography—as documentation and as interpretation—also inspires his technique, one that aims to mirror the artist’s subjective impression of his documentary scenarios by transforming the appearance of the prints using such techniques as partial bleaching and manipulation of color. Whereas some of the photographs will be on display at the GHI, the main body of the exhibition will be shown at the Goethe Institut from March 12 to April 30, 2001. The vernissage, to be held at the GHI on Wednesday, March 14, at 5:30 p.m., features introductions by Marion Deshmukh on Germany’s unification, Wendy Grossman on the history of photography, and Cordula A. Grewe on the artist and his work. The opening reception will be held at the Goethe Institut on Thursday, March 15, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. All are welcome.

UPCOMING IN 2001 AND 2002

“Prussia—Yesterday and Tomorrow.” Symposium at the GHI with the minister president of the German state of Brandenburg, Manfred Stolpe, and Professor David Barclay, March 27. Convener: Dieter Dettke (Friedrich Ebert Foundation) and Christof Mauch (GHI).

“Across National Boundaries.” Workshop at the University of Cincinnati (Ohio), April 6–8, 2001. Conveners: Deborah Cohen (American University) and Maura O’Connor (University of Cincinnati).


“Coming to Terms With the Nazi Past: West Germany in the 1960s.” Conference at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, April 19–22, 2001. Conveners: Philipp Gassert (University of Heidelberg) and Alan E. Steinweis (University of Nebraska at Lincoln).

“The Culture of Foundations in Germany and North America.” Workshop at the University of Toronto, May 3–5, 2001. Conveners: Thomas Adam (University of Toronto) and Eckhardt Fuchs (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science).


“A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction, 1939–1945.” Conference at the Hamburger Stiftung für Sozialforschung, August 29–September 1, 2001. Conveners: Roger Chickering (Georgetown University), Stig Förster (University of Bern), and Bernd Greiner (Hamburger Stiftung für Sozialforschung).
"Hollywood and the Cinemas of the World." Conference at the University of Victoria, September 20-23, 2001. Conveners: Heide Fehrenbach (Emory University), Christof Mauch (GHI), and Thomas J. Saunders (University of Victoria).

"Latin America, North America, and Europe: International Encounters and Relations in Historical Perspective." Conference at the University of Oregon, March 2002. Conveners: Christof Mauch (GHI) and Friedrich Schuler (University of Oregon).
GHI PUBLICATIONS

PUBLICATIONS OF THE GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, D.C. (WITH CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS). Currently edited by Detlef Junker, with the assistance of Daniel S. Mattern:


TRANSATLANTISCHE HISTORISCHE STUDIEN. Published in conjunction with the Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart. Currently edited by Detlef Junker, with the assistance of Cordula A. Grewe:


Copies are available for purchase from Franz Steiner Verlag, c/o Brockhaus/Commission D-70803 Kornwestheim. Phone orders: (07154) 13270. Website: www.steinerverlag.de.

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS SUPPORTED BY THE GHI


Matthias Judt and Burghard Ciesla, eds., Technology Transfer Out of Germany After 1945. Amsterdam, 1996.


**IN-HOUSE PUBLICATIONS**

BULLETIN. Published semiannually, in spring and fall, it is available directly from the Institute.

**ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES**


**Note:** In 1997 the Annual Lecture was published as part of the Occasional Papers series. It is now featured in the Bulletin.

**OCCASIONAL PAPERS**


REFERENCE GUIDES


CONFERENCE PAPERS ON THE WEB


Note: * Indicates no longer in print.