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Preface

This issue of the Bulletin begins with the 37th Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute, delivered last December by Tara Zahra (University of Chicago) on the topic “Against the World: Anti-Globalism and Mass Politics between the World Wars.” The author of a recent book on the subject, Zahra reframes the history of interwar Europe as a history of anti-globalism, demonstrating how productive it is to think about a variety of interwar movements that used the nationalist language of “self-sufficiency” or “sovereignty” to criticize internationalist policies as part of a broad anti-globalist trend. Arguing that these anti-global movements were closely connected to the collapse of continental empires and challenges to overseas empires, Zahra also makes a powerful case for their political ambivalence: While the quest for autarky could be and was used to justify racist imperial conquest, anti-globalism was not only a project of the political right but often received support from across the political spectrum.

Our next article reproduces a stimulating roundtable conversation on “new perspectives and controversies on East Germany” that took place at the German Historical Institute last November. Introduced here by Simone Lässig (GHI) and moderated by Samuel Clowes Huneke (George Mason University), this roundtable brought together the authors of three recent (2023) books on East Germany, which approach the subject from very different perspectives: Katja Hoyer (King’s College London), whose book Beyond the Wall: A history of East Germany offers a historical survey of East Germany from 1949 to 1990; Christina Morina (University of Bielefeld), whose book Tausend Aufbrüche: Die Deutschen und ihre Demokratie seit den 1980er Jahren, which won Germany’s 2024 Nonfiction Book of the Year award (the Sachbuchpreis), presents a comparative study of how ordinary
citizens in both East and West Germany understood and practiced democracy since the 1980s; and Joyce Mushaben (Georgetown University), whose book *What Remains? The Dialectical Identities of Eastern Germans* examines how the “identities” of five social groups – GDR writers and intellectuals; pastors and dissidents; women; youth; and working-class men – were reconfigured across three generations, from 1949 all the way to 2020.

Our third article introduces readers to the research of GHI Research Fellow Raphael Rössel. In his article, Rössel examines the “Golden Crutch” Awards, which were awarded by West German disability rights activists in a public award ceremony from 1978 to 1980, in a remarkable attempt to mobilize humor and satire to advance the rights of people with disabilities. Carefully reconstructing the historical context of the emerging disability rights movement, he interprets the awards as an important stage in the articulation of the interests of people with disabilities in West Germany. In particular, Rössel uses this case study to examine the role that satire can play in public advocacy, the agency of people with disabilities, and the complicated issue of allyship, that is the question, hotly debated at the time, what role people with disabilities should play in the disability movement.

The next section presents a thematic Forum on “Antisemitism and Sexualities” featuring three essays based on papers delivered at a conference that was co-organized by the German Historical Institute Washington and the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung at the Technical University Berlin. The *Forum’s* theme and the three essays are introduced by three of the conference’s organizers: Anna-Carolin Augustin (GHI), Sebastian Bischoff (University of Bielefeld), and Kristoff Kerl (Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung). Stefanie Schüler-Springorum’s essay “The Dark Side of Modernity? Rethinking Antisemitism and Sexuality” argues that, while some anti-Jewish images touched on matters of sexuality already in the Middle Ages and the early modern
era, it was only “with the advent of modernity that Judeophobia [became] intimately and ... universally connected with gender images and fantasies about deviant or dangerous sexual predilections, performances or activities.” Schüler-Springorum's essay is followed by a wide-ranging comment by Dagmar Herzog (CUNY Graduate Center) that focuses on the intersection between antisemitism and ableism directed against persons with disabilities in pre-Nazi and Nazi Germany. The Forum's final essay, by Sander Gilman (Emory University), explores the connections between masculinity and antisemitism by examining the role that antisemitic tropes play in the U.S. far Right's obsessive defense of masculinity.

Finally, this issue reports on GHI conferences on a wide variety of subjects, including the history of labor, migration, mobility, and borderlands. Please turn to our news section for recent GHI news. For up-to-date information on upcoming events, publications, fellowships, and calls for papers, please consult the GHI website at http://www.ghi-dc.org, check our twitter account at https://twitter.com/GHIWashington or sign up for our digital newsletter on our website. We look forward to welcoming you at upcoming events in both Washington and Berkeley.

Simone Lässig (Director) and Richard F. Wetzell (Editor)
Features
Against the World: Anti-Globalism and Mass Politics between the World Wars

37th Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute Washington, December 1, 2023

Tara Zahra
University of Chicago

In 1916, feminist and internationalist Mary Sheepshanks declared that the era of globalism was over. She lamented that even committed internationalists “have lost faith and join in the chorus of those who never sympathized with our ideals and say internationalism has failed.” Although she was confident that the spirit of internationalism would return once “the fumes cleared from men’s brains,” she argued that it had been replaced for the moment by “race hatred and national jealousy, leading to tariffs, militarism, armaments, crushing taxation, restricted intercourse, mutual butchery, and the ruin of all progress.”

But the fumes did not clear quickly. More than twenty-five years later, the Austrian-Jewish writer Stefan Zweig would publish his memoir, The World of Yesterday. It was a nostalgic eulogy for a lost era of globalism. Zweig, a self-described “citizen of the world,” recalled “Before 1914, the earth had belonged

to all ... There were no permits, no visas, and it always gives me pleasure to astonish the young by telling them that before 1914 I travelled from Europe to India and to America without passport and without ever having seen one.” After the war, everything changed. “The world was on the defensive against strangers ... The humiliations which once had been devised with criminals alone in mind now were imposed upon the traveler, before and during every journey.” Zweig linked these bureaucratic humiliations to a loss of human dignity and the lost dream of a united world.  

In Britain, economist John Maynard Keynes penned his own famous obituary for globalization shortly after the war ended. “What an extraordinary episode in the economic progress of man that age was which came to an end in August 1914!” he wrote. In the golden age before the war, “The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in bed, the various products of the whole earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep.” It was an age in which “the projects of militarism and imperialism, of racial and cultural rivalries, of monopolies, restrictions, and exclusion, which were to play the serpent to this paradise, were little more than the amusements of his daily newspaper.” These looming threats “appeared to exercise almost no influence at all on the ordinary course of his social and economic life, the internationalization of which was nearly complete in practice.”

Stefan Zweig and John Maynard Keynes remain among the most famous analysts of the changes brought by the First World War. They both understood these changes in terms of the end of a golden era of globalization, during which people, goods, and capital had breezed across international frontiers. But their very nostalgia for a lost world of globalism offers an important clue as to the causes of its downfall. Both men were myopic about the extent to which the freedoms they associated with globalization had been privileges of a narrow elite. The earth had not belonged to everyone

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before 1914. It had, however, belonged to people like Keynes and Zweig.

Zweig and Keynes traveled the world unmolested by bureaucrats before World War I largely because they were wealthy, highly educated, white European men. They traveled freely for business and pleasure, with no concern for their physical safety. Nor did they worry about the meddlesome interference of husbands, fathers, or state authorities.

In steerage, the “World of Yesterday” looked very different. Migrants heading toward the United States around 1900 were subjected to the poking and prodding of doctors charged with excluding sick, disabled, and “undesirable” migrants. Non-whites were categorically excluded. Millions of people in the world lived in deep poverty, in regions that were denied political sovereignty and exploited economically for the benefit of Europeans and North Americans. While international trade may have benefited all parties in the aggregate, it exacerbated inequality between rich countries and poor countries. Likewise, within industrialized countries, globalization did not benefit everyone equally: there were clear winners and losers.4

Keynes frankly acknowledged all this. The bounty of globalization was not shared equally. But inequality, he claimed, had been seen as a necessary corollary to progress in the nineteenth century. “The greater part of the population, it is true, worked hard and lived at a low standard of comfort, yet were, to all appearances, reasonably contented with this lot.” This was because they believed in the prospect of social mobility. “Escape was possible,” he insisted, “for any man of capacity or character at all exceeding the average.”5

The First World War shattered those illusions. The magnitude of wartime sacrifices bred popular demands for immediate justice. Across Europe and across the world, workers, women, and colonial subjects took to the streets, demanding sovereignty and greater equality. The wheels of global integration ground to a halt. The era of anti-globalism lasted another two

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de cades, punctuated by the greatest global economic crisis in world history, the Great Depression. Nor would the strife be overcome with a new treaty or a peaceful handshake. Rather, as American journalist Dorothy Thompson would observe from Berlin in 1931, "Looking at Europe, from the British Isles to the Balkans, one is forced to the admission that after twelve years of the League of Nations, the International Court ... multilateral treaties, Kellogg Pacts, the International Bank and disarmament conferences, the whole world is retreating from the international position and is taking its dolls and going home."

There is no question about the decline of global mobility and trade in this period: in 1914, international trade accounted for 30 percent of the world economy, an all-time high. By 1933 it had slumped to a low of 10 percent and did not recover until the 1970s. Transatlantic migration, which reached its peak of 2.1 million in 1913, came to a sputtering halt during the war. Global communication also broke down between the wars. News that had traveled via telegraph from Europe to North America and Australia in a day in 1913 took weeks to arrive in 1920. The gold standard, the motor of global financial integration, broke down during the First World War and was abandoned roadside during the 1930s, first by Great Britain (1931), then the United States (1933), and finally by France and other European powers. While trade, migration, and international cooperation recovered briefly during the late 1920s, the Great Depression dealt a decisive blow.

What name should we give to this age of disconnection? I use the term “anti-globalism” to refer to movements that sought to insulate societies from the global economy by mobilizing against policies, people, and institutions associated with globalization or internationalism. Sometimes, these movements produced “deglobalization,” the actual slowdown or curtailment of the transnational flows of people, ideas, goods, or capital. But people at the time did not use the terms globalization or deglobalization. They spoke instead of “freedom” vs.

I therefore use the terms “globalization” and “deglobalization” critically and with some caveats. These terms came into widespread use in the 1990s, at a moment when a certain kind of free-market capitalism and global integration appeared to be the unstoppable victors of History. After Communism’s collapse in Eastern Europe in 1989, many social scientists and journalists began to talk about “globalization” like they once spoke of “modernization.” It seemed to be an irrepresible force that moved in only one direction. McDonald’s opened in Moscow, global finance was ascendant, and an innovation called the World Wide Web was bringing people into ever more constant communication. But we only needed to look backward to see forward: the history of Europe between 1918 and 1939 reveals very clearly that the history of globalization was punctuated by pauses and (attempted) reversals. Yet many analysts in the 1990s and beyond maintained that “globalization” was a “natural economic process,” which would accelerate indefinitely if only left unmolested by government intervention. They saw deglobalization, by contrast (including interwar deglobalization) as the product of “unnatural” political interference with that process.9

Yet the history of global integration in the nineteenth century reveals that there was nothing “natural” or apolitical about it. Nor was it directed by an invisible hand. Imperial states and armies guaranteed that their colonies would be hospitable to foreign investments, and that debtors would pay back international loans.10 Even during globalization’s most rapid acceleration, “free trade” was more a British exception than the rule. The United States, for one, maintained high tariffs right up to the eve of the First World War.11

Another issue is that “globalization” and “deglobalization” sound like binary opposites. Yet, as we will see, deglobalization

and globalization, like nationalism and internationalism, were often flip sides of the same coin. This simultaneity was nothing new in 1914 or 1918. It was baked into the foundation of internationalist projects and accelerating global connection in the late nineteenth century. Globalization and anti-globalism rose in tandem.\textsuperscript{12} Even between the two World Wars, global flows often moved into new channels and morphed into new shapes, rather than rising and falling. The most radical anti-globalists rarely sought (let alone achieved) total isolation from the global economy, or autarky: they sought globalization on their own terms, or at least better terms.\textsuperscript{13} And anti-globalists themselves organized in transnational networks, a phenomenon frequently noted by contemporaries. “The only international which seems to be winning these days is the international of the anti-internationalists,” quipped Dorothy Thompson in 1931.\textsuperscript{14}

So, what did anti-globalism look like between the World Wars? When and why did it begin? While 1914 was a clear breaking point, there were real signs of trouble well before then. Anti-globalism was a product of two developments that coincided in the late nineteenth century: first, the acceleration of globalization itself, and second, the rise of mass politics, which meant that the people negatively affected by global integration (or who felt like they were negatively affected) had the ability to talk back, at the ballot box or in the streets.

By the turn of the twentieth century, it was already clear to many that the gains from free trade, imperial expansion, and mass migration were not shared equally. In Germany, economists began to sound alarm bells about a globalizing food market, arguing that reliance on imports would compromise both the economy and national security. The United States began to impose limits on immigration in the 1880s, with an all-out ban of Chinese migrants in 1882, followed by prohibitions of individuals seen as morally, mentally, or physically deficient; Germany reinforced its borders and ports against the influx of allegedly diseased East European Jews, and


\textsuperscript{14} Thompson, “The Gray Squirrel,” 7.
countries of mass emigration mobilized to stop what they saw as the massive hemorrhaging of human capital.

The First World War prompted further skepticism about the risks and rewards of global interdependence. On the one hand, it was a “global” war. World War I mobilized human and material resources around the world, set soldiers adrift to far flung locations, and increased international financial entanglement through a massive web of international debt (especially debts to the United States). At the same time, the war produced unprecedented supply-chain issues. The cost of shipping tripled, and inflation soared. Warring states sought to cut off supplies to their enemies. Many measures introduced during wartime for one purpose continued or became models for anti-global policies and politics after the war. In the name of security, states required travelers to carry passports when they traveled abroad, a new innovation. It was supposed to be temporary, but the requirement was not lifted after the war.

Demobilized soldiers took their weapons home. Some were inspired by the Bolshevik revolution and joined radical internationalists, pacifist, Socialist and Communist movements and parties. But the reaction to left-wing forms of globalism—real and imagined—was immediate and intensely violent. In Budapest and Munich, counterrevolutionary paramilitary groups hunted Jews in the street, as anti-Semites linked Jews to global capitalism and international Bolshevism. In the United States, a Red Scare was underway and the Ku Klux Klan was on the rise; Prohibition reflected animosity toward Catholic immigrants, who were believed to abuse alcohol. The so-called “Spanish flu” pandemic intensified popular xenophobia, as migrants were associated with disease. New laws further restricted mobility. The Johnson-Reed Act, passed in 1924, choked off immigration for decades based on racist quotas.

In Europe, states and regions that had once traded freely quickly erected protective barriers against one another. Europe now

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had 38 economic units instead of 26, 27 different currencies instead of 13, and customs frontiers that extended an additional 6000–7000 kilometers. After a brief period of recovery and growth in the late 1920s, the Great Depression unsettled the convictions of many former advocates of free trade. John Maynard Keynes famously wrote in 1932, “I sympathize ... with those who would minimize, rather than those who would maximize, economic entanglement between nations. Ideas, knowledge, art, hospitality, trade—these are the things which should of their nature be international. But let goods be home-spun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible; and above all, let finance be primarily national.”

Anti-global movements were closely linked to the collapse of continental empires and challenges to overseas empires. One of the most obvious parallels to interwar campaigns for autarky in Europe was the Swadeshi movement in India. The goal was a complete boycott of British goods and the increased production of homespun cloth (khadi) and clothing. “Our freedom will be won through the spinning-wheel,” Mahatma Gandhi declared in 1921. He argued that spinning would protect female virtue, prevent famine, and promote Indian independence. “The revival of hand-spinning is the least penance we must do for the sin of our forefathers in having succumbed to the satanic influences of the foreign manufacturer.” Yet anti-colonial advocates of economic self-sufficiency in interwar India preached a self-consciously “globalist” political agenda. They argued that more economic independence would produce a more genuine form of internationalism based on cooperation rather than exploitation.

In Ireland, the conservative government of Eamon de Valera promoted self-sufficiency in the name of independence from Britain. “I have said repeatedly that our guiding principle will be to make Ireland as self-contained and as self-supporting as possible,” de Valera emphasized. But it would come at the cost of austerity. “If a man makes up his mind to go out into a cottage, he must remember that he cannot have in the cottage...
the luxuries around him which he had when he was bearing the kicks of the master," he preached.\(^{20}\)

The problem was that while anti-colonial nationalists demanded an end to Empire, many states began to see the expansion and consolidation of empires as their best route to achieving their own “freedom” from the global economy. Britain and France both attempted to rely more on raw materials from their empires during the Great Depression. “Empire Shopping” became a mass movement in Great Britain in the 1920s, encouraging women to purchase, cook, and eat only foods grown in the Empire—which really meant supporting white farmers in places like Canada, Australia, and Kenya. In 1932, the Ottawa Agreement officially established the principle of “Imperial free-trade” in Britain, creating a system of preferential tariffs for trade within the Empire. Japan meanwhile strove to create an anti-colonial autarkic empire in East Asia. The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was intended to be a self-sufficient regional bloc that was free of white, Western domination, led, of course, by Japan. Nazi geopolitical experts such as Karl Haushofer saw the Japanese empire (along with the United States and Russia) as a model for what Germany would achieve in Central Europe. Hitler and Mussolini are remembered for their efforts to conquer the world, rather than as anti-globalists. But the drive for Empire in interwar Italy, Germany, Japan, and elsewhere was justified in the name of achieving economic self-sufficiency—these were anti-global empires.\(^{21}\)

The revolt against globalization was particularly fierce in states that had either lost their empires at the end of World War I, like Germany and Austria, or felt as though they had lost, like Italy. The Paris Peace Treaties transformed large sectors of the German, Italian and Austrian populations into bitter critics of globalization and liberal internationalism. That bitterness was exacerbated by hunger. During the First World War, Britain had imposed a successful naval blockade on Germany and Austria-Hungary, preventing food and crucial


supplies from reaching civilians. They continued the blockade after the war to force the losers to accept the terms of the Peace Treaties. The number of Germans and Austrians who starved to death is still being debated. But it is undeniable that many Central Europeans blamed the blockade for their defeat and vowed that they would never again be dependent for their security or survival on imported food.

Austria-Hungary had once been the largest free-trade zone in Europe. Its dissolution at the end of the war left consumers cut off from producers in successor states that erected high tariffs against one another. Austrians insisted that their new rump state was not viable. Social Democratic Chancellor Karl Renner declared: “As a consequence of the war we not only have no free trade, but protective tariffs in every country, direct barriers against foreign goods in every country, and often against foreign people as well.”22 In Vienna, citizens took matters into their own hands. So-called “wild settlements” appeared around the city before the war ended, as unemployed workers and returning soldiers illegally occupied land, built dwellings out of wood planks, waste material, and dirt, and ate what they could grow. These radical gardeners organized themselves into a mass movement, demanding support from the government.23 The settlement movement in Austria was explicitly about turning

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23 “Der Massenaufmarch der Siedler und Siedlerfreude am 3. April,” Der Siedler, May 1921, 22.
inward rather than outward, colonizing the homeland instead of the rest of the world. “Inner colonization is pure colonial politics,” explained the Austrian Kronenzeitung. “The only difference is that it does not involve the colonization of some foreign land, but rather the colonization of our own homeland.”

Initially the settlement movement had strong ties to Social Democracy. In 1920, Otto Neurath, the Vienna Circle philosopher (and Social Democrat), co-founded the Austrian Association for Settlement and Small Gardens with Hans Kampffmeyer, a founder of the German garden city movement. The association employed Adolf Loos and Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, a Communist and the first female architect in Austria, to design homes for settlers. Autarkic ideals were fundamental to Loos’s vision. “One often used to speak of Austrian cuisine,” he wrote. “Only today we have realized that this cuisine was only possible because there was a state-form called the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy ... we have now lost everything that nourished us. And that means re-education. We need to create our own national cuisine. The Bohemian dumpling, the Moravian Buchtel, the Italian schnitzel, all things that were an unshakable part of Viennese cuisine for centuries, must now be replaced by local foods.”


Loos, Neurath, and Schütte-Lihotzky promoted a utopian vision of settlers’ lives in modern, healthy, well-planned homes and communities. In reality, however, the settlement movement—and the broader movement for autarky—required sacrifice—of convenience, luxury, and variety—for the sake of independence. One settlement advocate suggested that settlers trade meat and potatoes for a local diet consisting solely of chestnuts, goat’s milk, and apples.\(^{26}\)

These projects had mixed results. Many settlers still collected unemployment payments in the 1930s. Settlers in Leopoldau, on the outskirts of Vienna, had no schools, doctors, public transit, gas, electricity, sewage, or stores in the 1930s. Settlers interviewed decades later recalled hunger and bone-chilling cold, due to a lack of real heating in the winter.\(^ {27}\) Female settlers often had a particularly rough life, working 13- to 14-hour days. The entire settlement idea was premised on the unpaid labor of women and children.\(^ {28}\)

In Italy, achieving “freedom” from the global economy was one of Mussolini’s goals from the outset. Mussolini’s “Battle for Grain” began in 1925, partly as a response to the world’s closing borders. Achieving autarky became an official goal of the Italian state after the League of Nations imposed economic

\(^{26}\) Max Ermers, Österreichs Wirtschaftsverfall und Wiedergeburt. Ein Wirtschaftsprogram zur Selbstrettung (Vienna, 1922); Heinrich Jungbauer, Unabhängigkeit durch Landwirtschaft (Vienna, 1920), 32–35.


\(^{28}\) Klara Friedländer, “Die neue Frauenfrage,” Das Wort der Frau, December 18, 1932, 3.
sanctions on Italy in 1936, in response to its invasion of Abyssinia. In fascist Italy, relentless propaganda instructed Italians (and particularly women) on the value of autarky. Weeks were designated to celebrate Italian products, such as the Festival of Bread, the Festival of the Grape, and the National Day for Rice. Deglobalization also inspired the invention of synthetic technologies and materials that could replace imported goods (such as chinotto to replace Coca-Cola, and a textile made out of milk products called lanital—rayon was more successful).

Italy had long maintained a global presence through the millions of emigrants who settled in Europe, North, and South America. Emigration had been the dominant solution to the

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problems of poverty and underemployment. Until the fascist era, the Italian government sought to transform emigrant communities into a diasporic empire that would substitute for formal colonies. But in the 1920s, thanks to new American restrictions on immigration, Italians could no longer emigrate easily. Mussolini now wanted to deglobalize Italians—by actively preventing emigration and resettling potential migrants internally, repatriating migrants from abroad, and acquiring his own formal empire in Africa. These efforts fed one of the most ambitious “internal colonization” projects of the interwar period: the “reclamation” and settlement of the Pontine Marshes, just outside Rome. The New York Times described these marshes as “inhabited by only a few fever-wrecked wretches.” For Mussolini, literally “draining the swamp” became the regime’s showcase project. Giuseppe Tassinari, the undersecretary of state in charge of this project, declared that the Pontine settlements represented the “foundation for the self-sufficiency in food that is the basis of our battle for autarky.” At its peak in 1933, close to 125,000 workers were employed on the land reclamation project in the marshes. Many died in abhorrent working conditions. In keeping with the regime’s focus on autarky, settlement workers who contracted malaria were sometimes treated with mercury, an ineffective and painful treatment used to replace imported quinine. The Pontine settlements might be seen as “anti-global cities,” as they were meant to embody autarkic, rural, and fascist values. But as in Austria, the reality was far removed from the propaganda. Administrators constantly complained about settlers. There were high levels of theft, slowdowns, alcohol abuse, and absenteeism. While Italy was 95 percent independent in food production by 1939, this was at the cost of increasing food prices and declining nutrition and caloric intake. By the beginning of the Second World War, massive food shortages contributed to the regime’s growing unpopularity.
Hitler announced his Four-Year Plan to achieve autarky in 1936. But anti-internationalism was always part of the Nazi party platform: in the July 1932 election campaign, Hitler proclaimed, "There’s so much international, so much world conscience ... there’s the League of Nations, the Disarmament Conference, Moscow, the Second International, the Third International—and what did all that produce for Germany?"  

The Nazi ideal of Blood and Soil was formed in opposition to Jewish cosmopolitanism, migration, liberal internationalism, and the global economy. At the first Reichsbauerntag (Reich Farmers’ Day) in 1934, Undersecretary of Agriculture Herbert Backe lamented that in previous decades, “The relationship between the Volk and its territory was blown up by the trans-national global economy. Individuals no longer felt bound to the Volk to which they belonged by blood, did not feel rooted in their native soil, but instead belonged above all to a global economic community.”  

When the Nazis came to power in Germany and eventually in Austria, they did so on a surge of anti-global rhetoric and activism. But there was ongoing disagreement among leading Nazis about the ideal relationship of the Third Reich to the global economy. In 1936, Robert Ley, the leader of the German Worker’s Front, mocked Germans who would ostracize a German housewife “who buys Brazilian coffee or a few Spanish lemons as a traitor to the Volk.” For Ley, autarky meant backwardness. “Cutting ourselves off from the global economy ... over the long run means not only renouncing conveniences of daily life that are provided by foreign goods, it means renouncing participation in the cultural and technological advancement of the world.”  

The regime conveyed contradictory messages to the German public in the 1930s. German women were flooded with propaganda urging them to cook and eat only local foods, boycott chain stores, and take up spinning to knit their own textiles. Nazi leaders continued to promote settlement. Behind the scenes, however, an expert in the Reichsbank confessed, “Even if we had 20


million sheep, we would only be able to produce 20 percent of the wool we consume domestically." The solution to this problem was imperial expansion, which was pursued in the name of the *Grossraumwirtschaft* (large-regional economy). After 1939, Nazi policymakers shifted from seeking autarky for the German nation toward achieving autarky for continental Europe—dominated of course by Germany—and inspired by the United States, Japan, and Russia.

The interwar quest for greater self-sufficiency ultimately justified racist forms of imperial conquest. But it was never only a far-right fantasy. People rushed back to the land in democracies as well as dictatorships. For example, in the United States during the Great Depression, more people moved from the city to countryside than from country to city, reversing a decades-long trend. Since the United States was one of the only countries in the world which produced enough food to feed its population, the goal was individual, rather than national self-sufficiency. During the Great Depression, Henry Ford required his workers in Michigan to cultivate subsistence gardens to keep “one foot in industry and another on the land.” He was a fierce opponent of the New Deal and saw subsistence farming as an alternative to the dole.

The Back to the Land movement was also popularized by lifestyle reformers such as Ralph Borsodi. On his farm in upstate New York, Borsodi, his wife, and their two children produced almost everything they needed. “We weave suitings, blankets, carpets, and draperies, we make some of our own clothing; we do all our own laundry work; we grind flour, corn meal, and breakfast cereals; we have our own workshops, including a printing plant, and we have a swimming pool, tennis court, and even a billiard-room.” Their diet consisted almost entirely of foods they grew themselves. Borsodi, like Ford, denounced the welfare state, insisting that subsistence farming was a great alternative to unemployment insurance. Ford and Borsodi were both staunch opponents of the New Deal, but President Roosevelt actually agreed with many of their prin-


44 Ralph Borsodi, *Flight from the City: An Experiment in Creative Living on the Land* (New York, 1933).
principles. One New Deal initiative resettled tens of thousands of unemployed workers on what were called “subsistence homesteads,” where they were supposed to grow their own food. As in Europe, these back-to-the-land movements were rarely successful on their own terms. In the United States, critics immediately remarked that Borsodi’s vision required a huge initial investment in equipment, far beyond the means of most workers. As public housing advocate Catherine Bauer noted, it also required “a husky wife with a positive taste for domestic production, no desire to do anything else with her time, and a gift for home education.”

But the fact that these settlement schemes failed does not mean that they were not consequential. As it turns out, the Great Depression was not the beginning of a permanent return to the land or to farming in America. But it may have accelerated the shift of populations toward the suburbs. It did not take much time for the subsistence gardens and poultry sheds envisioned by planners to be transformed into flower gardens and green backyards with swing sets and barbecues.

Interwar anti-globalism had many unexpected, long-term consequences. Often, it produced new and unexpected forms

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Figure 5. The Jersey Homestead project was developed near Hightstown, New Jersey, by the U.S. Resettlement Administration in an attempt to establish a self-sufficient agricultural community. Photograph by Russell Lee, 1936. Source: Farm Security Administration-Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

of globalization or internationalism. In the 1930s, for example, companies like the Czechoslovak shoe company Bat’a and the Ford Motor Company responded to anti-foreign sentiment and high tariffs by moving production overseas and using local labor. They exported factories, instead of shoes and cars, and advertised themselves as “local firms.” Ford ceded more and more control over his plants to governments and managers abroad, including Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Bat’a’s advertisements in India in the 1930s boasted that Bat’a shoes were all “Made in India” by Indians—and many Indians still think Bat’a is an Indian company. It was the beginning of the multinational corporation as we know it.\footnote{On Bat’a, see Zachary Doleshal, *In the Kingdom of Shoes: Bat’a, Zlin, and Globalization, 1894–1945* (Toronto, 2021).}

There were many other lasting consequences of anti-globalism, big and small. New technologies and products were developed in the quest for self-sufficiency, from synthetic fabrics to artificial fertilizers to the synthetic rubber and fuel;}
manufactured at Auschwitz. Meanwhile, internationalists did not simply pack up and go home. Experts in organizations like the League of Nations developed new initiatives to aid victims of deglobalization, such as minorities and stateless people. Economists in the late 1930s also promoted new ideas which they hoped would spread the benefits of globalization more equally. They set the stage for the construction of the postwar welfare state and institutions for economic development that aimed to reduce inequality domestically and internationally (such as the Bretton Woods system).

I have attempted to reframe the history of interwar Europe in terms of a history of anti-globalism. I have inevitably raised questions about our own moment. This project was inspired by contemporary events. I began my research in 2016. There was a refugee crisis, Donald Trump was elected, British citizens voted for Brexit, and right-wing populist regimes were on the rise everywhere. Still, I would not have predicted when I began this research on deglobalization that our lives would be interrupted by a disruption in global travel and trade on an unprecedented scale. Nor could I have predicted a war in Ukraine that would disrupt global supply chains and bring a new focus on energy independence. During the pandemic in the United States, people reportedly fled cities, seeking homes with gardens where they could socially distance. Local foods and homespun goods have never been more popular, as anti-globalism has acquired a new focus on environmental sustainability. As in the interwar era, anti-globalism and deglobalization are resurgent on the left and right, in democracies and in authoritarian states.

It is certainly a good moment to examine the last major era of anti-globalism, to remember the extent to which globalization is not unstoppable or inevitable. As a historian, however, I do not see this only as a story about what the past can teach us about the present. Rather, I have been even more struck by the ways in which the present has reshaped my understanding of the past—everything from the effects of the First World
War and the Great Depression to the rise of fascism. Between the two World Wars, the continent was rebuilt to insulate and protect people from globalization’s perceived and real negative consequences. Those efforts were halted only by the Second World War, after which no one wanted to return to 1918 or 1929. It is still unclear when or how today’s campaign against the world will end, but we can be certain that our own world will be transformed by it.

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The Other Half of Germany: New Perspectives and Controversies on East Germany—A Roundtable

Katja Hoyer, Christina Morina, and Joyce Mushaben, in conversation with Samuel Huneke

Introduction by Simone Lässig (Director of the GHI)

In November 2023, the German Historical Institute brought together a panel of three authors whose new works on the history of the GDR and the unification process have attracted a great deal of attention both nationally and internationally and have enlivened the debate on the history of “the East Germans” in different ways. I would like to thank Christina Morina, Katja Hoyer and Joyce Mushaben for answering Samuel Clowes Huneke’s questions and agreeing to make their discussion accessible to the readers of our Bulletin.¹

Transcending Walls

It was not long after German unification in 1990 that there began to be talk of a lingering Mauer im Kopf, a “wall in the head” that had taken the place of the Berlin Wall. Much as

eastern and western Germans might have agreed that the two post-war states should be one, it quickly became clear that they often had very different views on what had happened, what was happening, and what should happen in Germany. The term *Mauer im Kopf* was mostly used, though, by western Germans in describing the thinking of their fellow citizens in the east, and it strongly implied that easterners were still stuck in a past better forgotten. That past—the forty-year history of the German Democratic Republic—was cast in overwhelmingly negative terms in public discussion in the early years of unification. The GDR was typically taken to be synonymous with dictatorship, economic backwardness, and environmental devastation. But as the “blossoming landscapes” promised by Chancellor Helmut Kohl failed to materialize, easterners became more vocal in pointing out that life in the GDR had not been unrelentingly bleak and that some aspects of their lives had actually been better before unification.

Much has changed in Germany—in both halves of the country—since the 1990s. Thanks to national and European funding, for instance, many cities in the East have spruced themselves up and can boast both a modern infrastructure and a low unemployment rate. The divergence in views of the GDR era, however, largely remains.

Scholars, curators, and public historians have produced a rich body of research that offers and represents a nuanced, multifaceted picture of life and politics in the east from the end of World War II to the dramatic events of 1989. Today, everyday life in the GDR is an established subject of scholarly research and the post-1989 transformation that in one half of Germany—as in the entire eastern part of Europe—aﬀected all spheres of life is receiving increasing attention. In political and social debates, however, the differentiated images established by recent research or exhibitions rarely emerge.

The binary concepts and collective attributions that characterized debates about “the East Germans” in the 1990s
reverberate still in public discourse. This first became particularly clear in reaction to the high approval ratings that the “Party of Democratic Socialism” (PDS), the successor to East Germany’s ruling party, the SED, enjoyed in the new federal states. After the PDS was merged into the all-German party “Die Linke,” thereby losing importance as a mouthpiece for genuine East German interests and consequently also losing voter support, the focus shifted. The focus of public debate is now directed at the right-wing populist party Alternative for Germany (AfD), founded in 2013, which the German Verfassungsschutz (Office for the Protection of the Constitution) has now classified as definitely right-wing extremist and a threat to democracy in Thuringia, Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt. Some attribute the popularity of the AfD, particularly in the new federal states, to the supposedly weak roots of liberal democracy and a political culture in which the legacy of the National Socialist and Communist dictatorships has not yet been dealt with. Others see this support as a protest against western Germany’s hubris and deafness to the biographies, concerns and experiences of people in the East.

As crude and simplistic as the dominant and competing readings in public discourse are, and as little as they reflect the current state of research, it is indisputable that the history of the GDR and German unification is once again booming today. But it is equally undisputed that many East Germans still do not see themselves adequately represented in these debates and in the historical memory of the new Federal Republic as a whole. There are many explanations for this paradox, and almost all of them have a historical dimension.

Ambiguities of Transformation

In 1990, the majority of GDR citizens, for a variety of reasons, voted in favor of rapid unification with the old Federal Republic. Skeptical voices and calls for a new constitution to be created jointly found little response in both East and West. And indeed, by joining an apparently economically and
politically superior system, the East Germans gained much that had been unattainable for them in the GDR—personal freedom, democratic rights, and access to an alluring consumer society. What implications such a collective migration into firmly established social structures would have, and how profoundly it would change their lives, was only realized by the majority of East Germans when unexpected social hardships displaced the euphoria of the quickly completed unification and the joy of its achievements. Hardly any families were spared the consequences of the privatization and closure of state-owned enterprises, which were the responsibility of the Treuhand, a trust agency founded in the late GDR but headed by West German officials after the Unification Treaty. Only a tiny proportion of East Germans was able to benefit from privatization under the conditions set by the Treuhand, but the effects of the rapid economic and social change affected many of them. The state tried to compensate for material hardships, but the mental ones left wounds and scars: mass unemployment was an experience that had been absent in the GDR and therefore was just as traumatic as the social devaluation of industrial work, much of which had been performed by women in the GDR, and the collapsing social reputation of blue-collar workers.

Simultaneously with these social ruptures, the East Germans experienced a cultural change that gave many of them the impression of being restricted in their own power to act and having their autonomy determined by others in a new way. The GDR had disappeared, but the old Federal Republic lived on in a united Germany as a society of dominance and difference. The new citizens of the Federal Republic had to orient themselves, for better or worse, within this new normative framework if they wanted to survive in the new system. For East Germans, “unification” primarily meant catching up and adapting to West German standards. In the discourse of the 1990s, these standards were seen as the norm and everything East German as a deviation. At a time when the “end of history” was being celebrated in the West, “the East” embodied
everything that needed to be overcome quickly, and by no means in Germany alone. But here, where East and West wanted to come together in one and the same country, this constellation created specific feelings of dependency, inadequacy and the loss of identity—even among many representatives of East German civil society, who had experienced and shaped the period between the peaceful revolution and German unification as a time of self-empowerment, but now, like all East Germans, had to learn to navigate in legal frameworks and institutions that were foreign to them.

Most East Germans were not able to draw on relevant social experiences and coping strategies. The transfer elites from West Germany, on the other hand, had the cultural, social, and economic capital that new German citizens usually lacked. Regardless of the individual motives that led West German experts and job-seeking academics to East German administrative offices, judicial bodies, or research institutions, they reinforced the impression that East German biographies and knowledge were being devalued and delegitimized across the board.

The functionaries of the socialist system quickly lost influence at the upper, and in some cases middle, levels of society. The majority of East Germans welcomed this and yet were no less excluded from access to the new elites than they had been previously. This was soon to change in politics and government to such an extent that East Germans such as Angela Merkel and Joachim Gauck gained national and international recognition as representatives of the new Federal Republic. However, the disparities rooted in the early unification process still have not disappeared in top positions in business and academia, the media, or the judiciary. Neither have the serious differences in wealth distribution, demographic structures, or the location of innovative industries. Statistical surveys on inherited wealth delineate the borders of the GDR on a permanent basis—on average, inheritances in the new federal states are around a tenth as large as in those which
constituted West Germany. The income and living conditions of many East Germans have improved significantly over the years, but these material gains are built on a shaky foundation. Property is usually permanent, income is not. The widespread fear of loss and decline in the East can be explained by the radical system change after 1990 and the experience that everything in life can change quickly. However, these feelings can also be explained by the fact that the social status newly acquired over recent decades is in comparison to that of many West Germans highly volatile. In the face of the multiple crises that all contemporaries are currently confronted with, terms such as “security” and “predictability” have a very special ring to East Germans (and Eastern Europeans as well).

In all of this, disparities are also increasing within eastern Germany, particularly between regions that are lagging behind economically and have a high proportion of older citizens, in contrast to cities such as Dresden, Leipzig and Jena, which are benefiting enormously from the burgeoning, robust knowledge industry that has emerged in proximity to the region’s universities and is thus attracting young, creative people. The pace of deindustrialization in the former East Germany, and to some extent Eastern Europe writ large, may well be unprecedented internationally; however, with the wide gap between urban and rural areas, between “left behind” regions and those attuned to cutting-edge technological development, the East German federal states symbolize fundamental problems of post-industrial societies in the age of globalization. Similar disparities have shaped the USA for a long time and with similar consequences for the political landscape as in united Germany.

However, there are striking differences in East Germans’ stance toward the state: on the one hand, experiences of real socialism and a transformation that many East Germans experienced as transfer recipients are the reason for the high, often exaggerated expectations that many people in the East project onto the state as a problem solver; disappointment...
and frustration are therefore inevitable. On the other hand, the same experiences have nurtured a deep-seated mistrust of “the state” and the conviction that East Germans—on behalf of all German citizens—have to show “those up there” what “the people” expect.

As all the participants in our discussion pointed out, East Germans shaped their lives under real socialism in very different ways. They embodied or supported the system, endured or criticized it, or did both at the same time. Only a few actively fought against the communist state and its elites. But many developed eigensinnige (stubborn, independent) practices in their everyday lives. They experimented with various forms of self-empowerment, and in the end they even allowed a dictatorship to implode (or watched it do so). Quite a few of them, including former or prevailing communists, saw the subsequent upheavals—as Christina Morina shows—as the dawn of a promising future. Nevertheless, many East Germans trust the democratic institutions of the new Federal Republic less than their fellow citizens in the West, and in public discourse this is predominantly understood as a lack of democratic capacity. More recent research represented on our panel, on the other hand, sharpens the focus on East-specific elements of a democratic self-image. According to this framework, notions of democracy were not absent from everyday life in the GDR but were practiced and called for “from the bottom up” in structures and forms of expression such as individual petitions or internal debates in companies, partly even in local branches of socialist mass organizations. However, these forms of grassroots democracy, which experienced an impressive confirmation of their effectiveness in 1989, could not easily be reconciled with the representative democracy established in the West, and this in turn reinforced the latent feelings of limited political agency in the East. Grassroots movements and parties of the right-wing spectrum, which had previously found only moderate support in the West, knew how to use these feelings to their advantage.
The Political Use of Contemporary History

Notwithstanding differences over how to gauge the democratic potential of East Germans, historians and social scientists agree in the assessment that right-wing populists have cleverly appropriated widespread experiences of loss, fears of decline, and discourses of devaluation; that they benefit enormously from the construction of an “Eastern identity”; and that they know how to instrumentalize historical moments of self-empowerment for goals that threaten democracy. Institutions of research, education, and victim advocacy have all contributed to this to some extent, not to mention the predominantly West German-dominated media: for a long time, they treated GDR history as a mere history of dictatorship and defined confrontation and demarcation as the dictum of their “reappraisal.” In doing so, they established narratives that bypassed many people and did not invite them to critically reflect on their own responsibility in the socialist system.

To this day, East Germans have hardly given an account of their own actions to each other. For the most part, they avoid putting themselves to the test and engaging in an honest debate that goes beyond the usual victim narratives. The “Round Tables” convened over 1989/90 made enormous efforts to establish such a critical position. In the culture of Western dominance, however, such spaces for self-reflection suddenly seemed to be sealed off. In a time of undifferentiated judgments, anyone who wanted to find a place in the new system always ran the risk of permanently damaging themselves with a critical review. Added to this was East Germans’ widespread feeling of having become a living experiment in how to overcome a dictatorship. What the old Federal Republic had neglected and suppressed in dealing with the history of National Socialism in the decades after 1945 was now to be dealt with all the more emphatically, and quickly, when it came to the history of the GDR and the responsibility of Germans in just one (the dictatorship-shaped) part of the country.
This complex constellation has made it difficult for East German families and micro-collectives to critically examine the history of the GDR and has contributed to the fact that even members of the post-reunification generation conjure up an East German identity and complain about a lack of historical representation. Hardly any East Germans want the GDR back, but debates such as those experienced by West German families after 1968 about their own historical responsibility and the leeway that each individual has in dictatorships are still rare in East Germany today. More widespread were inter-generational forms of self-empowerment, self-assurance, and collective remembrance, which—with ripple effects since the late 1990s—were expressed in literature, private consumption, sport and regional media. Nostalgia and Eigensinn, defiance and self-assertion, entered into an interesting mélange. This mixture became politically explosive when the political right wove itself into these discourses and when its leading figures, most of whom came from the West, projected the fear of further social devaluation felt among East Germans onto the already conflict-ridden topic of “migration.”

As all our panelists emphasize in different ways, East Germans were never a homogeneous group, and most GDR citizens were neither in the Stasi nor in the opposition. Caution is still required today when making collective attributions. It is true that the AfD’s gains and the challenges facing representative democracies became apparent earlier and more clearly in the east than in the west of the country. However, despite all justified concerns, it should be noted that the majority of East Germans who go to the polls in state and federal elections do not vote for right-wing populists, but for democrats.

Discussing Multiple Perspectives

The panel, which we document below, was unusual in its composition, not only because we gave three female authors a stage, but also because two of them—Katja Hoyer and Christina Morina—as well as the two conveners—Anna Maria
Boss and myself—grew up in the GDR, while the other two panelists—Joyce Mushaben and Samuel Huneke—bring a North American perspective. The fact that the West German perspective, which is usually perceived as the dominant one, was not biographically represented on the panel was not a conscious decision on the part of the organizers, but this constellation may have lent our discussion a special “spice.” It centered on three questions: how should the history of the former socialist part of Germany and the experiences of its citizens be incorporated into an intertwined history of Germany after 1945? How have different readings of German history and different experiences of reunification and social change specifically influenced the understanding of democracy and expectations of democratic political processes in East and West Germany? And what weight should differences in memory and historical perspective have when it comes to understanding the current political and social situation in Germany?

The three panelists offer very different answers, as they perceptibly differ in their methods, their objectives, and their approaches to the recent history of a divided Germany struggling for unification. What unites them is their endeavor to finally break down binary interpretations and give a broad spectrum of actors a historical voice. The issues that are increasingly preoccupying historians are the questions of how to write a polyphonic history that does not become arbitrary but sharpens the focus on structures, causalities, and processes; how to make the many entanglements in the history of the two states and their European and global contexts visible; and how to do justice to the inherently heterogeneous historical experiences of East Germans in public discourse. The panelists provide answers that can open up new perspectives on seemingly familiar developments. However, they also show that the transformation that began in 1989/90 has not been completed. It continues and interlocks with new transformations and experiences of crisis in a way that is likely to further intensify the need for social and historiographical debates.
This is why it is so important to bring together different ways of approaching recent German history, but also the different chambers of resonance in which they become audible, on one and the same platform, and to allow controversial approaches to coexist. The GHI is a place of free research and as such promotes the unprejudiced study of history and its representations in society. The discussion documented below offers a telling example of this, and I would therefore like to thank the three authors and the moderator for making their contributions available to an even wider audience.

The Roundtable

**Samuel Huneke:** I’d like to briefly thank the GHI, Simone Lässig, and Anna Maria Boß, for organizing such a wonderful event. I’ll begin by introducing the three panelists, and then I have a few questions that I’ll pose before we open it up to general questions and answers from the audience.

First we have Christina Morina, who has been Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Bielefeld since 2019. Her research focuses on major themes in German and European history from the 19th to the 21st century, particularly Nazism and the history of bystanding during the Holocaust, socialism, Marxism, and communism, political and memory cultures in Germany since 1945, and the history of historiography. Her dissertation on the memory of the Eastern Front War in post-war Germany appeared as *Legacies of Stalingrad: Remembering the Eastern Front in Germany since 1945*, with Cambridge University Press in 2011. Since then, she has published a wide range of articles and book chapters. Her second book, her Habilitation, *Die Erfindung des Marxismus: Wie eine Idee die Welt eroberte*, was published in 2017 with Siedler. It won the prestigious “Geisteswissenschaften International” translation prize and appeared in English with Oxford University Press in 2023 as *The Invention of Marxism: How an Idea Shaped Everything*. In 2019, she co-authored *Zur
rechten Zeit: Wider die Rückkehr des Nationalismus (published with Ullstein), with Norbert Frei, Franka Maubach, and Maik Tändler. And most recently, and relevant for today, Morina’s third monograph was published under the title Tausend Aufbrüche: Die Deutschen und ihre Demokratie seit den 1980er-Jahren, also with Siedler.

Next, we have Katja Hoyer, who is a German British historian, a journalist, and the author of the widely acclaimed history of the Kaiserreich, Blood and Iron. Her latest book, Beyond the Wall: East Germany 1949–1990, was long listed for the Baillie Gifford Prize and deemed one of the best books of the year by several newspapers, including the Times of London, the Financial Times, and the Daily Telegraph. Katja is a visiting research fellow at King’s College London and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society. She’s a columnist for the Washington Post and contributes to several other newspapers in the UK and Germany. Katja co-hosts the podcast “The New Germany.” She was born in East Germany, as was just mentioned, and is now based in the UK.

Finally, last but not least, we have Joyce Mushaben, who is Curators’ Distinguished Professor of Comparative Politics Emerita at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. She now lives here in Washington D.C. and works as an adjunct faculty member at the BMW Center for German and European Studies at Georgetown University. Her early work focused on new social movements, in particular, peace, ecology, feminist, anti-nuclear protests, and neo-Nazi activism, on German national identity, and generational change. She then moved on to European Union developments involving women’s leadership, gender policies, citizenship, migration, and asylum policies, Euro-Islam debates, and comparative welfare state reforms. She’s the author of six monographs, including most recently and relevant for today, What Remains? The Dialectical Identities of Eastern Germans, which was published in 2023 with Palgrave Macmillan. Her current book project is titled “Becoming Madam Europe: Ursula von der Leyen and the Pursuit of Gender Equality.”
Welcome to all three of you. And as a sort of icebreaker question, I’m curious to hear a bit more about the books each of you have just published, which are either on or include the history of East Germany. To start off this discussion, could you say a little bit about your book, its focus and arguments, and what drew you to your topic in the first place?

Katja Hoyer: My book was called *Beyond the Wall*, and was intended to be an entire history of East Germany, of the GDR, from its origins in 1949 to its fall in 1990. In German, the subtitle is actually “A New History of the GDR.” We had a long debate about whether that’s appropriate or not, given that I’m synthesizing a lot of the research that’s already there. But what I think is new about it is that I’ve tried to write it for a Western audience, taking this internal German debate out of Germany. I wrote it in English for, first, the UK audience, but also internationally, for an audience that is not particularly familiar with East Germany or all those particular details about the state, about its development and so on. And mainly also for people who didn’t actually live in East Germany themselves. But I was also trying to do that out of the perspective of East Germans themselves. So, I didn’t want to talk about them without including them in this narrative. And so the idea was to make as many of their voices heard in the story as I possibly could.

Each of the chapters, even each of the subchapters, starts with a personal story of one individual who lived in East Germany. So, it’ll say something like: “On the 17th of September in 1954, Brigitte left her house thinking about this, that, and the other,” and I’m trying to link her story back to what happened in the GDR overall, to try and humanize the entire political history of the GDR while telling it. So, I think in that way it is a new history of the GDR in that it’s trying to tell the story from the perspectives of the people who lived there, but making it understandable for an audience that doesn’t have that experience.
What brought me to this idea is an interesting speech that Angela Merkel, arguably the most famous East German of them all, gave in 2021, one of her last big speeches in office just before she left as German Chancellor, where she said that it still riles her when people reduce her biography before 1990, so the first 36 years of her life, really just over half of her life at that point, to a negative aspect of her biography, something she should shrug off, leave behind. The phrase that the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, who basically are very close to her own party, used—they intended to praise her at the end of her career and said, essentially, despite the “ballast” of her GDR biography, she still managed to become a decent politician and make her way in life after 1990. And she said there’s so much wrong with that sentence, not only despite of that, has she managed to do it, but also to call that entire time span of her life, “ballast,” something heavy, a heavy load to shrug off. And I thought it was interesting that even after 16 years in the highest office of the land, that she’s the success story of post-unification, this is the first time really she made a big thing out of it and discussed it. And I thought—she says this in the speech herself—, but it’s interesting that if it’s difficult for her to talk about these things, then imagine what it must be like for a lot of other East Germans out there who can’t tell their story, or feel that they can’t tell their story. Whether that’s actually the case or not is neither here nor there, but people feel that they can’t talk about these things without putting it into a context of the dictatorship.

So my intention really was to try and put all of those things together, the big political history that I’m interested in, the economic and social strands, but making it relatable on a human level for people who didn’t live there, and making it relatable for the people that did live there, who hopefully—the majority tell me so, anyway, of the letters and responses that I get—see themselves somewhere in that story.

Joyce Mushaben: My book has a much longer history. I came here about 32 years ago—you know, as a child prodigy,
I had a grant over at AICGS—now the American German Institute—to write about East German identity because I had already conducted extensive research for a book on West German identities, titled *From Post-war to Post-wall Generations*. I have always been interested in the question of generational change, and its impact on the political culture, having focused on three full generations in Western Germany who had very different senses of national identity. The second generation, the Baby Boomers, proved the most ambivalent, with responses such as “no national identity is a good national identity,” “I am a citizen of the world,” or “I’m a European”—anything but a national German identity. I decided to conduct a parallel study.

I arrived at the AICGS in May of 1989 and had a conversation with *Die Zeit* editor Theo Sommer, whom I had interviewed for my first book. After I told him about my project on East German identity, he responded, “Joyce, there is no such thing as a GDR identity.” Six months later, the wall fell, and I proved him wrong. In fact, the next time I visited him in Hamburg, he poured me a glass of whiskey at 10 o’clock in the morning and said: “You were right.”

One of the problems is that Westerners, including politicians, had always failed to differentiate between “GDR identity,” the officially state-defined, imposed-from-above identity, and what I call “Ostdeutsche Identität,” “East German identities,” rooted in one’s everyday association with “Heimat,” peer culture, values, friends, relationships and families. One of my purposes in writing this book [*What Remains*], which I picked up again after 30 years, was to prove, first of all, that those two categories of identity are distinct, and that even if people rejected the official GDR state identity, that does not mean they did not have deeper, everyday peer-culture identities.

My second point was to focus on the fact that a lot of people, right after the wall fell, jumped on the bandwagon to write about *exit, voice, and loyalty*, Albert O. Hirschman’s paradigm
for understanding decline in systems and organizations, and how management and consumers respond. Most scholars looked at the fall of East Germany and concluded there had never really been voice in the GDR until the Leipzig demonstrations and the Monday night demonstrations that began to spread; they completely underestimated the function of loyalty, cutting it a bit short. What I intended to do was to look at the wide array of subcultures within East German society.

The GDR was never a homogeneous mass of people, all marching to the beat of a single socialist drum. The SED leadership had to respond to different groups in the population: women, youth, working class men, Stasi, intellectuals, writers. I explored the identities of each of these groups, before and after the fall of the Wall, the factors that shaped their identities during GDR days, what happened to them during the period of transition ten years after unification, and what these identities look like 30, 32 years later. It is important to stress that each of these groups developed their own form of exit, their own form of voice, as well as their own loyalty dilemmas. GDR writers, such as Christa Wolf and Stefan Heym, had a concept of loyalty grounded in anti-fascism and the founding of the new republic. That made it much harder for them to leave because they kept hoping this ideal might someday maybe be realized. The second generation, the born-into generation, was willing to accept all the kinds of advantages, subsidized childcare, free education, opportunities that the GDR afforded. But that does not mean they identified politically with the regime and with its many constraints. By the time we get to the third generation, there is no systemic loyalty whatsoever. These people then develop their own forms of voice, the gruffies, the punks, the hooligans, the crazy groups that congregated out on the streets of the GDR, the local eco-movements, the little peace movements that found a base for themselves in the churches across Eastern Germany, who then contributed to a mass movement as all of these groups came together in 1989. Then there are the working-class men who were always
the prototype of the ideal “sozialistische Persönlichkeit,” who thought they were going to emerge from the system’s collapse more successfully than they actually did at the end.

My third framework for this book is to explore who were “the winners” in GDR times, what has happened to them in the interim, and whether they qualify as “winners” or “losers” today. Do they perceive themselves as such? I evaluate the status of each of these groups. We could argue, for example, that women were the clear losers of unification: abortion was recriminalized, Kohl eliminated subsidized childcare, and mass unemployment ensued, up to 35 percent in some regions. Under Angela Merkel’s four terms as Chancellor, under Ursula von der Leyen as well, many policies that they took for granted in the GDR are being restored, like guaranteed childcare. One could argue that 30 years later women emerged as winners of unification, whereas the people who thought they were going to grow up to be the big corporate managers, run their own companies and businesses, these are the men who are increasingly inclined to vote for the AFD, because they suddenly feel like the losers. It’s a case of relative deprivation. I offer a very complicated framework at three different levels. It is very easy for me to argue that there are still Eastern German identities, that they are highly differentiated, and that they have absolutely nothing to do with the state-imposed GDR identity that most Westerners immediately call to mind whenever you talk about Eastern identity.

Christina Morina: My book actually is concerned with both halves of Germany, which differentiates it from the other two books. It also covers a specific, very recent period. Tausend Aufbrüche focuses on the decades since the 1980s—for contemporary historians, a period where it becomes somewhat uncomfortable because of the archival limitations we have and the lack of temporal distance to the events.

I want to talk about the three impulses that inspired me to write the book. One is truly historiographical. In Germany
and beyond, we’ve been discussing the challenge of writing postwar German history in an integrative perspective, to relate East and West German history to one other and to find ways, narratives, questions that make it possible to write East and West German history in a connected way. Much has been done on the 1950s and the 1960s, on cultural themes or sports, for example, but regarding the political-cultural history of the 1970s and 1980s and across the caesura of 1990, there are astounding few attempts to explore and narrate this history of Germany in an integrated way. So, my book is the attempt to fill this gap, it suggests one way to approach this recent political-cultural history as an integrated history.

The second impulse came from the present. The idea for the book was born around the year 2017 when the AfD, the already mentioned right-wing populist party, managed to gain 94 seats in the Bundestag, and to establish itself as a permanent political force to the right of the CDU/CSU. And as this rise was significantly driven by East German voters, I was interested in finding out why. Not that right-wing populism is not a West German problem, too, but the difference, the ten or 15 percent more that the AfD has in East Germany, is what I wanted to investigate and explain. So, the second impulse was tied to the classic, yet somewhat outdated question: How could this have happened? How do we explain the rise of the AfD from a historical perspective, and why, in particular, was and is it so strong in East Germany?

A third impulse is the popular narrative of the revolution in 1989 as a high point, a *Sternstunde* in German history. It’s considered the happy end to a—finally—successful democratic history of Germany. Yet, at the same time, we’ve been talking about East Germany mostly in terms of crisis, threats to democracy, and disarray. So there as an obvious paradox, and I wanted to know how the idea of a *Sternstunde* and the democratic crisis mode in which we have been discussing the East basically since the early 1990s were actually related to one another. It is time for us historians to take up the task, to
address this paradox and move beyond the overly schematic and polemical debates that Simone mentioned at the very beginning. We need to find different ways of talking about East Germany in past and present, in academic history as well as in society at large.

Finally, a few words about the title of the book and its main argument. It came to me during a visit of the Archiv der Bürgerbewegung, Leipzig, which holds records of the civic movement from the 1989 revolution. There I came across two boxes with hundreds of miscellaneous documents that were collected in the fall of 1989 and the spring of 1990, where ordinary citizens had written down or put on flyers their ideas about how, finally, “true” democracy can be built, now that the SED dictatorship with its pseudo-democratic rhetoric was toppled. And these ideas were so creative, so diverse, so idiosyncratic, too, that, you know, when I left the archive and went down the stairs, I thought: *tausend Aufbrüche*, a thousand new beginnings! That’s what it felt like. And it was the perfect title for a book that looks at how ordinary citizens in East and West Germany perceived themselves as citizens, what they understood to be the state, what they understood to be the task of politicians and politics, and how they thought about democracy.

Regarding the East, all this has to be considered before the backdrop of another paradox, namely that the GDR called itself “Deutsche Demokratische Republik”—a democratic republic, while, in fact, it was a dictatorship. The term democracy is mentioned over 90 times in the state’s constitution. So, there’s a tension regarding what we understand as (liberal) democracy and how the idea of “democracy” was propagated in the past. At the same time, this offers a path towards relating East to West German history in new ways: We can ask, for instance, how democracy was imagined and practiced on both sides of the wall. Thus, in the book, I’m comparing citizens’ correspondence from various contexts, in West Germany, mostly letters to the Bundespräsident, and in East Germany,
correspondence that was collected by the Stasi, plus material from various citizen movement archives from the revolutionary period. So, I am interested in what people understood by democracy when they talked about it in the West and in the East, and how these notions actually played out and matter in the political culture of contemporary Germany. One of my conclusions is that part of the extra support for the AfD in East Germany is related to a distinct, eignsinnige, sense of “people’s democracy,” popular or direct democracy “from below.” That’s what the SED promised, as all communist regimes promised while, in fact, they built dictatorships. But that promise had a profound, real-life impact. And in the run-up to the truly democratic revolution of 1989, its significance, you know, comes from the fact that people started throwing this back at the regime and saying, “you’re telling us this is socialist democracy. We know that this is not democracy. What we want is real democracy.” So, there’s a democratic experience, there’s a learning curve, a discourse of democracy also in East Germany, that started way before and goes way beyond the revolution. I think that is a perspective that enables us to look at Germany as a country in which two very distinct democratic traditions merged, even if the East German one was long about a fake democracy, a hollow claim and promise. Still, it mattered greatly, and matters until today.

Samuel Huneke: Right, thank you. So, that’s actually a wonderful lead-in to my next question, which is very much about the historiography of East Germany. As Simone mentioned, there’s a rich but also fragmented history of East Germany in both English and German. For a long time, the German Democratic Republic was seen as a totalitarian country, as equivalent even to the Nazi state. You’ll frequently hear references to Germany’s second dictatorship making that direct comparison. This is a common view today, I think, among people who aren’t professional historians. I was recently teaching about East Germany to my undergraduates and I asked them what they knew about East Germany and they threw out all
sorts of things about how it was gray and awful and everyone was constantly being spied on and sent to prison and so on and so forth. So that’s rather the traditional view. In subsequent years, scholars of everyday life have turned to private experiences, and to everyday life, to argue that East Germans enjoyed a degree of agency, what’s oftentimes called “Eigen­sinn.” And even more recently, scholarship has looked at successful political and social movements, as we’ve already heard a little bit about today, that further challenge this totalitarian hypothesis. So, I’m curious to hear each of you talk a little bit more about your overall perspective on East German history. What do you make of these historiographical debates, where do you see yourself fitting in, where do you fall among them?

Katja Hoyer: I would subscribe to what you just said about people’s perceptions. Despite the fact that the scholarship has moved in that direction, I think quite a long time ago, and opened up the field to different perspectives, I think the perceptions that people outside of Germany in particular—but I would say even in what was West Germany—hold of what life was like in the East are very much as you describe.

I remember when I was still a child, one of my best friends moved to Hamburg. So this would have been the mid-nineties, and I went to visit him and spend some time there and I was asked by their neighbors whether by now we had running water in East Germany and I just, you know, from a child’s perspective, I hadn’t been confronted with these sort of stereotypes before. The questions went on: “Are there cars and what’s life like now?” and, “Is there some color now in your cities?” and things like that. So that was the first time that I was presented with these stereotypes and didn’t quite know, as a kid, what to do with that and whether that was representative in any shape or form or not.

But certainly, in the context of the Cold War, I would say, my experiences in Britain and also, from the response that I’ve had from here, from the U.S. as well, there’s a very cartoonish
kind of Cold War image of what East Germany was like as well; people imagine men in gray coats walking around and watching people and spying on them. And people associate East Germany immediately with the Berlin Wall and with the Stasi and of course these are extremely important elements of what the state was, not just elements of it, but they provide the framework quite physically and also politically to life in the GDR, but it’s not the only thing that shaped the lives of people. And if you think that way, it basically takes agency away from East Germans. So, when you speak to people who’ve never had much to do with that this topic, they imagine East Germans, not even as individuals, but often as a gray mass of victims or perpetrators, depending on which category they fell in.

And in Germany, that debate was a bit more complicated, but for a long time, there was still the assumption that East Germans, were either perpetrators or victims and would fall into one or the other category. And what I was trying to do with the book is break this up. Not so much to reinvent the whole thing because this had been done in scholarship for a long time. But I don’t think it’s been done in a way that’s accessible enough to have this debate, both in Germany and abroad, with a wider audience. So I’m pleased with the way that the book has been so widely received. I mean, when I first started writing it, people were saying it’s a niche topic. But actually, it’s been picked up by most of the newspapers. As a result of that, I’ve been able to speak in so many countries about it with people who’ve never really come across this topic before, or thought much about it since, and that’s what I was trying to do —bring that idea of diversity, of agency, of complexity, of the idea that there’s 16 million East German stories to tell, and not one or two, to a wider audience and to have those debates as widely as I possibly can.

Christina Morina: I think it is important to differentiate between scholarship and the public image of and discourse on East Germany. And I also think it’s important to differentiate between analysis and narratives, history and memory.
Plus, there is always the question, “who are we writing for,” right? The book I’ve written is supposed to reach a wider audience. I’m not an identity producer nor someone seeking to provide ideological material to a certain political viewpoint or worldview. I am a historian. My goal is to understand and explain a matter of the past, and to ask how it might relate to the present. And for me that can only happen while acknowledging that I am standing on the shoulders of many other historians and the work they are doing next to me or have done before me.

Having said that, I actually invite us to rethink the “two dictatorships” perspective, because the question “In which way was the GDR a democratic state?,” which is an irritating question at first sight, adds something to the explanation of that very dictatorship. It points us to why people were willing to be mobilized—were available for mobilization, as Mary Fulbrook put it—in much greater numbers than just for the party and just for the Stasi. Many people were very skeptical of the party and state institutions, but a lot of people still bought into the idea of socialism, of the other, the better Germany with a true, a socialist democracy being built here. So, in that sense, the central framework of the GDR remains the dictatorship, but I think we also have to move beyond that paradigm, conceptually and empirically. What does it actually mean if we tell the story of German radicalization and de-radicalization in different ways, if we make this story, or rather these stories, more complicated, and seek new explanatory frames for why the twentieth century in Germany looked the way it did. That’s what scholarship is all about, in my view, including historical scholarship.

So, I think if we look differently at the issue of dictatorial mobilization and propaganda, we can actually add something to the question how dictatorships work. I also think it’s necessary to relate the historiography on Nazism in a deliberate and nuanced way to the second, the communist dictatorship. Just think of the scholarly consensus that Nazism
was a societal project, that it was not only a destructive but a 
cruelly visionary communal endeavor, a “Zustimmungs-
diktatur” to cite Frank Bajohr. It was not founded on hatred 
only, but also on some kind of a vision for a supposedly bet-
ter, happier Volksgemeinschaft. The communists promised 
the socialist Menschengemeinschaft and justified repression 
in its name. So, notions of community matter greatly, and 
they mattered in divided Germany in ways that are compara-
able, especially those related to the idea of an ethnically 
homogenous German people. And these notions have lin-
gered on and contributed to the rise of the AfD as a truly 
German-German endeavor, because the party resumes and 
nurtures long-standing authoritarian, racist and nationalist 
traditions, including those stemming from the second German 
dictatorship.

Joyce Mushaben: I come back to my framework of exit, voice, 
and loyalty because I think about the different kinds of voices 
that were developed: writers could use their novels and their 
works, [such as] Guten Morgen, du Schöne, the interviews that 
Maxie Wander transcribed, to substitute for what we in dem-
ocratic societies normally consider to be voice.

You go to the polls, you can write a letter to the editor,—or 
you don’t go vote, that’s also a political statement—but then 
you have to push it a bit farther. Even though I am a political 
scientist, and I cannot take part in family debates here, I have 
done a lot of historical research. For my book on West Ger-
man identities, I went back and reviewed 30 years of survey 
research in Western Germany. By 1984, I kid you not, it was 
very clear that even though the Preamble [to the Basic Law] 
said, “we should all look forward to the day when Germany 
can unify and we’ll be one big happy family,” according to poll 
data from the mid-1980s, only 12 percent really believed that 
unification would ever happen. That led, on the one hand, to 
a lot of West German indifference. Or, to quote Peter Schnei-
der’s novel, Der Mauerspringer: “The wall became a symbol 
of something that told them day by day, who was the fairest in
the land. Whether there was life on the other side of the death strip was something that sooner interested only cats and pigeons."

There is also an emotional paradox here, because both of these populations were caught up in Cold War ideology. Each of their governments consistently pointed to the other as the enemy. Yet people were supposed to remain brothers and sisters, or at least second cousins through all of this, to develop positive social relationships with each other, or to still feel this kind of emotional attachment. When you finally do put them together, they find out they’re not “zwei Staaten in einer Nation,” but “zwei Nationen in einem Staat.” So, two nations in one state, to paraphrase Willy Brandt.

But that also brings us to points about the East German side. I had unprecedented access to youth data at the Central Institute for Youth Research in Leipzig right before the whole institute was “abgewickelt.” That includes a lot of classified studies that were always given to Honecker et al. and immediately put in what they called the “Panzerschrank.” None of the leaders wanted to read these things. I have data that go back to 1964, when they created the ZIJ, where you can also see major changes in attitudes. When, in 1986, roughly 23 percent of the FDJ functionaries admit in anonymous surveys that they no longer believed in the leading role of the Communist Party, you know you have a problem.

The real problem was that the East German officials never read the reports. They didn’t even read a lot of the Stasi reports they routinely demanded which said, “Here’s a problem and the Pleiße [River] stinks: you have to fix this river because you have a big environmental problem.” This idea of East German democracy never filtered down, but the belief I share with Christina, is that they hoped the grassroots democracy they imagined could eventually filter up to the top of the system. Suddenly they were confronted with West German institutions that were also superimposed from above, although
they chose this result in the March 1990 elections. This is what led to the reaction, to cite Bärbel Bohley, “Wir wolle
Gerechtigkeit, und wir haben den Rechtsstaat bekommen.” (“We wanted justice, and we got the rule of law.”) The West
German institutions did not work at all in terms of the dem­
ocraphic categories they had in their own heads, and that has yet to be resolved. There is still gross underrepresentation, a disproportionate distortion among the people (mostly West­
erners) who hold all the elite positions in united Germany.

Samuel Huneke: That’s actually a great segue to the next question. I’d love to hear you share your thoughts about—the
place that the GDR occupies today. Obviously, it no longer exists as a state; it was abolished in 1990. But in what ways—cultural, economic, political, and so forth—does the GDR linger on? We’ve already talked about the AfD, and I’d love to have all of you speak a little bit more about why the AfD is so popular, as well as in what other ways does the GDR still con­
tinue to be somewhat relevant to life in Germany?

Christina Morina: By life in Germany, I was just going to ask, what do you mean: in relation to what? Public discourse, pol­
itics, historiography?

Samuel Huneke: Whatever you think is relevant.

Christina Morina: Maybe I can tie my response to Joyce’s previous remarks. In my book, I also have a chapter on Angela
Merkel, and of course, the statistics you cite are worrisome: there’s a significant misrepresentation or underrepresentation of East Germans in German public life. Other groups are also underrepresented, so it’s a structural problem of democracy or societies in general, not only an East-West German problem. Still, I would not count the fact that Angela Merkel became chancellor, and Joachim Gauck president, as exceptions. Because if you look at the statistics closely, the one area in which East Germans have been overrepresented for more than two decades, is the so-called staatspolitischer Sektor. In the areas of federal government, the executive branch, and
the political parties, there’s a slight overrepresentation of East Germans. So, Merkel and Gauck are actually not exceptions from the rule, but their careers exemplify a deeper fact and development. I would argue that they are a kind of testament to the positive effects of the Tausend Aufbrüche, the thousand new beginnings of 1989, and many other women and men from the GDR’s civil rights movement have likewise made politics their profession and ended up shaping the Berlin Republic in pretty remarkable ways.

So, in that sense, my book is also a plea to quit looking at the East German “problem” as the East German problem and ask instead why certain groups are better represented in any given democratic systems and others worse. And we should have a clearer view of what East Germans actually constructively added to German democracy—what the Sternstunde was and is really about, in terms of strengthening the idea and practice of democracy. Not least because this also raises the question of East German agency and responsibility, what East German politicians actually did do in the “Berlin Republic”, why Angela Merkel talked about East German underrepresentation and a peculiar outlook on democracy only this one time, at the very end of her fourth term. Why didn’t she—and the two other chancellors before her, for that matter—address the problem, which she knew very well, earlier, in a more profound way, not only in terms of socio-economic development, but as a political-cultural challenge? So, there are a lot of questions we as historians still need to ask and answer.

Joyce Mushaben: Right. You want this to get spicy? It’s about to get spicy. Because I am now going to argue like a pure political scientist, and I come equipped with data. Angela Merkel actually entered the Kohl cabinet because there is a kind of quota system within the CDU; he said to her, “Do you get along well with women?” and she said, “I think so.” He decided at that point to make her the Minister for Women and Youth. He needed another East German besides [Günther] Krause and [Rainer] Ortleb in the cabinet. So that’s how she
got in. Gauck got in because, first of all, conservatives had rejected Jens Reich as a potential presidential candidate, they had rejected Gesine Schwan—there were lots of pushes to try to get a female president. There are structural, informal albeit systemic rules inside the CDU that catapulted them into these unusual positions.

However, it’s kind of like the old feeling about the Russian Czar, who like “heaven is high above and far away.” Okay, average easterners did not really identify with Angela Merkel, who could not say a whole lot about East Germany. Even though she was pretty inexperienced at that point in time, she was confronted by the likes of [Horst] Seehofer (CSU), Michael Glos (CSU), and other people in the cabinet who just did not want anything that she was trying to push through in the environmental field or with regard to women’s opportunities.

Where it would matter is exactly where East Germans still do not see themselves as being represented. As late as 2016, a study compiled by Michael Blum and Olaf Jacobs at the University of Leipzig defined roughly 15,000 positions that qualify as the top elites in Germany. Eastern Germans comprise 17 percent of the population, yet as late as 2016, they held only 1.7 percent of those elite positions: three out of 60 state secretaries, two out of 200 Bundeswehr admirals and generals. Their share of ownership of regional newspapers and chief editorships of regional newspapers in their own territory had fallen to less than 13 percent. They occupied only 5.9 percent of all the chief justice slots—and that includes in their own state constitutional courts. I could go on, one in seven directors of research institutes. We’re talking about almost 30 years after unification, where you do not see yourself represented even in your own state governments, because a lot of Westerners continue to dominate. The only East German Ministerpräsident for many years was [Manfred] Stolpe in Brandenburg. Because they did not see themselves being brought into the lower levels of the elites where they could eventually move up the ladder, this was one great source of
resentment. I will stop there with my political science take on this and pass it on.

Katja Hoyer: Maybe just to add something anecdotal to that as well—when I arrived at Jena University, which is in the East, in 2005, I think two of the history professors were from East Germany; the rest had all come over from West Germany. And of the Eastern ones, one was for local medieval history, so not only quite niche, but actually local to the region that he was from. And the other one, I forget now, but basically this was 15 years after reunification and they had basically culled the entire academic staff there and thoroughly replaced them.

So these things did, I think, make many people feel like they had been annexed, or, as another widely-read book argued, that East Germany was taken over by West Germany. I think on a cultural level—since you included that in the question—many people also felt that their memories and the sort of day-to-day stuff that they remembered from the GDR wasn’t really valid memory anymore. One example that springs to mind was that a few years ago, Rewe, the second-largest German supermarket chain, had the slightly odd idea of bringing back some East German foodstuffs. So they brought back this bizarre design of soups and cans where they had the East German state logo on it, or the pioneer organization, uh, so you had like little boys and girls with their neckerchiefs and so on, advertising for the tins basically. There was “NVA-Suppe,” the soup that you’d get from the East German army at festivities and events where they’d rock up with their field kitchens, and people bought that. And then the Bundesstiftung Aufarbeitung—the official institute that deals with the legacy of East Germany—actually wrote a letter to Rewe to say, “Can you take these off the shelves, please, because this is glorifying dictatorship.” And people were saying, “Well, hang on a minute, I just like pea soup. I just want to have the taste of something that I’m used to from my childhood.” Or they had this overcooked pasta and tomato sauce—I quite liked it, but it’s really quite awful—which you got in your canteen, at school
and workplaces and things, which had such a distinctive taste and smell, mainly because it was probably completely synthetic. But they brought that back and people bought that, and wanted to have that taste back in their lives, or perhaps sit there and reminisce about their past. And they were told by an organization that is, by law, in charge of GDR memory that that’s not a good thing, that it means that they’re glorifying dictatorship. And I think these things collectively led to a sense that your own history, your own legacy, is written out of the national narrative because there was a sense that 1990 was the happy ending to Germany’s horrible twentieth century, and anything that came before it opened up all of those wounds again, and people didn’t really want to talk about them.

So, I think, it’s hard to pin this on things because it always ends up in pretty acrimonious discussions when you try and talk about this, because some people will say: “This has absolutely nothing to do with me. I just want to talk about Germany now as a unified country. I’m neither East German nor West German.” Other people say: “But you know, I’m old enough to remember things that happened, either in the East or the West, and I don’t want that taken away from me.” And you very quickly end up in a situation where one anecdote stands against another, or this statistic stands against that statistic. I would argue it’s a very individual experience, post 1990, whether people feel aggrieved about the situation or not. And it’s difficult to bring that into an overarching conclusion, whether it’s in which areas has it been successful and in which it hasn’t. Because we get people saying, “Oh, but I heard about this person that they’re really nostalgic about what happened in East Germany.” So therefore, all these Germans are “Ostalgic,” as the phrase has it now. And I find it difficult to pin that on an entire group of people, never mind the entire country.

**Samuel Huneke:** Thank you. As a historian of gender and sexuality, I am always interested in the ways that East Germany sort of bled across the border into West Germany and actu-
ally affected policy and life and culture in the former Western
lands. I remember distinctly when I was interviewing former
East German Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière for my book,
he told me rather shockingly that he thought not only had
East Germany been a better place for queer people, but also
that that sort of progressiveness had bled across the border
into West Germany after the “Wende.”

So, one more question: I’m really curious to hear your take on
why it is that East German history is still, over 30 years later,
discussed so intensely. I’m thinking in particular about the
reaction to your book, Katja, in Germany. I think in the United
States East Germany is oftentimes a sort of stand-in for social-
ism or state socialism. And that’s the reason why these dis-
cussions can be heated in our country. You also then have
figures like Kristen Ghodsee who come out and say, “Well,
I think state socialist countries are better for women,” and
making these really provocative claims. So I’m curious to hear
why you think it’s so heated still today. What are the stakes of
this work?

Katja Hoyer: I find it really interesting how different the re-
sponse was from different people, but also in different coun-
tries. The book has come out in different countries now. It’s
been translated into 15 languages now, and it’s interesting that
wherever I go I have different discussions. So, for instance,
a few weeks ago I was in Dublin and the whole debate was
around national unity: how do you bring two parts of a coun-
try, of a nation, together without everything erupting into
acrimonious political dialogue again. So, they were interested
in that aspect. In Finland, now that the country has joined
NATO, people there are very interested in reassessing the odd
hybrid role it had, sort of sitting between East and West, hav-
ing a close and strange relationship with the Soviet Union,
but at the same time being a neutral country. They collabo-
rated a lot with the Stasi at the time. So many people that are
now still in economic and political positions might well have
collaborated with the Stasi. And my book fell right into that
debate. Should the Stasi archives be opened in Finland? And should they be looking at who was involved in that, now that they’re part of NATO in case they’re putting those people into sensitive positions?

What makes East Germany both fascinating and also quite a heated subject to debate is there are really big questions at stake there. You could look at it from a national point of view, from a divided nation point of view, you could look at it in terms of the experiments that it tried to do as a population. So, when you look at public housing, for example, the way that that was done on a large scale. The role of women —by the end of the GDR, over 90 percent of women were in full-time employment. That’s the highest rate ever achieved in the world, and whatever the motivations behind that, the question is, “How was that possible, and are there elements of that that are worth preserving?” So there are ‘all of these really big questions about society, about politics, about the way that nations divide and unify. All of these play a role for different people for different reasons, but they’re all really big things that matter. And I think as a result of that, it’s such a heated debate because, people will say, “Oh, look at this, it worked,” or, “It didn’t work.” And the next person will look at the same historical example and draw very different conclusions for the present. And you can’t escape the idea that this is really highly relevant for politics and for thinking today.

Christina Morina: Well, I think anything else would be surprising, I would say, because it’s contemporary history, right? We are the historians who have the honor and the harrow of having to deal with stuff that people remember, that people have lived through. And I think one of our most important tasks is to remind our listeners and our readers, that history, academic history, historiography is not about representing every single individual experience, but about larger questions. Our task is to relate individual and collective experiences to traditions, attitudes, and actions, to explore their conditions and contingencies, to trace continuities and change, and, yes, even
to probe questions of causation and generalization. We should strive to capture the signum of a society in a certain time and place, without negating that there is a plethora of individual experiences and memories that often differ fundamentally. That is, I think, the message we have to get across—this is our work. It is neither about legitimizing nor delegitimizing people’s biographies or memories. Rather, the art of history for me is to educate people’s sense for larger societal and perennial issues, if you will, for history in general—and to position and contextualize individual stories within it in plausible ways.

My book has gotten a reception that tells me just like what you said, Sam, people are very, very interested. Most are looking for explanations and differentiations, not for polemics. The willingness among non-historians to read a 400-page book and engage with its ideas is astounding; it tells you the stakes are really high.

But, if I may, I want to comment briefly on the critique to your book, Katja. In my view, it has partly to do with the fact that it does claim it’s a new history. In the introduction you claim that you portray all sides of East German society, while in fact, the book paints a rather one-sided picture and focusses only on selected aspects of East German history while downplaying or marginalizing others. At the same time, I would agree that it is indeed still a huge challenge to write a synthesis of the GDR that does justice to its signum, in the sense I just talked about, and represents and contextualizes individual stories in a fair manner. But crucial, I think, is the way we deal with scholarship that’s already there; that’s a big issue in the critique of your book coming from German academics. If you claim, “this is all new,” it’s going to invite criticism. This, of course, touches upon the question how we sell our books, in a very literal sense—how we let the market shape our work. I think the way your book has been marketed explains part of the fire it has gotten in Germany.

But returning to the scholarly criticism, let me point to an example. The guest worker chapter doesn’t mention racism
with one word, even though the historiography on racism, antisemitism, and nationalism in postwar East Germany is rather extensive by now. And it’s so relevant for understanding the present! Instead, you present a rosy story of somebody who experienced some sort of “tension” in Eberswalde without addressing even half of the story that needs to be told here when talking about so-called guest workers in the GDR. Another example is your treatment of women and the issue of gender equality, in which the fundamental political inequality plays no role whatsoever. So, there are real issues that people have trouble accepting and, you know, it’s a legitimate debate we can and should have.

Joyce Mushaben: It will keep coming back to haunt us, already your example of racism. Each generation will be looking for different things in the history of a place, and there will be new sources. Or there will be new conceptual frameworks, different kinds of discourses. So you have to keep revisiting history—never mind Ron DeSantis and his take on slavery in the United States—but a lot of communities are talking about reparations. Native Americans’ water rights are being recognized now, in the context of the extreme water shortage out in the Western states, although it says right there in the treaties that they get first dibs on the water. We cannot expect there to be a kind of one-size-fits-all history. If we keep debating, then it is going to be a case of generations debating with each other about the significance and what that means for [their personal] sense of ethics, my sense of morality, my sense of belonging in a particular society that has this kind of a history, good and bad.

Samuel Huneke: Katja, do you want to have a quick response and then we can open it up to the audience?

Katja Hoyer: Yeah, there’s so many points that I can’t obviously respond to all of them. I mean, I did try and capture that. What I don’t do is use the same vocabulary, the same phrases. It was also a deliberate decision to write it in English for that
reason. I think it comes across, in my chapter, for example, on
guest workers. Jorge Nogueira, who I discuss there, is a Cuban
who came over on a contractual basis to the GDR. He says that
he was extremely conscious of looking different, of having
a darker skin color because East Germany wasn’t an immi-
grant society, it was largely a homogenous white society. He
does say that he felt very uncomfortable with that and there
were tensions, so I describe a brawl, a drunken brawl, that the
immigrant workers had with German workers who were sup-
posed to teach them, basically, and then send them back to
Cuba. But what I was trying to do in that chapter is explain the
whole idea behind his story: because East Germany wasn’t an
immigrant society, the idea was to bring contractual workers
there, train them, and then send them back because East Ger-
many lacked the international trading network it needed to
procure things like coffee, sugar, tobacco, all sorts of things.
And, because it was isolated from the West, the idea was to
try and build up a viable network of like-minded states that
it could trade with. The problem is, of course, that when you
are the most developed state, you can’t really do this kind of
German model of importing cheap raw materials and then
exporting stuff. Cubans aren’t going to buy your washing
machines or your cars or whatever, because the economy is
just not there. So, the point of the chapter wasn’t specifically
to talk about racism. I try to explain that at the same time, but
the point of the chapter was to explain this whole idea behind
the contractual workers.

And I think why this met with such a hostile response from
many people immersed in the historiography is precisely be-
cause so much research had been done on this; people were
expecting this story to lean on the same references and it
doesn’t. So, by no means was I trying to find a particularly
rosy story. I was trying to find one that covered these kinds of
different elements. He is an exception in the sense that in the
end, actually, he stayed, which isn’t normal, but that’s the rea-
son why I could use his testimony, because he speaks German
and lived somewhere nearby. So, I obviously completely agree with the fact that I couldn’t represent all aspects and it’s not trying to be a complete history. I think that’d be very difficult to do and get all the different aspects in.

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The Golden Crutch: Satire and Debates on Disability Rights in West Germany

Raphael Rössel
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I. Introduction

“Heil HUK!” It was Ernst Klee’s final provocation. Klee, who later became known for his pathbreaking documentation of the Nazi T4 mass murder campaign, was working as a social worker in the 1970s. At the same time, he wrote books on social issues and regularly contributed to high-profile media outlets like Die Zeit. As the climax to a 1978 event in Frankfurt, he accused an umbrella organization of German car insurers—known as the HUK Association—of reiterating Nazi propaganda about the so-called lebensunwertes Leben, the life unworthy of living. In order to promote the use of seatbelts, the car insurers had used the slogan “being crippled for life is worse than death” in a 1978 ad campaign.

Klee’s contempt did not confront HUK directly. Rather, he mockingly praised the campaign. He and a group of disabled and non-disabled activists bestowed on HUK an anti-award, the so-called Golden Crutch:

We are pleased to announce: The HUK Association has succeeded in becoming the first winner of the “Golden Crutch.”

2 Ernst Klee, “Euthanasie” im NS-Staat: Die “Vernichtung lebensunwertes Lebens” (Frankfurt, 1983).
The HUK Association deserves the “Golden Crutch.” Thirty-three years after the end of the Third Reich, it continues to propagate the life of the disabled as a life unworthy of life. The HUK Association deserves the “Golden Crutch” because it has used all its intellectual gifts—combined with high financial expenditure—to produce an ableist [behindertenfeindlicher] text that hinders the integration of seven million disabled people ...³

During the last third of the twentieth century, satirical, ironic, and mocking awards became a staple of West German culture. They were often part of activist attempts to highlight persistent everyday forms of discrimination. Alongside similar awards like the feminist magazine Emma’s “Pascha [i.e., “macho”] des Monats,” which had been awarded since 1977, the Golden Crutch was among the earliest activist mock awards gesturing at everyday discrimination.

In histories of West German disability rights, the Golden Crutch has been described as one of the earliest initiatives of German disability activism as it developed from local group efforts into a national movement.⁴ What has not been studied, however, is exactly how the Golden Crutch informed public debates about disability rights. In this essay, I expand upon the existing argument that the Golden Crutch and similar satirical initiatives represented a subversive new strategy for challenging ableist thought patterns and denouncing discriminatory realities in everyday life.⁵ With this mock award, activists with disabilities claimed a subject position that destabilized pervasive assumptions about the docility of disabled people. By awarding the Golden Crutch, disabled advocates claimed a new public voice not as objects of pity or charity but as scathing satirists. Alongside established, more confrontational forms of activism, such as demonstrations or street blockades, satirical awards could call out ableism by way of irony.

Furthermore, I will argue that the Golden Crutch allowed for critical exchanges between members of the general public and

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⁴ Carol Poore, Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture (Ann Arbor, MI, 2007), 275.
the activist sphere. Some members of the public, including some who professed awareness of the social challenges for people with disabilities, disagreed with the Golden Crutch organizers about the selection of targets and the style of the award ceremonies. Finally, the Golden Crutch illustrates central internal fault lines within the broad spectrum of West German disability rights advocacy during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Over these years, questions of identity gained traction within disability rights groups. Compared with other social movements of this period, people without disabilities had a greater presence in disability rights advocacy than, for instance, straight persons had in queer movements, or men within feminist circles. This period increasingly saw more radical activists challenging the prominence of non-disabled people in the disability rights movement which included directly criticizing the Golden Crutch and its initiator, the non-disabled journalist Ernst Klee.

While creatively exposing paternalism and confronting members of the majority society with the discrimination that people with disabilities faced in their everyday lives, the Golden Crutch had run its course after just three annual presentations. In the early 1980s, award ceremonies descended into insider debates only members of the activist sphere could follow. At the same time, new instances of blatant ableism demanded less tongue-in-cheek commentary but rather more direct confrontation.

In this article, I will place the three awards of the Golden Crutch within West Germany disability history. I will draw on the vibrant historiography of the social history of people with disabilities and disability rights activism and refer to various types of published and unpublished source material, including correspondence taken from the estate of Ernst Klee archived at the Hadamar Memorial Museum. First, I will briefly introduce the evolution of disability rights advocacy in West Germany. In a second step, I will offer an analysis of each presentation of the Golden Crutch and the public debates each ceremony triggered.
II. From Veterans’ Associations to “Cripple Activism”

For a long time, advocacy for improvements in social care for disabled people in West Germany was generated either by a specific group of disabled people or by associations predominantly made up of non-disabled people. In the early FRG, so-called Kriegsopferverbände [war victims’ associations] that, among other groups, represented wounded war veterans, argued that ex-servicemen were due a “thanks of the Fatherland.” These influential, male-dominated organizations such as the Verband der Kriegsbeschädigten, Kriegshinterbliebenen und Sozialrentner Deutschlands (VdK) counted roughly two million members in the 1950s. These groups drew a clear-cut distinction between people whose impairments stemmed from combat and people with so-called civilian disabilities. For war veterans, they demanded privileges and preferential treatment.

Disabled women and people with other disabilities, particularly cognitive impairments, could not rely on similar pressure groups. From the late 1950s onwards, parental associations began to challenge the stigma attached to having a child with cognitive disabilities. The most prominent of these associations was and is the Lebenshilfe für das geistig behinderte Kind (founded 1958). While these organizations gained immense political influence, they were headed by (non-disabled) parents and experts.

In his dissertation, Behinderte Anerkennung?, Jan Stoll traces the shift to organizations based on ideals of self-organization and self-advocacy in the late 1960s and over the course of the 1970s. Emerging from local initiatives, the first notable groups were the so-called Clubs Behindeter und ihrer Freunde (CeBeEF). These clubs focused less on programmatic political activism but rather on connecting people with disabilities across the country and on the removal of everyday barriers. A more political branch of disability rights activism gained traction a couple of years later.
In 1973/1974, the non-disabled journalist Ernst Klee and the social worker August ‘Gusti’ Steiner, himself a wheelchair user, started a so-called Volkshochschulkurs or VHS-Kurs that aimed to empower people living with a disability.\footnote{On the course, see Jonas Fischer, “Ums- trittene Interessenver- tretung von Menschen mit Behinderungen: Zur Geschichte von Kriegsopferverbän- den, Elterninitiativen, Clubs, VHS-Kursen und Krüppelgrup- pen,” in Aufbrüche und Barrieren: Behindertenpolitik und Behinderten- recht in Deutschland und Europa seit den 1970er-Jahren, ed. Theresia Degener and Marc von Miquel (Bielefeld, 2019), 213–242, esp. 222–234.}

Volkshochschulen (Adult Education Centers) are a distinctive feature of the Central European academic landscape. Not offering degrees but rather goal-oriented training in a broad range of topics, Volkshochschulen are open to the public and often charge comparatively low tuition for their classes.

Steiner and Klee’s class was entitled Bewältigung der Umwelt, i.e. “overcoming” or “coping” with the surrounding world. Klee and Steiner addressed their program to both disabled and non-disabled people. The class was intended to address the sense of isolation many people with disabilities felt and to raise public awareness for persistent forms of exclusion. While Klee and Steiner initially laid out a detailed class
The syllabus, in succeeding installments of this class the participants themselves decided on the curriculum. The first year’s course attracted roughly 70 people. Klee and Steiner’s course became known for its spectacular activist maneuvers. For instance, its members, frustrated with the inaccessibility of public transport, blocked the Frankfurt Metro for twenty minutes in 1974.

There were changes in leadership, as Steiner soon stepped down from his supervisor position to focus on his studies. Yet satire always played an enormous role within the VHS-Kurs. During Christmas season, course students mocked charitable institutions’ practice of raising money by showcasing people with disabilities as objects of pity. The use of pity was particularly tangible in a series of charity TV shows titled Aktion Sorgenkind. Literally translated as “program for children to be worried about,” this social organization was created in 1964 as a reaction to the thalidomide scandal and organized lotteries to finance special educational facilities and other rehabilitative initiatives. From the late 1970s onwards, activists would harshly criticize the paternalism of Aktion Sorgenkind. The VHS-Kurs mocked the focus on pity by drafting a fake flyer advertising an agency to banks, shopping centers and political parties which offered to “rent out” disabled people. In an article for Die Zeit, Ernst Klee reported on this initiative:

... participants of a VHS course in Frankfurt founded a “Christmas sales organization for the disabled” [“Vertrieb Behinderte zum Fest”]—Rent-a-Spasti. Disabled people were offered for sale (by disabled people) ... “Disabled people with one crutch 4.98 marks; disabled people with two crutches 6.98 marks; spastic people without speech impediment 7.88 marks; with speech impediment 11.88 marks.” Children residing in institutions were of course offered at a bulk discount. In Klee’s words, the class used Spott als Waffe, mockery as weaponry, to lay bare everyday forms of ableism.
In 1977/1978, the first so-called “Cripple Groups” [Krüppel-gruppen] formed in Bremen and elsewhere. These had a different approach. Unlike the CeBeeF Clubs or the VHS-Kurs, the “Cripple Groups” excluded non-disabled people, whom some of their members termed “oppressors.” As I will show over the course of this article, some of these activists went on to take a critical stance towards the Golden Crutch and its initiator Ernst Klee.

III. The 1978 Award: A New Strategy for Challenging Ableism

HUK’s seatbelt-promotion ad began appearing in various German newspapers in January 1978. The VHS-Kurs members were shocked by the ad, which they read as an implicit call for suicide. Advocate groups such as the CeBeeF Clubs quickly challenged the insurers and, in a letter to the organization, pointed out the ad’s reiteration of Nazi pro-euthanasia propaganda. The insurers flatly rejected these accusations and the ad continued to appear in major newspapers and magazines.

Members of the VHS-Kurs were unsure how to proceed. First, they wanted to see how the majority society felt about the HUK ad. On May 9, various class members took to the streets of Frankfurt to interview non-disabled people on their opinions about the ad campaign. The answers horrified them. While some interviewees grasped the bigoted premise of the

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ad, most at least partly agreed with the claim that disability was equal to or even worse than death. According to class minutes, one passerby declared: “I would prefer death [to dis­ability]. Because it is awful that all the people say: ‘you are a cripple.’ If I were you, I would be miserable and not take to the streets.”

Another interviewee concurred: “It depends on how crippled one is—if you are only a heap of meat ...” These statements hint at the persistence of eugenic beliefs within the West German public even three decades after the end of National Socialism. Similar eugenic and ableist beliefs were also documented by social scientific research at the time.

These remarks do not mean there were no challenges to the HUK ad’s eugenic undertone. One outlet where critical takes on the HUK ad appeared were the so-called Politmagazine, current-affairs television shows which took up controversial issues and addressed social injustices. On June 13, 1978, the show Report Baden-Baden aired a piece on the ad campaign that included interviews with members of the Frankfurt VHS-Kurs. The report pointed to the lack of awareness on the part of the insurers about how the ad would read to people with disabilities. However, while the report criticized HUK and featured interviews with disabled people it remained a self-reflection of the non-disabled majority society. The program’s host introduced the segment by explaining the reason he and his colleagues took up the topic was because they wanted to show the (implicitly) non-disabled audience “how little aware we sometimes are of the hardship of our fellow citizens with disability.”

Finding it difficult to receive solidarity, the VHS-Kurs sought their own tone of critique instead. Looking back, Ernst Klee later noted: “We thought long and hard about how we could counter the text, because it contained ideas from the ‘Third Reich,’ according to which disabled life is an unworthy life. We decided to create an anti-prize in an attempt to ridicule a decidedly unLaughable fact.”

The group chose satire and created the Golden Crutch trophy to be awarded annually on the Buß- und Bettag (Day of
Repentance and Prayer), a religious observance which at the time was also a federal holiday. This date was chosen with the idea that a large public event was sure to draw a sizeable crowd. Religious symbolism surely also played a role in choosing the date, at least for Ernst Klee who had studied Christian theology, worked within denominational contexts, and was married to a pastor.19

On November 22, 1978, the first Golden Crutch award ceremony took place at the municipal theatre of Frankfurt. The ceremony was introduced by a play that satirized daily forms of exclusion. Among other skits, the performance depicted the inaccessibility of government buildings and included an absurdist collage of ableist laws and regulations. At the event’s conclusion, Ernst Klee read aloud the mock laudatio bestowed on HUK. The ceremony received coverage both within the national press and in the newly founded activists’ newspaper Die Luftpumpe. Members of the VHS-Kurs saw the award ceremony as a complete success. After the award ceremony, one father of a disabled child wrote to Klee about his solidarity with the initiative and asked how he could become engaged in activism himself.20

Satire became a staple of the emerging activist press. Yet, while the satirical approach of anti-awards became fashionable in the disability movement it was also challenged. One example is an incident at the so-called Berliner Behindertentage [Berlin Days of People with Disabilities] held in the spring of 1979.21 At this event, the Berlin commissioner of disabled people was awarded the quickly-invented “Golden Wheelchair” because he was seen as not having done enough to set up the event. Prominent activist Lothar Sandfort welcomed the idea but warned against too many “anti” awards.22 In the case of this state-appointed official, the award was directed at somebody who thought of himself as supportive of people with disabilities and, as he revealed after receiving the award, lived with a progressive condition himself that would soon force him to use a wheelchair. This revelation softened the

20 [Anonymized] to Ernst Klee, January 20, 1979, file 244, N Klee. The names of individual correspondents in the Klee collection have been anonymized in this article.
21 Stoll, Behinderte Anerkennung?, 393.
activists criticism of him and furthered doubts among some observers whether he was the right target for this anti-award and its attendant public humiliation.\textsuperscript{23} Such worries were indicative of an emerging debate between disability advocates and members of the general public that revolved around whether to condemn the paternalism of (residential) institutions for disabled people and (charity) organizations and public officials that acted on behalf of people with disabilities. In the following years, activists criticizing the state of care for people with disabilities would coin terms like \textit{Wohltäter} or \textit{WohlTäter}, a play on words translating to “philanthropists” but also containing the word \textit{Täter}, which can be translated as “perpetrators” or “criminals.”\textsuperscript{24} When the Golden Crutch was awarded for the second time in the fall of 1979, debates about the right targets of activist satire took center stage.

\textbf{IV. The 1979 Award: Debates on Targets and Style}

In 1979, the award ceremony turned out to be more divisive. Retrospectively, Ernst Klee noted “The second award ceremony on the Day of Prayer and Repentance in 1979 sparked fierce protests from the ‘prizewiners’ and the audience.”\textsuperscript{25} The 1979 award was handed to the leadership of two facilities, the \textit{Alsterdorfer Anstalten} in Hamburg and the \textit{Spastikerzentrum} in Munich both of which had come under public scrutiny in the preceding years.

Criticizing residential facilities was nothing new at the time. In the late 1960s, significantly later than in other Western countries, experts in the field of psychiatry started to voice criticism of residential facilities in West Germany. Over the course of the 1970s, such institutions were more and more seen as outdated and isolating.\textsuperscript{26} In 1975, an expert commission called the \textit{Psychiatrie-Enquête} highlighted the need for reform, informing the German parliament of the dire state of the crowded and understaffed mental institutions in the country. Dissatisfaction only grew as more and more instances of over-
In the 1970s, challenges to the status quo also came from within the institutions themselves. A new generation of more critical professionals took a more resident-focused approach at Alsterdorf. This large Lutheran institution had a history dating back to 1850 when it was founded by the Protestant pastor Heinrich Matthias Sengelmann. During the Nazi era, its medical personnel—like that of many other institutions—was complicit in the Nazi crimes against people with disabilities. A group of younger personnel associated with the educator Horst Wallrath founded the so-called Kollegenkreis. This group demanded, among other things, new leisure activities for the residents. Due to their unvarnished criticism of the existing state of residential life, this group was at odds with the director, Pastor Hans-Georg Schmidt. In the fall of 1978, members of the Alsterdorf staff had privately published a so-called schwarze Broschüre [black book] that documented daily indignities. The book’s publication, however, went almost unnoticed by local media outlets.

In April 1979, Die Zeit journalists working undercover exposed the scandalous living conditions of the residents of the Alsterdorfer Anstalten in Hamburg. Ernst Klee visited the institution the following month. After the VHS-Kurs decided to award the Golden Crutch to the Alsterdorf leadership, Klee received severe criticism from the institution. The director and personnel from the care unit addressed irate letters to Klee. They suggested that Klee himself should take in people with so-called severe and/or multiple disabilities. Sarcastically,


they asked him why he had not taken “two or three” Alsterdorf residents home with him after his visit: “Your income, your enthusiasm, your sympathy, your beautiful home and your kind way would have been great qualifications. ... Wouldn’t that be better than throwing around catchphrases?” According to them, Klee had only spent one hour at the facility and his reporting did not do justice to the tedious nature of care work nor to the tense financial situation of the institution. Therefore, they symbolically issued a counter award: “the sleazy pen.” Klee invited the clinic director to the award ceremony. While the director, Pastor Schmidt, absented himself, the award ceremony was attended by members of the critical Kollegenkreis who thought it was refreshing and thought-provoking. This time, the satirical play in Frankfurt put the audience in the position of clinic residents. For instance, mirroring everyday realities at institutions, the audience was segregated according to gender and during the show the actors threatened to limit the audience’s access to the toilets.

The members of the Kollegenkreis documented their experiences in Frankfurt for the Alsterdorf residents in a leaflet. The leaflet also included an interview with the Kollegenkreis conducted with Ernst Klee. Asked about the motives for awarding the Golden Crutch to Alsterdorf, Klee answered: “If you only moan about grievances in the disability sector, you only reinforce the charity image. And satire is a way for disabled people to go on the offensive. And the hysterical reaction of the award winners shows that it is effective.” Director Schmidt responded to the award ceremony in an interview with the tabloid Bild by claiming that the accusations launched by Klee and other were outright lies. Wide-reaching local media like the Norddeutsche Rundfunk, however, took up the Golden Crutch ceremony and aired critical news reports on Alsterdorf.

As in the previous year, the Golden Crutch helped to amplify existing criticism of the discrimination of people with disabilities. Unlike the case of HUK, however, there were opponents...
to awarding the prize to Alsterdorf. This was not only true of the care personnel who condemned Klee. Much like the Berlin Disability Days, there was also criticism from members of the general public. A woman from Hamburg who lived near the institutions condemned the selection of Alsterdorf: “I am opposed to such an institution being denigrated in this way and would like to recommend that you and your so-called ‘support group’ spend at least a full year working among such people, some of whom are really severely disabled. You will certainly discover how difficult and grueling such care work is.” 36

The other award recipient in 1979 was by no means less controversial. Alsterdorf shared the “honor” with the Spastikerzentrum [Spastics Center] in Munich and its director, Albert Göb. Göb, who had headed the institution since 1956, had already been criticized for his leadership style. In 1977, the Bavarian parliament had received more than one hundred complaints from patients, their parents, and former staff members. The same 1978 episode of the Report Baden-Baden which aired the interviews with the VHS-Kurs members on the HUK incident included another report documenting the many complaints against the Munich institution and its director. Accusations included prescribed toilet times and video surveillance of the patients. According to the report, such regulations had allegedly led to suicidal tendencies among children and teenagers with disabilities educated at this institution. The persistent criticism led to an investigation by state agencies and to a court case between the state of Bavaria and the Spastikerzentrum. In April 1979, Ernst Klee himself compiled these allegations in a Die Zeit article. 37 Göb’s attorney quickly intervened with the newspaper to demand an opportunity to reply. 38

Again, awarding the Golden Crutch helped to amplify existing grievances. As the recipients of the award were decided in the spring while the event occurred in the fall, the announcement that the award would be bestowed upon Göb itself influenced local debates. In the months before the 1979 award ceremony,

parents collected signatures to apply pressure on the clinic’s leadership to resign.

Their petition listed the accusations against the Spastikerzentrum’s director and concluded:

> Despite numerous public protests, Prof. Dr. Göb is not prepared to hand over the reins in the interests of the disabled. In order to persuade him to resign and to draw attention to the appalling conditions in care homes in Germany, he is to be awarded the “Golden Crutch” this year. ... Support the protests against maltreatment of children and young people in homes in the Federal Republic of Germany and the awarding of the “Golden Crutch” to Prof. Dr. Göb with your signature.\(^1\)

According to Klee, the group collected thousands of signatures on the streets of Munich over the course of two weeks.\(^2\)

Again, already existing local debates were handed a major platform with the Golden Crutch. But there was also pushback, as articulated by the institution’s attorney. In the end, the initiative to unseat Göb did not succeed, and he remained director until 1990.

Not only the choice of recipients, but also the format of the award ceremony itself were debated in 1979. Upon entering the Frankfurt theatre, guests were expected to provide reasons for attending the event on a piece of paper. The answers that revealed the most ignorance of disabled people were to be awarded with another impromptu anti-prize. A non-disabled woman was declared the “winner” and, in a short interlude, was invited on stage and symbolically pitied for a minute by

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1. [Anonymized], “Mißhandlungen in Heimen!,” undated, file 249, N Klee.
2. Klee, Behindert, 265.

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Figure 3. Preparatory meeting for the 1979 “Golden Crutch” ceremony, November 13, 1979. © Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München/ stern-Fotoarchiv/Klaus Drinkwitz.
the members of the VHS-Kurs. With this performance, course participants sought to demonstrate the paternalism of pity that was always directed at disabled people. The organizers were aware that this skit might be hurtful to the woman, but they thought it was reasonable. In his account of the ceremony, Ernst Klee sarcastically wrote on this episode: “Then the award for two spectators who had to give a reason for their visit on their ticket. That gives you a consolation prize. One minute of pity. The disabled people all look down. The spectators turn away. It is an embarrassing and shameful silence that triggers outrage everywhere. How can you humiliate a person like that? The unfortunate woman walks out, tears in her eyes. The audience is shocked.”

Both some in attendance at the event and parts of the press criticized the interlude. The conservative-leaning Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) saw the skit as a sign that disability advocates were not actually demanding better living conditions but rather seeking revenge on non-disabled people. “For then [when the audience members were pitied on stage] it became clear for a brief moment that the gulf between those in wheelchairs and the healthy is much deeper ... It was not the desire for compensatory aids that became briefly visible, but the desire for revenge. Those in wheelchairs cannot be comforted with surrogates. ... Health cannot be replaced or sued for. Just as little as tact, by the way.”

Frankfurt resident Albrecht Verron, himself living with a disability, criticized this FAZ report in a letter to the editor entitled “incredibly wrong.” He argued that it was necessary to confront non-disabled people with the everyday realities of people with disabilities. In order to raise awareness, Verron argued that it would be necessary to offer a glimpse of everyday ableism to those who had never experienced it.

The same spectators were not at all horrified by the atrocities and cruelties that had been portrayed on stage during the evening. Are they just voyeurs? If it is true that the “pitied” woman


wanted to get to know the lives of disabled people better on this particular evening at the theater, then this short scene gave her the very best start; in just one minute she had an experience that some “healthy” people would like to avoid for the rest of their lives.43

As Carol Poore has pointed out, the Golden Crutch had an emancipatory thrust.44 Further distancing themselves from traditional rehabilitation approaches, the VHS-Kurs challenged public perceptions about ever-grateful people with disabilities. Even more than in 1978, in 1979 the Golden Crutch sparked and furthered debates on the directions of disability rights advocacy. Within activist circles, the event was seen as a success.45 Yet, selecting recipients from the field of disability institutions for the anti-prize and using a direct-confrontation skit during the award ceremony divided the non-disabled majority society. Families of the residents and reform-oriented clinic staff welcomed the award, as it amplified their own criticism of these institutions. However, there were also critical voices. What was new, however, was that it was a group of mostly disabled activists that set the tone for debates to which the majority society now had to react.

V. 1980/1981: The Limits of Satire

1980 began with another scandal. On February 25, 1980, a Frankfurt District Court presided over by judge Otto Tempel awarded damages to a tourist on a package vacation because a group of people with disabilities was among the other hotel guests. In its ruling, the court issued the statement: “It cannot be denied that a group of severely disabled people can impair the enjoyment of a vacation for sensitive people.”46 This instance of overt discrimination instantly created public outrage which mobilized more people with disabilities, families and other non-disabled allies than ever before in postwar Europe. The outcry culminated on May 8 when various groups


44 Poore, Disability in Twentieth-Century Germany, 275.


46 Quoted after Ernst Klee, Behinderte im Urlaub: Das Frankfurter Urteil – eine Dokumentation, (Frankfurt, 1980), 33.
—including the Frankfurt VHS—organized a large demonstration of about five thousand people. In his documentation of the case, Klee reflected on the march to the court building.

The demonstration marched through the city center, along the main streets of the [Frankfurt] City Ring. Never in their lives have the citizens seen so many disabled people, hundreds of wheelchair users, mentally disabled people, learning disabled people, parents with their disabled child, thalidomide victims, people with short stature, married couples with disabled partners. Never before has there been such a large demonstration in the Federal Republic of Germany or in Europe, uniting all disabled people, whether physically or mentally disabled.47

Tempel was quickly deemed a worthy recipient of the 1980 Golden Crutch. In one journal, the father of a child living with cognitive disabilities even explicitly nominated the Frankfurt court for the award.48

Yet the 1980 event itself was perceived as something of a failure. While the Golden Crutch was indeed awarded to Otto Tempel in the fall, the theatrical part of the program turned into an insider debate that outsiders could hardly understand. The ceremony itself stuck to the established formula and featured satirical skits relating to the ableist rhetoric of the Frankfurt court ruling. But, crucially, the audience was not agitated as it had been in the years before. This was largely because it was not the intended audience anymore. In the fall of 1980, the Golden Crutch was, as prominent activist Lothar Sandfort acknowledged, in crisis:

47 Klee, Behinderte im Urlaub, 82–83.
48 Klee, Behinderte im Urlaub, 98.
The crisis is also due to the fact that the award ceremony is becoming an insider affair. Just a few days after tickets went on sale, insiders—those who deal with disability issues on a daily basis—had almost filled the available seats, so that they occupied about 4/5 of the sold-out hall. However, the concept of the award ceremony is geared towards a more naïve public. What makes this public’s ears prick up are often old stories, too dull for insiders. ... Either you concentrate on getting a more naïve public—this includes more advertising, which was prevented this year after the house was sold out so quickly, this includes more space in the hall, and this includes more tickets at the box office—or you accept that the award ceremony becomes an insiders’ party.49

While Sandfort hoped to revive the Golden Crutch, the award was paused in 1981 and not awarded again. In a way, it was not needed anymore to generate attention. The scandal surrounding the Frankfurt judgment had already garnered significant national coverage.

There were other reasons for the award’s demise. There was emerging criticism of Klee’s status as a figurehead within disability rights activism when he himself did not have any disabilities. As Jonas Fischer has shown, referencing minutes of early VHS-Kurs meetings, some members felt insecure around Klee or claimed that he was too authoritarian.50 But these challenges had been voiced behind closed doors. Publicly, Klee was increasingly called out by the more radical activists. In a 1981 radio review of his recent books, he was harshly criticized for dominating the disability rights movement and his alleged lack of reflection about his status as a non-disabled man.

Emancipatory work with the disabled—Klee apparently only understands this to mean his own work at the Frankfurt VHS and the awarding of the ‘Golden Crutch’ initiated by him—both of which have already been exploited to the hilt in the media. ... Disturbingly, at no point does Klee define his position as an educator for people with disabilities [Behindertenpädagoge] and a non-disabled person. He merely talks about being personally affected.51
Already in early 1980, activists of the “Cripple Groups” had criticized Klee for not amplifying their often spectacular initiatives. The best known “Cripple activist,” Franz Christoph, had applied for political asylum in the Netherlands, citing oppression of disabled people in the Federal Republic.\(^{52}\) According to members of the “Cripple Groups,” Klee refused to write about this maneuver in *Die Zeit*, the widely-read newspaper to which he was a contributor. In an article in the activist *Krüppelzeitung*, they quoted a letter which according to them was written by a *Die Zeit* journalist to the *Krüppelzeitung* editorial staff indicating that Klee and others had talked about taking up Christoph’s asylum application in the paper but decided against it as they concluded that the situation of disabled people was improving overall. In the article, the activists directly asked Klee how such a positive evaluation could be reconciled with awarding the Golden Crutch.\(^{53}\)

Christoph also accused Klee, whom he referred to as disabled people’s “strange friend” [*seltsamen Freund*], of maintaining traditional hierarchies by talking in the name of disabled people.\(^{54}\) Various “Cripple activists” claimed Klee was financially profiting from writing about disability and served as a false icon for many young people with disabilities. Christoph went even further by saying that Klee’s publishing of a disability rights calendar would be like a man publishing feminist material, which would have been unthinkable at the time.\(^{55}\)

When asked directly about his motivation for engaging in the disability movement, Klee seemed incensed.\(^{56}\) In March 1981, the central journal of Swiss disability activism, *Puls*, issued a special edition on the personal motivation of non-disabled people for engaging in disability rights activism. In his contribution, Klee dismissed the issue:

> I do not want to engage in a discussion about my “motivation.” ... I am annoyed, I don’t know why non-disabled people always have to explain their support and engagement. A postman does not have to explain why he took the job, somebody who likes to play chess or soccer, or enjoys listening to music or going to the...
museum is allowed to do so; yet non-disabled people within the
disability rights movement are always pressured to explain their
reasons for being engaged.\textsuperscript{57}

In the May issue of the same journal, one Swiss activist reacted
to Klee’s statement in an article labeled “disabled prophet on
the sidelines.” While reporting that he himself was intrigued
by Klee’s early publications on disability rights issues, he
was shocked by Klee’s evasive answer about his motivation.
Implying that Klee was reluctant to talk about his motivation
because he was making good money with his books on dis­
ability, he claimed Klee was only interested in helping dis­
abled people as long as they were dependent on him. He saw
Klee’s paternalism play out most prominently at the Golden
Crutch.

At the award ceremony for the Golden Crutch (television broad­
cast), the stage was densely “garnished” with disabled people,
especially wheelchair users. However, it was not a disabled per­
son who appeared at the podium, but Ernst Klee. In my opinion,
this scene clearly showed a lack of sensitivity on Klee’s part (and,
of course, incorrect behavior on the part of the disabled people
present).\textsuperscript{58}

Looking at media coverage about the Golden Crutch, Klee is
indeed in most cases the only organizer mentioned by name;
often the disabled members of the \textit{VHS-Kurs} are only referred
to as “die Behinderten.”\textsuperscript{59} While the palpable tensions between
Klee and the more radical disability activist branches deserve
more attention in future research, this critique of Klee can be
seen as a indicator for identity debates that dominated 1981.

The year 1981 itself was another reason why the Golden
Crutch was suspended. In 1976, the United Nations had cho­
sen 1981 as the \textit{International Year of Disabled Persons} (IYDP),
as it had already designated an international women’s year
(1975) and a children’s year (1979). In many countries, state
actors, charities, and experts created event schedules, mostly
to talk about the successes of and advances within the reha­
bilitative sectors. In West Germany and elsewhere, activists with disabilities rejected these official schedules as self-congratulatory paternalism. The protest against the IYDP overshadowed other activist activities. “The ‘Golden Crutch’ will not be awarded this year. The reason for this is the ‘International Year of Disabled People,’ which is currently taking place in front of everyone’s eyes and ears.”

Prior to and during 1981, activists not only interfered with the official events; they also created their own counterprogram. Important with regard to the legacy of the Golden Crutch is that parallel to the public criticism of Klee, the question about the role of non-disabled people in disability activism became a major discussion point. The highlight of the counterprogram was to be the so-called Cripple Tribunal. Modeled after the Russell People’s Tribunal series, a 1960s initiative that had indicted Vietnam war atrocities, this court was to preside over the “human rights violations in the welfare state” which, among other things, included the living conditions in residential institutions.

During a preparatory meeting for this tribunal in late February, a controversial discussion took place over whether the tribunal should be organized by disabled and non-disabled people cooperating together or whether non-disabled individuals should be mostly excluded. A vote among the disabled members of the group decided that disabled members should work mostly on their own, with only occasional cooperation with non-disabled people. This approach was favored by the so-called “Cripple Groups.” In the following months, the issue of cooperation remained divisive. Eventually members of the more radical “Cripple Groups” dropped out of the organizational committee, claiming that the Cripple Tribunal was cooperating with the “oppressor.”

The tribunal was held on December 12–13, 1981, in Dortmund. It attracted roughly 400 participants across the spectrum of disability activism. The tribunal reiterated criticism

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63 The exchange is reprinted in Krüppel-Tribunal: Menschenrechtsverletzungen im Sozialstaat, ed. Susanne von Daniels et al. (Cologne, 1983), 157–159.
of everyday discrimination and, like the Golden Crutch, voiced criticism from the perspective of people with disabilities. It remains one of the central points of reference for the collective memory of the German disability rights movement. The debates surrounding the identity of the tribunal organizers took up questions that were also discussed with regard to Ernst Klee’s perceived dominance in the movement and the awarding of the Golden Crutch.

VI. Conclusion

The Golden Crutch was an important stage in the articulation of the interests of people with disabilities in the Federal Republic of Germany. Satire and ridicule had already played a role in local clubs and would also play a significant role in activist magazines. The satirical approach allowed the members of the VHS-Kurs to take on a new active speaker position, which was very well received and was therefore also transferred to other contexts. Challenging internalized hostility towards disabled people, such as in the case of the HUK advertisement, was also well received by a broader audience.

However, as soon as the target of the mockery became the field of disability care, public approval was more divided. In the case of the award of the Golden Crutch to the Alsterdorfer Anstalten in 1979, it was not only the clinic director who rejected the award and its implicit condemnation. There were also voices who thought that the award was aimed at the wrong target, as the clinic was by some seen as working in the interests of disabled people. Nevertheless, it was empowering for disability advocates to set the tone in these debates. In 1980/1981, the era of irony seemed to be over, at least for the time being. While its satire had become worn out, the Golden Crutch’s empowerment remained. In 2014, the Berlin disability pride parade revived the idea and to the present day awards a “Glitter Crutch” [Glitzerkrücke] annually.

64 Stoll, Behinderte Anerkennung?, 314–316.
More radical activists criticized the dominance of the non-disabled journalist Ernst Klee in organizing the Golden Crutch and in public reporting on the disability movement. Here, new research perspectives materialize particularly regarding the history of what is today often called allyship. Recent research has shown that parents of disabled people were often criticized in West German activist media, but parent groups were simultaneously often engaged in supporting disability rights issues.65 Within and beyond disability history, the ambivalent and sometimes contentious relationships of self-activists and people engaging in activism for people whose identity they do not share require further research attention.


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Forum: Antisemitism And Sexualities
Antisemitism and Sexualities: Introduction

Anna-Carolin Augustin, Sebastian Bischoff, Kristoff Kerl

Antisemitism and sexualities have developed a bond. For centuries, fantasies about Jews as sexually abnormal, dangerous, or using sexuality as a weapon have been part of Judeophobic and antisemitic discourses. This aspect of antisemitism is also referred to as “sexual antisemitism.” While elements of these antisemitic ideas and images can be traced back to medieval Christian Judeophobia, sexual antisemitism has reinvented itself time and again and is still very much alive today.¹

Current antisemitic conspiracy narratives blame Jews for promoting LGBTQI+ rights, pornography, interracial sexuality, and therefore allegedly “perverting” the “social fabric of gender and sexual norms.”\(^2\) Antisemitic ideas focusing on sexuality also flourished among coronavirus deniers and anti-vaccination activists during the pandemic, denigrating the vaccine as a Jewish-made means of sterilization to control the world population, and sometimes even randomly combining this with the antisemitic trope of sexually deviant Jews who prey on children by highlighting the Jewish sex offender Epstein as a representative of Jewry.\(^3\) Closely related to allegations of sexual abuse of children, this contemporary sexual-antisemitic fantasy is easily unmasked as an incarnation of the centuries-old Judeophobic blood libel.\(^4\)

Today’s antisemites do not only use historical images and tropes such as the blood libel to construct supposedly new antisemitic narratives, but they also deploy a certain kind of memory politics to keep alive historical debates that were framed in antisemitic terms. An example of this is the case of Leo Frank, a young Jew accused of sexual abuse and murder, who was put on trial in Atlanta, Georgia, between 1913 and 1915. During the trial, which resulted in the lynching of the accused, constructions of racialized sexualities were of major importance. While notions of racialized sexuality constructed African American men as “wild,” “natural,” and “uncivilized” —creating a fantasy of the “Black rapist” that fueled racist furor and caused thousands of lynchings of African American men in the United States in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century—Jewish sexual morals, practices, and desires were imaged to be “perverted” and the


\(^3\) In Germany, a song played at several rallies against the measures to contain the corona pandemic, for instance, bluntly linked antisemitism and sexuality. RIAS Bayern: “das muss man auch mal ganz klar benennen dürfen”.

\(^4\) According to the blood libel, Jews kidnapped and killed Christian children for ritualistic purposes. This Judeophobic fantasy can be traced back to the 12th century, at least. See Magda Teter, Blood Libel: On the Trail of an Antisemitic Myth (Cambridge, MA, 2020).
result of “over-civilization.” Nowadays, Leo Frank, or rather the antisemitic construction of Frank as a “sex killer” is part of contemporary antisemitic memory politics. Antisemites in the United States but also in other countries such as Germany still draw on the case in order to show, firstly, Jews’ alleged social power and, secondly, their allegedly deviant and threatening sexuality.6

Sexuality, gender, and antisemitism are not only connected in the world of ideas, but also in sexualized violence inflicted on Jewish people. Conceptualizing antisemitism as “cultural sadism,” Susannah Heschel describes “the essence, goal, and purpose of antisemitic violence” as rape. According to Heschel, rape is “the climax of pogroms by combining sexuality, violence, and intimacy in a unique form of sadistic violence against the body and the soul. Moreover, mass-perpetrator rape is an attack against women, against Judaism as a religion, and against the Jewish future.”7 Even though Heschel’s article, as well as the following essays in this forum were written before the caesura of October 7, the “conflict-related sexual violence [that] occurred during the 7 October attacks in multiple locations”8 should give us cause for future reflection in


9 A small but growing group in the United States, for instance, “denies the basic facts of the attacks, pushing a spectrum of falsehoods and misleading narratives that minimize the violence or dispute its origins.” See Elizabeth Dwoskin, “Growing Oct. 7 ‘Truther’ Groups Say Hamas Massacre Was a False Flag,” Washington Post, January 21, 2024, https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/01/21/hamas-attack-october-7-conspiracy-israel/. This also applies to the sexual atrocities that were committed. The way numerous international human rights groups dealt with the sexualized violence of October 7, 2023 was characterized not by denial, but by long hesitation. It took UN Women, the United Nations’ women’s rights agency, and other institutions months to address and condemn the gender-based atrocities – a silence and lack of solidarity that has since sparked the protest of “Me too unless you are a Jew” activists.

This forum brings together three essays by researchers who have been working on the topic for many decades. Originally, the following texts were contributions to the conference “Antisemitism and Sexualities Reconsidered.” These essays are not intended as reflections on current developments nor do they provide a comprehensive survey of the study of antisemitism and sexualities. They do, however, offer incisive thoughts and reflections on the history of sexual antisemitism that may help us to better understand events and debates today. With this forum we aim to deepen our knowledge of the historical connections between antisemitism and sexualities and thus to stimulate academic engagement with a subject that is, unfortunately, once again very relevant.

This forum offers new perspectives on the historical chronology of sexual antisemitism as well as its ability to bond with other categories of social hierarchization, such as gender and disability. Both perspectives provide a more nuanced understanding of the subject and new insights on the way Jew-hatred was constructed and changed over the course of history up to today.

10 The conference was organized by Anna-Carolin Augustin, Sebastian Bischoff, Kristoff Kerl, and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum. It was funded by the GHI Washington, the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Berlin, and the DFG. See the conference report by Laszlo Strzoda in the Bulletin of the German Historical Institute 70 (Fall 2022): 107–113.
The notion that Jews’ sexualities constitute a threat to non-Jewish subjects and communities has been part of Judeophobic discourses since ancient times, when sexuality already played an important role in conflicts between Jews and Gentiles. The Roman historian Tacitus considered Jews to be “prone to lust” and open to “immoral” sexual practices.\(^\text{11}\) Early Christians used depictions of Jews’ sexuality as a means to mark and stabilize the still fluid boundaries between Christianity and Judaism. By the fourth century, the description of Jews as “carnal, sexual deviants had become a topos in early Christian texts.”\(^\text{12}\) Leading Christians such as the archbishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, or Augustine accused Jews of being lascivious and immodest, and depicted synagogues as places of sexual immorality by.\(^\text{13}\) However, Susanna Drake’s research on sexualized representations of Jews in early Christian texts shows that other religious groups were depicted the same way: “Christian writers portrayed these Others, alternately, as sexually aggressive or vulnerable. Their men were too feminine, their women too masculine, their bodies too wild, their morals too loose. The creation of an orthodox Christian attitude toward the body thus coincided with the construction of an abject ‘heretical’ sexuality.”\(^\text{14}\) Furthermore, it is important to note that in Antiquity Jews used the same sexual stereotypes and slander to describe Gentiles and to distinguish Jewish subjectivity “as superior to Gentile identity.”\(^\text{15}\) Against this backdrop, it is plausible to assume that notions of a particular Jewish type of sexuality did not yet exist in Antiquity.

During the European Middle Ages, some transformations in Judeophobic politics of sexuality took place. Sexuality continued to mark the inter-community borders, but the practices of protecting these borders changed, at least since the thirteenth century, as Stefanie Schüler-Springorum argues in her essay in this forum. After the 4th Lateran Council of 1215 Jews and Muslims were obliged to wear particular clothes to mark their Otherness and to prevent any sexual contacts that would

12 Drake, Slandering, 2.
13 Drake, Slandering, 2; Walter Laqueur, Gesichter des Antisemitismus: Von den Anfängen bis heute (Berlin, 2008), 62.
14 Drake, Slandering, 3.
15 Drake, Slandering, 13.
transgress religious borders.\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, Christian notions of Jewish bodies changed. The latter’s religious difference was increasingly naturalized, and their allegedly deviant sexuality was inscribed into their bodies. This is reflected in the notion of the male menstruating Jew, which circulated in Christian writings from the twelfth until the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{17} Here we can observe that already during the Middle Ages the first Judeophobic topos that constructed a particular Jewish gender identity and sexuality started to enter the historical stage. Since the fifteenth century, Jews’ genitals also became part of Judeophobic discourses in another way. With the first appearance of syphilis in Europe during the fifteenth century, Jews were blamed for the spread of the disease.\textsuperscript{18}

It was only with the rise of modernity and the shaping of racialized discourses on gender and sexuality that a distinct type of Jewish sexuality appeared within so called “modern antisemitism.” Jews were now held responsible for a variety of (both alleged and real) social ills that were linked to the shaping of modern social conditions. Furthermore, modern antisemitism constructed Jews as driving forces of conspiracies aimed at subjugating and exploiting non-Jewish people. These important shifts and changes had enormous repercussions for anti-Jewish discourses on and fantasies of sexuality. Stefanie Schüler-Springorum argues that “it is only with the advent of modernity that Judeophobia becomes intimately and, it seems, universally connected with gender images and fantasies about deviant or dangerous sexual predilections, performances or activities.”\textsuperscript{19} Against this backdrop, she suggests that the “long nineteenth century” should be understood as a watershed moment in the history of sexual Judeophobia and sexual antisemitism respectively—a time when the antisemitic notion of a deviant Jewish sexuality was born. The question of periodization also plays a role in Dagmar Herzog’s essay, which serves as a comment on Schüler-Springorum contribution. Although she agrees with Schüler-Springorum in considering the rise of modernity as
a crucial development in the history of sexual antisemitism, she argues for dating the “sexual turn” at the turn to the twentieth century.\(^{20}\)

Beyond offering stimulating thoughts on the periodization of the histories of sexual antisemitism, Stefanie Schüler-Springorum’s and Dagmar Herzog’s articles also point to sexual antisemitism’s potency for “bonding and intertwining” with other social power structures and hierarchizations.\(^{21}\) Gender is one prime example. The sexual identities and sexual desires attributed to Jews were characterized by gender ambivalence—a topic that Stefanie Schüler-Springorum traces in more detail in her essay. The dissolution of the borders between “masculine” and “feminine” sexuality corresponded to notions of “effeminate” Jewish masculinity and “masculinized” Jewish femininity. Whereas “unmanly” desires were ascribed to male Jews, antisemites imagined female Jewish sexuality as characterized by male-connotated attributes such as sexual activity, passionate lusts, and agency. This can be seen, for example, in the figure of the seductive Jewess or in the figure of the sex-obsessed vamp in 1920’s cinema.\(^{22}\) Despite the gender ambivalence in these constructions of Jewish sexuality, they also reproduced notions of male activity and female passivity. While fantasies of “Jewish-male” sexuality constructed Jews as very active, the beautiful and seductive Jewish woman ultimately remained an object of male desire. In contrast to the construction of non-Jewish, “white” women as “pure” objects that had to be protected from the alleged sexual desires of (often) racialized masculinities, the “beautiful Jewess” as an object of sexual desire became, as Jean-Paul Sartre has argued, an object of annihilation.\(^{23}\)

Scrutinizing constructions of Jewish sexuality does not only allow us to understand the historical entanglements between antisemitism and gender better. In her thought-provoking comment, Dagmar Herzog points to historical and contemporary intersections between antisemitism and discourses on (dis-)ability in West Germany. In antisemitic fantasies, the


\(^{21}\) Schüler-Springorum, “Dark Side.”

\(^{22}\) Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, “Gender and the Politics of Antisemitism,” The American Historical Review 123 (October 2018): 1215.

\(^{23}\) Schüler-Springorum, “Gender,” 1216.
allegedly deviant sexual practices of Jews, including incestuous acts, supposedly caused a higher percentage of disabled children among them compared to non-Jews.\textsuperscript{24} Class is another category that comes to mind when we think about antisemitic figures such as the “Jew Pervert” or the “Jew homosexual” since “Jewish perversion” was considered to be the result of Jews’ alleged membership in the upper-classes.

Researching racialized constructions of sexuality can also contribute to the ongoing scholarly debates on the relationship between antisemitism and racism—a topic that is being actively debated in the field of antisemitism studies not only since the so called Historikerstreit 2.0. The construction of racialized sexual morals and sexual practices has not been a singularity of Jew-hatred but has also played an important role in the history of various types of racism. To shed light on how antisemitic and racist discourses constructed the particular “Other” as a sexual threat enables us to gain new insights into the parallels but also differences in the way that racialized subjectivities were constructed in antisemitism and (other) racisms. White supremacists, for instance, assigned different “races” specific types of sexuality that correlated with the racialized subjectivities they attributed to them. Both African Americans and Jews were imagined to have enormous sexual desires for white women and thus both were constructed as sexual threats to white women’s “(racial) purity” and, by extension, to the “white race” as a whole. According to white supremacists’ fantasies, the way they tried to satisfy these desires differed. Whereas African Americans were often imagined as making use of their alleged physical prowess and violence to satisfy their lusts, Jews, in these discourses, were depicted as using their alleged social and economic power and influence to gain sexual access to white females. The antisemitic construction of Jews as powerful and cunning also paved the way for the fantasy of sexual conspiracies conducted by Jews. In this sense, white supremacists and white nationalists have understood a whole range of
sex-related phenomena—feminism, the struggles of LGBTQI+
people against discrimination, sexual contacts between white
and non-white people as well as pornography—as tools of
subversion that Jews use(d) in order to weaken the “white
race” and stabilize their alleged social dominance.25

Sander L. Gilman’s essay begins by examining the insurrection
on the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on January 6, 2021. Gilman
identifies male perceptions of being emasculated and castrated
as a strong impetus for participating in the attack and for believing in antisemitic conspiracies. He
then contextualizes his observations by tracing the history of
“the Jew as [the] exemplary presence” of the stereotypes of
deviant human sexuality back to the mid-nineteenth century
and to discourses on Jewish circumcision. On January 6, Gil-
man argues, the perception of emasculation united far-right
antisemites and right-wing Jews, who performed a “Jewish
hyper- or hypo-masculinity in the age of Trump” in the attack
on the Capitol.26

This dialectic of sexual antisemitism recurs throughout its
history. Fantasies of deviant and threatening Jewish sexual-
ities not only caused emotions such as disgust and anger but
were also sources of (sexual) pleasure. The National Social-
ist newspaper Der Stürmer, for instance, reported on Jews’
alleged sexual atrocities in detailed and explicit ways, and
such reports were often illustrated with images of (almost)
nude women. Against this backdrop, Dagmar Herzog argued in Sex after Fascim that “Der Stürmer served as pornogra-
phy.”27 Such pornographic antisemitism can also be found in
some interrogations and investigations in cases of so-called
Rassenschande [racial defilement], in which accused men and
women had to give detailed information about their intimate
acts.28 Consuming sexual antisemitic tales and fantasies can,
therefore, be understood in some sense as a sexual practice
that allowed people to indulge in fantasies of allegedly devi-
ant and horrible sex acts while at the same time attributing
these acts to Jews. Herzog’s observation seems to confirm the

25 Jessie Daniels,
White Lies: Race,
Class, Gender and
Sexuality in White
Supremacist Discourse
(New York/London,
1997), 113–130; Abby
L. Ferber, White Man
Falling: Race, Gender,
and White Supremacy
(Lanham, 1999), 125–
126; Kerl, “Oppression
by Orgasm”; Kerl,
“Conspiracy of
Homosexualisation.”

26 Sander L. Gilman,
“Masculinity and
Antisemitism in Our
Day,” in this Bulletin
issue.

27 Dagmar Herzog,
Sex after Fascism:
Memory and Morality
in Twentieth-Century
Germany (Princeton,
NJ: Princeton Univer-
sity Press, 2005), 40.

28 Alexandra
Przyrembel, “Sexu-
alität und Antisemi-
tismus während des
Nationalsozialismus,”
Geschichte
und Gesellschaft 39
assumption that “Jews are contradictory objects of desire and revulsion” and are often “eroticized as enemies and lovers.”29 At the same time, it should not be forgotten that the erotic fantasies in people’s minds all too often led to actual physical violence, sadistic cruelty, and annihilation in Jewish history.

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The Dark Side of Modernity?
Rethinking Antisemitism and Sexuality

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The idea that modernity might have had some dark sides is not really breaking news. Bookshelves, even libraries are filled with this topic in all its variations, and recent debates on colonialism and the Enlightenment, on postcolonialism and antisemitism fire up newspapers, social media and roundtables. So, while this article does not intend to add to this policy-driven dispute, it will try to show that by thinking antisemitism and sexuality together, we might discover new connections and periodizations that can broaden our understanding of at least one of them: antisemitism.

My reading of the entanglement of these two categories is firmly based on what one could probably term a generational approach not untypical of a young West German student of history in the 1980s. As a feminist, I was fascinated by what Claudia Honegger has termed “ruses of powerlessness”, by female resistance to the impositions of the enlightenment and the nineteenth-century’s new bourgeois gender order. At the same time, Klaus Theweleit’s 1977 bestseller Male Fantasies opened my eyes to the male side of the coin, namely to the fact that gender as an analytical category refers not only to

1 Claudia Honegger, Listen der Ohnmacht: Zur Sozialgeschichte weiblicher Widerstandsformen (Frankfurt am Main, 1994).
women but also to men and thus has something important to tell us about twentieth-century fascism, among other things. Theweleit’s findings were, in my eyes, closely connected to the third pillar of my perception of modern history, Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), which placed the blame for fascism on capitalism and on the repressive culture of bourgeois society, including its gendered structure. Together, these factors produced what Adorno and Horkheimer called the authoritarian personality, or: Theweleit’s Freikorps fighters. In Theweleit’s theory, the fear of physical dissolution, the dissolution of the body, stands at the core of what he calls fascist personality (which is not exactly the same as the authoritarian one but has similar traits), for this fear has to be contained by all means, by all kinds of frontiers, defenses, and armors. And this is where the second category of this paper comes in, namely sexuality: For what human activity, theoretically at least, tends more towards the dissolution of physical borders than sexuality? So, it is not by chance that on the other side of this momentum we find the first-mentioned category: antisemitism (and for that matter: racism) as highly effective ways of defending any kind of borders.

In order to relate the two of them, however, it is necessary to assume a specific perspective on antisemitism. While the social construction of “gender” and its changeability over time are by now integral, if not indispensable parts of the theoretical toolbox for historians, this is not the case when it comes to antisemitism. On the contrary, this field of research is not only a very contested one, but also one oscillating between what I would call “closed” and “open” interpretations of antisemitism’s long history. Roughly speaking, two directions can be identified, which at their extreme ends could hardly be more different. Emblematic for one such direction is the title of a study by the late British-Israeli historian Robert S. Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred*. In this perspective antisemitism is a coherent and cohesive concept, employed

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to refer to the hardly changing and always present historical phenomenon of hatred of the Jews “since classical antiquity and on into the present”—as many popular book subtitles phrase it. A historical phenomenon for which ultimately—that is the political conclusion drawn by many authors—there is only one viable solution: namely a Jewish state. At the other end of the spectrum stands the much-discussed essay “Away from a Definition of Anti-Semitism” by Wistrich’s American colleague David Engel, who develops a profound critique of this specific view of world history. Instead of taking a concept from nineteenth-century Germany and applying it as a prime tool of explanation to analyze all possible historical events and phenomena worldwide, Engel argues for the radical deconstruction of the concept by means of an exacting contextualization of the respective historical phenomena to be described: “Constituting anti-Semitism as an object of historical study, in whatever form and according to whatever parameters, has diverted and will likely continue to deflect historians from potentially fruitful ways of investigating the specific incidents, texts, laws, visual artefacts, social practices and mental configurations that such rubric customarily subsumes.”

Between these two starkly opposite poles we can find a growing number of widely differing attempts to describe animosity toward Jews, among which I would like to single out one author, who has the rare gift of being able to think in both directions (even if, this must be conceded, at different temporal points in his research career). In his 1996 dissertation, the medievalist David Nirenberg critiqued a teleological understanding of antisemitism that completely excludes the local and temporal context. While there he had placed his focus on the historical specificity of anti-Jewish persecutions, in his second key work, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, he directed his attention to the continuities of anti-Judaism, which he regards—in the fundamental contrast of “flesh” and “spirit”—as defining a structural framework for Western

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Building on Karl Marx, Nirenberg stresses that anti-Judaism (he consciously avoids using the term antisemitism) is not about a history of relations between real Jews and non-Jews. Rather, what is central are the “basic tools and concepts ... through which individuals in a society relate to the world and to each other,” a “set of ideas and attributes with which non-Jews can make sense of and criticize their world.”

I would argue that it is precisely this binary structure of anti-Jewish sentiment that forms the arc of cognition between the two Nirenbergs: on the one hand, the matrix of anti-Jewish thinking, which over the centuries has repeatedly reactivated itself anew in totally different contexts; on the other, its ability, to date too little examined, of being able to enter into linkages—in part very stable, in part fleeting and fluid—with all other possible hostile sentiment and animosity, its capacity for bonding. This, to be sure, only becomes clearly visible by means of a careful and exacting historical contextualization. The potency of antisemitism to bond and intertwine also determines its obvious tendency toward total incoherence. This, however, contrasts with the exactly investigated anti-Judaism interpretation that Nirenberg develops but helps to explain the often noted “flexibility” of antisemitism: Jews as backward and yet as agents of progress, as capitalists and yet as communists, and, to finally come to our topic, as hypersexual and yet as effeminate.

By now it has become clear why I have discussed Engel and Nirenberg here: on the one hand, a focus on sexuality tends to reinforce the “longest hatred” interpretation: a straight line from the menstruating Jewish men of the Middle Ages to the race defiler of the Nazis on to the U.S. porn industry. On the other hand, this focus can also serve as a lens that sheds light on the manifold entanglements of the anti-Jewish with other forms of resentment, which is what I will stress in this contribution—not as a general challenge to our overall approach to the topic, but rather as a window of opportunity, as a potential
line of thought that might lead to new insights or connections. In doing so, I will start with a hypothesis that, for the moment, still rests on rather shaky grounds but will hopefully instigate further research. It reads as follows: while there are certain anti-Jewish images that relate to Jewish (and other) bodies in the Middle Ages and in premodern times, it is only with the advent of modernity that Judeophobia becomes intimately and, it seems, universally connected with gender images and fantasies about deviant or dangerous sexual predilections, performances or activities. This hypothesis therefore links “modern antisemitism” not so much to the invention of “race” 12 but rather to the enormous importance of clear-cut gender roles and ascriptions for the structure of modern, capitalist, and bourgeois society—a development that would start roughly with the Enlightenment, and which has been described so convincingly in its economic, social, and cultural aspects by Karin Hausen in her pathbreaking article “The Polarization of The Polarization of ‘Gender Characters.’” 13

In order to assess the changes that occurred with the advent of “modernity,” a look back in history, if only a brief one, is necessary here. Regarding the monotheistic divide between Christians and Jews, the need to watch the borders between the distinct communities was for the first time clearly formulated in church regulations in the results of the 4th Lateran Council of 1215, which marks the change from a basically protective albeit hierarchical to a repressive Christian theology towards the Jews and—nota bene—towards Muslims. The Council’s Canon 68 deplores:

> In some provinces a difference in dress distinguishes the Jews or Saracens from the Christians, but in certain others such a confusion has grown up that they cannot be distinguished by any difference. Thus, it happens at times that through error Christians have relations with the women of Jews or Saracens, and Jews and Saracens with Christian women. Therefore, that they may not, under pretext of error of this sort, excuse themselves in the future for the excesses of such prohibited intercourse, we decree

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that such Jews and Saracens of both sexes in every Christian province and at all times shall be marked off in the eyes of the public from other peoples through the character of their dress.\textsuperscript{14}

It is very clear, therefore, that special dress codes or marks for Jews and Muslims were introduced in order to prevent sexual contacts between the different religions, contacts that could lead to a blurring of religious difference and might eventually lead to conversion. While the decree obviously points to quite extended social and sexual contacts between the different groups (and others, since, later on, it would be extended towards heretics, prostitutes and lepers), sexuality—or rather its prohibition—here merely serves as an instrumental barrier and not as something that in its specific quality is formed by Jews or Muslims and therefore dangerous. Sex was sex, so to speak, and what had to be avoided was its outcome: social intimacy and offspring.

A similar function can be observed with regard to the visual presence of Jews and Muslims in the medieval imagery. First of all, it is important to note that this imagery was far less static, homogenous, and aggressive than our present-day gaze is inclined to think. Sara Lipton has reconstructed the development of images of Jews from benign, if exoticized, figures connoting ancient wisdom to increasingly vicious portrayals inspired by (and designed to provoke) fear and hostility.\textsuperscript{15} Interestingly enough, these changes occur only after the Fourth Lateran Council in the thirteenth century, meaning they seem to have worked hand in hand with stricter segregation. In a similar line, Alexandra Cuffel has analyzed medieval Jewish, Christian, and Muslim uses of gendered bodily imagery and metaphors of impurity in their visual and verbal polemic against one another. Foul smell, bodily fluids and states, and animals were employed as powerful tropes to mark religious opponents as sinful, filthy, and unacceptable, with a special emphasis on women. By defining and denigrating the religious “other,” each group, sharing basic assumptions about purity, wielded bodily insult as a means

\textsuperscript{14} Peter Schäfer, \textit{Kurze Geschichte des Antisemitismus} (München, 2020), 126.

of resistance, of inciting violence, and of creating community boundaries.\textsuperscript{16} In my lay view, we might also place the idea of menstruating Jews or the famous \textit{Judensau} sculptures at Christian churches within this tableau of religious competition which by the invention of somatic markers served to foster biological ideas of difference and, at various times in history, persecution. Cuffel’s study is fascinating insofar as these purposes are remarkably similar to how we would describe the intentions of modern antisemitism, while at the same time this was apparently a joint monotheistic, that is Jewish, Christian, and Muslim endeavor—if we leave aside the differing power relations over time and space.

As far as the Jews are concerned, they were obviously the most vulnerable group in this triangle, and it is their depiction, illustrating religious difference, that over the centuries transmuted into purported physical difference. One topic, however, is conspicuously missing in these visual narratives, a topic that would in later centuries develop into a key symbol of Jewish difference and a powerful trigger of sexual fantasies of all kinds—namely, circumcision. In those few Christian texts that mention it, there is hardly any trace of the later obsession with this tiny missing part of the male Jewish body. Rather, it is taken as yet another symbol of Jewish theological arrogance or stubbornness or both; see Luther, for example.\textsuperscript{17} As such, it was reflected upon by Jewish intellectuals as well, such as Spinoza, who argued that “they have incurred universal hatred by cutting themselves off completely from all other peoples.”\textsuperscript{18} As Sander Gilman has demonstrated, the practice of de-circumcision—medical ways of reconstructing the foreskin—became fashionable and feasible only in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{19} There are sources, especially medical ones, that focus on Jewish physical difference in the second half of the eighteenth century, although at the beginning rarely with negative overtones. The circumcised penis was at that time not automatically considered unmasculine. Rather, it could serve as a trigger for Christian fantasies about the

\textsuperscript{16} Alexandra Cuffel, \textit{Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic} (Notre Dame, IN, 2007).


\textsuperscript{18} Sander Gilman, in his article in this issue.

sexual potency of Jewish male competition. One can find telling illustrations of this, for example, in the 1790s in the letters written to the Swedish diplomat Gustav von Brinckmann by young Wilhelm von Humboldt, who was obsessed with talking about “the circumcised,” that is male Jews, while both frequented the literary salons of Jewish women, Rahel Varnhagen and others, as enthusiastic guests. 20 Their behavior can serve as a fitting example for the ambivalent nature of the period around 1800, where the role of women and of Jews came under scrutiny at the same time and with similar intellectual fervor, resulting in hundreds of books and pamphlets arguing for or against female and Jewish difference—or, to put it differently, when the great promise of equality, fostered theoretically by Enlightenment philosophy and in practice by the French Revolution, had to be watered down in order to maintain fundamental hierarchical structures between the sexes and between the religions. One should not forget that this was a long and torn historical process, the outcome of which was far from certain in the beginning. 21

If we take, for example, the debates on general conscription between 1780 and 1810 in Prussia, it becomes clear that their main focus was on military homogeneity and how to maintain it if everybody were called to arms. In these debates, doubts about the Jews as soldiers were generally connected with their religious and cultural otherness, and only a few authors mentioned an alleged physical incapacity. And if they did so, this incapacity was attributed to the lamentably poor condition of health among the (impoverished) Prussian population as a whole rather than to specific male Jewish traits. By marked contrast, the advocates of compulsory military service for Jews in this debate argued for Jewish inclusion by citing certain especially masculine qualities ascribed to the Jewish character, features that had evolved historically and were ostensibly proven. In 1784, one Prussian minister wrote that the Jews’ “hot oriental temperament (that) would render them furious in attack,” while “their cunning and mischievous nature (rec-

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21 See Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, “Gender and the Politics of Antisemitism,” American Historical Review 123 (2018): 1210–22, where I discuss the following at further length.
ommended them) for the tasks of reconnoitering.” Neither he nor his colleagues were sympathetic toward Jews, but rather thinking in terms of utility and how to make use of the “manly strength” of their Jewish underlings. It is important to note, thus, that in the early nineteenth century the physical ability of Jewish males was not doubted, and their masculinity was not yet called into question. But again, we need to be cautious about sweeping conclusions: At that time, around 1800, the general concept of “patriotic manliness” was far less militaristic than later. Rather, manliness was closely bound up with bourgeois virtues like loyalty, piety, readiness to sacrifice and fraternity, all family values claimed by both religions, Christianity and Judaism. 22 We cannot understand the dynamics of anti-Jewish resentment if we do not take into account its entanglement with general society, in this case with the gender discourse of the time—something that might sound banal to gender historians, but is fiercely debated, as shown above, among historians of antisemitism.

It was thus not by chance that it was Jewish women who bore the brunt of what was to become the “modern” anti-Jewish discourse, probably the only time in the long history of Judeophobia. This discourse was closely entangled with an anti-feminist one: First and foremost, the women of the famous Berlin and Viennese salons were denied their femininity, the standard reproach against educated women and one that is still prevalent. Letters, pamphlets, and stage plays from that era are replete with malicious representations of educated women/Jewesses behaving in an affected manner. With the demise of the literary salons and the advent of the Restoration period after 1815, however, Jewish women vanished from the field of view of the Judeophobes, only to come back more or less a hundred years later as dominant spouses of the by then feminized Jewish male, or more frequently, as an ambivalent, erotically threatening fantasy in the image of the “Beautiful Jewess”, who as an exotic temptress, an Oriental, darker-skinned beauty, inspired male sexual fantasies. 23


It is interesting to note that, again, here we find entanglements with anti-Muslim depictions, which by the nineteenth century, had morphed into what would later be called Orientalism. Achim Rohde has written extensively about the links between German orientalism and modern antisemitism, links that were defined by the still (or again) powerful idea of a Christian Occident, or *Abendland*, or by the dichotomy between “Aryan/German” on the one side and the ‘Semitic’ on the other.24 Directed towards the Muslim world, the Othering consisted in creating an inferior but threatening outside enemy, whereas antisemitism targeted the enemy from within. While the old “Turks before Vienna threat” lost much of its power during the nineteenth century and morphed into narratives of colonial superiority, we can still find traces of this link during the German Empire when, for example, Treitschke calls Jews “Asians” and warns of “Asian Hordes” threatening Germany’s well-being. In contrast to antisemitism, however, there always existed an ambivalent gaze towards the Muslim world, one that would combine exotic cruelty with exotic erotism, and in this regard, the dark beautiful Jewess with the equally dark and beautiful inhabitants of the harems from Granada to Damascus.25 None of this—no beauty, no exotism, no desirable sexuality—is part of the image of the Jewish male in the early nineteenth century, which over time became firmly anchored in the ideological discourses of German nationalism.26 Now, doubts emerged about whether Jews were really physically fit for military service, a key argument being their supposed proclivity to being flat-footed. This purported minor malformation was to mark the Jews unfit to serve in the military ranks, because, as Sander Gilman has pointed out, in times of the glorification of the foot soldier as a hero and the liberal citizens’ militias in the period 1815 to 1848, the alleged flat foot rendered sustained marching difficult and thus served as concrete proof of the inability of the Jewish male to integrate into the community of able-bodied citizens of the state.27 Nonetheless, the physical exclusion and segregation of the


26 George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison, Wis., 1985).

male Jewish body did not emerge in a comprehensive way until the last third of the nineteenth century, when “the Jew” was construed as the counter-image to the classical “Greek” ideal of masculine beauty, which suggested the unity of the ideal body and perfect spirit or intellect.\textsuperscript{28}

It was in this context that the topic of circumcision came up again and was used as a symbol of sexual deviance: Parallel to the process of pathologizing sexuality in general, the circumcised penis was now transformed from a symbol of religious stubbornness—or reluctance to assimilate to bourgeois habits—into a conscious mutilation of a perfect (Greek/German) organ with unpredictable consequences, including an alleged proclivity for venereal diseases.\textsuperscript{29} According to this logic, it was out of sheer necessity that Jews took to other unspeakable sexual practices, thus seducing or perverting young innocent females.\textsuperscript{30} While male Jewish sexuality became deviant (but also produced fears of sexual superiority), it was at the same time pathologized in a manner very similar to that of women and—as newcomers to the bourgeois sexuality discourse—homosexuals: as devoid of self-control and subject to their base carnal desires. From this, similar psychological traits were deduced: Women in general, Jewish men, and homosexuals in particular, were all considered prone to melancholy or hysteria, but also deemed immoral, devoid of character, manipulative, mendacious, and unpredictable.\textsuperscript{31}

Needless to say, these supposed psychological traits were also reflected in the image of the Jewish (and homosexual) body, which from the last decades of the nineteenth-century onwards was always described as unmanly and unmilitary, chubby and wimpish, and suffering from flat feet, a flat chest, and poor posture.\textsuperscript{32} Antisemitic representations of the Jewish male were ambivalent about Jewish potency and impotence, just as they persistently blurred the distinctions between the genders and/or hinted at deviant sexual practices. In contrast with earlier discriminations and exclusions, these venomous attacks on male Jewish gender and sexual identity were

\textsuperscript{28} Brunotte, The Femininity Puzzle, 84–89.
\textsuperscript{31} Angelika Schaser and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, introduction to Liberalismus und Emanzipation: In- und Exklusionsprozesse im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik, ed. Angelika Schaser and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Stuttgart, 2010), 9–22.
now, at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, firmly anchored in the body and supposedly substantiated by science as fundamentally organic in origin. A hundred years after the discussions on civil equality for women and Jews, normality and deviance were defined in medical, biological, and psychological terms and the result was now unambiguous: the norm was male, heterosexual, and Christian; by contrast, deviance was female, homosexual, and Jewish. Antisemitism, racism, homophobia, and misogyny had thus become closely entangled in the antimodern vision of a clearly demarcated and hierarchically structured society. 33

Around 1900, this development found its posthumous literary climax in Otto Weininger and his 1903 publication *Sex and Character*, 600 pages of misogynist furor with anti-Jewish sidebars, which soon became a must-read in educated (male) bourgeois circles, even though one might wonder in hindsight whether this popularity was also related to the author’s Jewish background and to his suicide. 34 As resentful as his and so many other writings of the time might have been, they did not yet become socially and politically influential. It took a disastrous war and its aftermath to turn ideas that had previously been considered crazy or marginal by many into tools for political action. Now, these gendered images of Jews and biological ascriptions of gender served to consolidate a nation (in Germany, but not only there) whose fundament had been shaken by military defeat, revolution, regime change, and economic crisis. In a world perceived as having been turned upside down, feminized men and sexually potent women now represented a confusion of gender and, as David Biale has insisted, the sexuality of the Jews became “a threat to an ordered world, a barbaric affront to civility.” 35 Thus, it was the symbolic moral degeneration of the nation that had to be counterattacked and overcome at any cost.

Again, this attack was directed against emancipated women and Jews, but it was Jewish men and women that represented


this threat in the most coherent and capacious way, while gentle women, albeit in subdued form, obviously had to remain part of the national project.\footnote{Birthe Kundrus, “Gender Wars. The First World War and the Construction of Gender Relation in the Weimar Republic,” in Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth Century Germany, ed. Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Oxford, U.K.: Berg, 2002), 159–179; Schüler-Springorum, “Vom Wort zur Tat: Das Erbe des Weimarer Antisemitismus,” in Weimars Erbe: Das Nachleben der ersten deutschen Republik, ed. Hanno Hochmuth, Martin Sabrow, and Tilmann Siebeneichner (Göttingen, 2020), 92–108.} Their Jewish sisters, however, now turned into the veritable incarnation of the femme fatale. In an even more dramatic variant, specifically on the cinema screen of the 1920s, she transmuted into the sex-obsessed vampire or man-murdering monster—far removed from the exotic, but salvable sweetheart of Christian men in the nineteenth century. And in order to understand the dynamics of the 1920s, one must be aware of the fact that these images were now to be found not just in novels, bourgeois journals or theater plays, but circulated wildly by all the means available to modern mass culture and especially those with a visual appeal: tabloids, illustrated magazines, movies, cabarets and last but not least postcards.\footnote{See the archival collection “Alava” at the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung: https://arthur-langerman-foundation.org/.} Furthermore, as far as antisemitism proper was concerned, these images had moved, in the words of Shulamit Volkov, from the written to the spoken word, from the pamphlets, articles, and books of the nineteenth century to Goebbels and Hitler’s speeches at the election campaign rallies of the 1920s.\footnote{Shulamit Volkov, “Das geschriebene und das gesprochene Wort: Über Kontinuität und Diskontinuität im deutschen Antisemitismus,” in Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, ed. Shulamit Volkov (München, 1990), 54–75.} Both, the visual and the visceral, directly targeted the emotions of those involved. So, by the 1930s, racist moral norms regarding the body and sexuality had become deeply anchored mindsets. But it was only with the transfer of power to the National Socialists that these norms were translated into laws.

In order to fully grasp the difference that the Nazis’ ascent to power made for the relationship between antisemitism and sexuality, one must examine the distinct fields involved here: As is well known, antisemitism moved from propaganda to state policies, from words into deeds. It is important to note, though, that the National Socialist preoccupation with breeding and purity did not start or end with the German-Jewish population. From the very beginning, Nazi biopolitics targeted German non-Jews as well: persons with disabilities, the “feeble-minded”, the “hereditary ill”, the socially deviant
in whatever variant; all these groups were objects of severe legislation from 1933 onwards, and it is not by chance that it was especially women who bore the first brunt of this aggression, as symbolized in the 400,000 forced sterilizations. Parallel to the manifold repressive policies imbued with the phobia of undesirable procreation or miscegenation, sexuality in a positive and desirable sense became a central part in the construction of the Volksgemeinschaft.

As Dagmar Herzog has shown, National Socialist Germany witnessed permanent talk in about sex, but this discourse remained ambivalent in nature. This became especially clear in the “race defilement” trials, proceedings that were initiated after the passage of the Nuremberg Laws (1935) and which the German press had a field day reporting on. The female partners of the men charged were sometimes questioned in the dock about their sexual preferences in ways that accorded special weight to the proof or admission of so-called “abnormal practices”. While such accounts of “deviant” Jewish sexuality were to be found in the local sections of German newspapers on a weekly basis, if the reader moved on to the paper’s “world politics” section, he or she could find even more horrendous stories there from the summer of 1936 onwards. For the coverage of the incipient Spanish Civil War was characterized by a breathtaking mixture of mostly sadistic eroticism and violence, committed by the external archenemy: Bolshevism. It is this close conjunction of desire, fear, lust, and violence that seems to me to typify sexualized propaganda in Nazi Germany—which did not operate in antisemitic terms only but would be extended in a variety of ways towards other internal and later external supposed threats: from the homosexual and/or asocial to the Bolshevik and/or Slav.


40 Gisela Bock, Zwangssterilisation im Nationalsozialismus (Opladen, 1986).


42 The following part of this paper is an abbreviated version of my chapter: “Sex and Violence: Race Defilement in Nazi Germany,” in Contem- porary Europe in the Historical Imagination, ed. Darcy Buerkle and Skye Doney (Madison, WI, 2023).

While this tableau of enemies was not a German specificity but rather common—in cultural variations, of course—to all European fascisms, it was its public staging in the middle of German towns and villages over several years that might explain its specific ferocity and longue durée. In a large-scale study, Michael Wildt has described the genesis of the Volksgemeinschaft by means of anti-Jewish violence inflicted in rural Germany and analyzed the so-called race defiler parades as a ritual of public humiliation. Such events, at which Jewish males accused of race defilement were forcibly paraded through the streets of their home town, began to occur more frequently during the summer of 1935, so that the Gestapo even spoke of a “kind of race defilement psychosis.” In numerous localities public amusement at the pillory morphed into brutal violence, while the number of denunciations of race defilers skyrocketed after it became a legal offense with the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935. Both the wish for harsh punishment and the great numbers of people watching these public rituals account for the success of a policy of segregation driven by fantasies of an abnormal sexuality. Even if we concede that the behavior of the bystanders was not always clear-cut and unambiguous, the bystanders do form part of the triangle that characterizes violence as a social process, which Teresa Koloma Beck has aptly described as something that is “not only exercised and suffered, but also observed and judged.”

Interestingly, this triangle came under duress when, during the war, the race defilement phobia was extended to another, much larger group: the Polish and later Soviet prisoner of war and slave laborers. With the outbreak of the war, the ideologies and practices of sexual segregation against Jews were applied to Poles in strikingly similar wording: In the “Poland Decrees” issued in March 1940 the image of the Slavic Untermensch, the “subhuman”, was radicalized and connected to the already demonized Jews. The compulsory wearing of an identifying badge for Poles was introduced 18

44 Michael Wildt, Volk, Volksgemeinschaft, AfD (Hamburg, 2017).
months before the “Jewish star” in Germany, and in a leaflet from spring 1940 with the heading “How to behave toward the Poles”, it was explicitly stated: “Just as it is considered the greatest disgrace to become involved with a Jew, any German engaging in intimate relations with a Polish male or female is guilty of sinful behavior. Despise the bestial urges of this race!”

Thus, if in the 1930s the sexual-racist anxieties of the regime had targeted mainly German-Jewish males, stigmatized for an allegedly deviant sexuality, after the outbreak of the war the rage of propaganda turned against German women and their “moral inferiority”, while the “racial inferiority” of their Polish partners was taken for granted. The punishments for both were much more draconic: The involved Polish and later the Soviet POWs, in contrast with Western prisoners of war, were without exception sentenced to death and executed publicly. The German women were paraded through the streets and had their hair shorn at the market square in front of large crowds. Here, too, the extreme brutality of such events is evidenced by numerous series of photos. The public humiliation of these German women was followed by imprisonment for several years, with loss of honor, and, from 1941 on, internment in a concentration camp, which often ended in the inmate’s death.

The step of victimizing German, non-Jewish women in public for a sexual act probably produced mixed feelings in the audiences, in particular among the female onlookers. The “unrest in the population,” according to police sources, appears to

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49 See Herbert, Hitler’s Foreign Workers, 79–81, 122–129.

have become so perceptible that directives were issued at the end of 1941 to do without the public rituals of humiliation on the street. This, however, enraged some of their male 
_Volksgenossen_ in such a way that they consequently called for the death penalty for women who had become intimately involved with foreigners. They justified this by stating that these women were committing “the greatest crime that can at all be imagined in National Socialist Germany.”

Such wishes for eradication, even of female members of one’s “own” group, prove once more the destructive power that racisms can unfold—if they are solidly anchored in the body via images of gender and concepts of sexuality, and interwoven with emotions of fear and desire, excitation and loathing, attraction and repulsion. And perhaps, one might speculate, it is precisely the ambivalence of the emotions bound up with this in the way described—the simultaneity of aversion and attraction, but also of shame and desire—which produces the untrammeled aggression. Klaus Theweleit has written extensively about this mechanism in wartime, in the fight against “red women” in the postwar revolutions of 1918/19 and the fantasies about female Jewish partisans in the Second World War. Based on a vast array of empirical material and impressive case studies, Regina Mühlhäuser, Elissa Mailänder, and Wendy Lower have argued that it was the specific colonial and racist setting of the war in Eastern Europe that produced an extremely widespread sexualized violence against women, regardless of their ethnic background, even though this was forbidden in “racial” theory. Thanks to their (and many other) works, we do have some knowledge about the perpetrators’ mindset and more specifically about how the military dealt very differently with these crimes on the Eastern and Western fronts, which, again, is proof of the overarching power of racial practice.

At the home front, the outcome of this often mortal mix of antisemitism, racism, and sexualized violence left palpable

51 See Herbert, _Hitler’s Foreign Workers_, 129 (quote), 132–133.

52 Some of his sweeping analysis regarding the Freikorps has recently been put on firmer social history ground by Jan-Philipp Pomplun: _Deutsche Freikorps: Sozialgeschichte und Kontinuitäten (para) militärischer Gewalt zwischen Weltkrieg, Revolution und Nationalsozialismus_ (Göttingen, 2022).

traces in German memory.\textsuperscript{54} As the Israeli historian Efrat Yeger has recently shown, the experience of various forms of (often gender-based) violence—in her case, in the Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg—characterized both the last war years and the early postwar years, for victims and perpetrators alike, albeit differently.\textsuperscript{55} It is thus more than just an interesting experiment to adopt this perspective when assessing the ways in which Nazi antisemitism as the apotheosis of sexualized racism morphed into its “democratic” variant of the Federal Republic and whether, and (if so) why it changed its specific sexualized character on the way.

If we take a look at the years 1943 to 1949, the answer is easy and not very surprising, thanks to the intensive work on the postwar era that has been done in the fields of gender, Displaced Persons, and Jewish history.\textsuperscript{56} With the turn of the war after the defeat at Stalingrad and the intensification of the air war in Germany, German males were slowly losing not only the war but also their role as protectors of wife and children at home. The intensified Nazi propaganda highlighting the threat that Jewish-Bolshevik rapists posed to German women took an indirect toll on German soldiers, whose fierce resistance in a militarily desperate situation appears to have been rooted to no small extent in the idea that they were protecting their families from the same atrocities that they themselves had committed or at least witnessed at the Eastern front. Thus, more German soldiers died in the last year of the war than in the five preceding ones.\textsuperscript{57} Those who survived came home as losers between 1945 and 1955, where they met with a female population that had learned to take control of their own lives and the lives of their families.\textsuperscript{58} The surprisingly short story of female redomestication and male reconstruction after the war is not our topic here, but there is a clear connection to the sexualized


\textsuperscript{57} Ian Kershaw, \textit{The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler’s Germany, 1944–45} (New York, 2011).

antisemitism and racism of the Nazi era. The rage first directed against the Jewish seducer of the 1930s and then against the “unfaithful wife” of the 1940s, which had let off steam in the rituals of race defilement, appears to have crossed over seamlessly into postwar shared outrage and indignation over German women consorting with American soldiers, the so-called *Ami-Liebchen* ("sweetheart of the Yankee soldier"). Even in the case of the tens of thousands of German women raped by Soviet soldiers at the end of the war, male German representatives often insinuated that, in reality, the women had “voluntarily consented.” So while even the rebuilding of gender hierarchies depended on racist images, the same is true of the overall stocktaking of Germans after the war. As Frank Biess has shown, Germans “experienced the post war society as a world upside down with completely inverted social hierarchies.”

The fear of revenge, so masterfully orchestrated by Goebbels’ propaganda since 1940, became omnipresent—just as the millions of Polish and Russian slave laborers had been in the last years of the war. But now these former slave laborers were free, and their sheer existence meant that the worst racist nightmare had come true. The fear and aggression this produced would shape the German handling of them and especially those who remained somehow stranded in the country for the decades to come, a situation that was exacerbated by the feeling of racist superiority that quickly became operative again after 1949.

In case of the Jews, the fear of revenge was much more complex or, to put it differently: traditional antisemitism fulfilled its role. In Nazi propaganda, the “world enemy” was at all fronts, staging an implacable air war against German cities and raping German girls in East Prussia. Germany had been fighting a war against “the Jews” by trying to kill all of them—which 37 percent of Germans in 1945, after capitulation, still deemed as having been necessary for the country’s safety. It should come as no surprise that, after the great defeat, the occupying forces were consequently all perceived as “Jewish” or “Jew Protectors.”


61 Frank Biess, *Republik der Angst: Eine andere Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Hamburg, 2019), 55. All references are to the original German edition; the quotations have been translated by the author of this article. See also the English translation: *German Angst? Fear and Democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Oxford, UK, 2020).

62 See Maria Alexopoulou, *Deutschland und die Migration* (Ditzingen, 2020).

63 Biess, *Republik der Angst?*, 43–46, 52.
Germans complained about the few surviving Jews being favored by the US occupation forces in housing, food, and everything else, while their behavior was continuously described with adjectives like cheeky, brazen or unabashed. These anti-Semitic aggressions found their perfect projection in the “sneaky Jewish black marketeer” on the one hand and in the figure of the powerful and vengeful Jew on the other, be it Henry Morgenthau or Philipp Auerbach, the self-confident commissioner of the Bavarian state government for religious, political, and racial victims of the Nazis, who successfully defended the rights of the formerly persecuted and was driven to suicide in 1952 by an obviously anti-Semitic German judiciary.

Fantasies about Jewish men as wily and vengeful still fitted the traditional gendered imagery of antisemitism, and it is fascinating to see how much of the early revenge fantasies revolved around the images of sexualized racist and anti-Semitic policies. There were rumors, for example, about a marriage ban for Germans or a plan to parade Nazi women shorn and marked with swastikas through the streets. But with the advent of German sovereignty, blatantly sexualized images of the Jewish “Other,” so powerful in the decades before, seem to have mysteriously disappeared from the still potent antisemitic universe, at least in Germany. Descriptions such as Rudolf Augstein’s 1950 characterization of the Jewish lawyer Joseph Klibansky as a “mixture of a Roman tribune and a carpet dealer from Smyrna” who moved around the court room “with the agility of a raccoon and the habitus of a penguin” vanished from the media—or at least I suppose they did, because, to my knowledge, no research has been done on this specific topic for the Federal Republic or the GDR. This hypothesis is not to be confounded with the absence of antisemitism, which, as is well known, aside from age-old practices like attacking cemeteries or Jewish institutions, would, in the coming decades, focus on the Nazi past and the German guilt for the Holocaust, while officially being completely tabooed, first by the Allied occupiers and then by both German states.
So, the question is: where did the gendered imagery of the anti-Jewish resentment disappear to? What happened to the sexual anxieties associated with the threatening “Other” for so long? The first and obvious answer that comes to mind is, of course, racism: First, the black American soldier and the “Slavic rapist” took all the brunt, later to be followed by migrant workers of various waves and provenances up to this very day. Empirical material and social science research on this subject abound but seem to cover only half of the story. In his book about German Angst, Frank Biess analyzes some very concrete projections of postwar anxieties that had striking structural similarities and caused veritable moral panics at the time. The first figure, in the 1950s, was the ominous “recruiter” for the French Foreign Legion, who supposedly corrupted the fatherless male German youth with a mixture of an elegant, rather feminine appearance and a veiled, maliciously seductive and greedy agenda. While the “recruiter” clearly overlaps with the figure of “the homosexual,” at a time of fierce and unbroken homophobia and persecution, he shares the mixture of deviance, hidden activities, and danger to the fatherland with “the communist,” undoubtedly the new archenemy in divided Germany at the height of the Cold War. “Similar to the recruiter,” Biess argues, “the ‘communist’ inherited many markers of the preceding stereotypical enemy, the Jew, and thus became a familiar figure in new garb.” Even though Jewish and (homo-)sexual markers became less and less obvious in the coming decades, which saw the Sympathisant (“sympathizer,” a derogatory term used with reference to the Baader-Meinhof terrorist group) or the

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70 Between 1945 and 1969, about 50,000 homosexual men were judged, more than in the 60 years of the German Empire and the Weimar Republic; see Alexander Zinn: “Gegen das Sittengesetz: Staatliche Homosexuellenverfolgung in Deutschland 1933–1945,” in Homosexuelle in Deutschland 1933–1969: Beiträge zu Alltag, Stigmatisierung und Verfolgung, ed. Alexander Zinn (Göttingen, 2020), 15–47, 45.


69 Biess, Republik der Angst?, 101–104, 122–133.
“asylum seeker/Muslim” as new variants of this threatening figure, one can conclude with Biess that all of them integrated certain traditional antisemitic features.72

In this context, and if one follows the hypothesis, proposed by Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, that antisemitism was taboo in West Germany and thus only survived in private communication, the publication of Martin Walser’s key novel Tod eines Kritikers can serve as a striking example of the return of the repressed.73 For in Walser’s novel the figure of the famous Jewish literary critic (and Holocaust survivor) Marcel Reich-Ranicki is construed in a way that fulfils all the gendered anti-Jewish clichés of the 1920s and 30s: ugly, deformed, lecherous, impotent, deviant, greedy, etc. Whether the author was reassembling childhood memories from the infamous Stürmerkästen—display boxes showing the latest issue of the antisemitic Nazi newspaper Der Stürmer—here, or just following his own (old-age) male fantasies, this book seemed curiously anachronistic in 2002 because, at the beginning of the new century, the sexualized antisemitic vision of the Jewish “Other” had long morphed into its opposite, namely philosemitism.74

Whether it had to do with the complete discrediting of German military manliness, with German guilt or with sheer material necessity, very soon after the war ended, Jewish men suddenly became highly attractive for German women—and have remained so ever since.75 As Barbara Steiner has shown, besides “mixed” couples that met in hospitals or Displaced Persons camps, with the women always in a subservient position, there were others, mainly women who were actively searching for survivors to marry. After the foundation of the state of Israel, Jewish men could add the image of the victor to their male portfolio, and Paul Newman in “Exodus” plus the war of 1967 provided an almost unbeatable mixture.76 Jewish men had turned into symbols of masculinity, while Jewish women were carrying arms without being turned into threatening Flintenweiber: the beautiful Jewess, so it seems,
remained intact even (or especially) with an Uzi dangling from her tender shoulder. In the case of their male counterpart, the antisemitic cliché of the sex-driven, prurient Jew was turned into that of the best lover on earth.\textsuperscript{77}

This rather surprising shift hints at a related development to be discussed here: that of changed gender roles in general. As is well known, role models for men and women in the West underwent profound changes from the 1960s onward, discrediting both military masculinity and docile femininity.\textsuperscript{78} It remains an open research question as to how far this played out in the disruption of the connection between sexualized antisemitic images and antisemitism as a political conspiratorial world view. My hypothesis would be that with the continuous blurring of clear-cut gender images in the last decades, the ambivalent sexual character of “the Jew” simply does not serve as a threat anymore in a world full of sexual/gendered ambivalences and has thus become useless for antisemitic mobilization. What is more: with the upsurge of radical right-wing nationalism and populism in recent years, it seems that “gender” and “Jews” have almost changed places. Nothing serves as a better “symbolic glue,” in the words of Andrea Pető, for the highly heterogenous populist movements’ rejection of the (neo-)liberal order than the fight against “gender” or, in German: \textit{Gender-Gaga}.\textsuperscript{79} It remains an open question whether this might, in the end, re-activate sexualized anti-Jewish images, or whether the Jewish string-puller will remain “invisible” behind the scene, working incessantly to flood the European continent with masses of Muslim/Arab immigrants to take over the task of “destroying German female purity” from a whole parade of predecessors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Jews, Franco-Africans, Afro-Americans, and Russians.

So how can we make sense of the persistence of these entangled mechanisms, of “sexual fantasies operating through racism and racial fantasies operating through sexualized imagery,” as Aidan Beatty so pointedly put it?\textsuperscript{80} First of all, it seems obvious that even though the imagery, antisemitic


\textsuperscript{79} See Eszter Kováts, Maari Poim, and Andrea Pető, \textit{Gender as Symbolic Glue: The Position and Role of Conservative and Far Right Parties in the Anti-Gender Mobilization in Europe} (Brussels, 2015); Sabine Hark and Paula-Irene Villa, eds., \textit{Anti-Genderismus: Sexualität und Geschlecht als Schauplätze aktueller politischer Auseinandersetzungen} (Bielefeld, 2015).

and racist, was present already in premodern times, it was only with the advent of modernity, introducing a solidly constructed new gender order, including cemented forms of acceptable and unacceptable sexuality, that these entanglements developed their totalitarian and often deadly power. We miss much of this story if we only look at the anti-Jewish strand of it, however seductive it may be in order to trace long and longer durées. Furthermore, if we take seriously one of the few uncontested findings of research on antisemitism, namely that anti-Jewish resentment, ideology or practice always refers to the self-image of the antisemite, then we have to look at the whole picture: the longing for a pure, homogeneous, heterosexual, antimodern, strong community of “real” men and “real” women inherently entails the enumeration of the many enemies of this vision, even though often enough and until today “the Jew” is at the core of it all.

Unfree Associations: Disability, Antisemitism, Sexual Sin

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I.

In the autumn of 2021, I was in Germany, about to return to the United States the next day, and intent on visiting the Kalmenhof, in the town of Idstein, half an hour northwest of Frankfurt/Main. The Kalmenhof was a highly-regarded charity institution for children with intellectual disabilities founded in the late nineteenth century. During World War II, it had also become a site of Nazi terror and murder. On the top floor of the Kalmenhof’s hospital, in one of the approximately thirty “special children’s wards” established by the National Socialists as a core part of the “euthanasia” killing program that ultimately claimed over 200,000 lives within the German Reich and another 80,000 in the occupied Eastern territories of Poland and the Soviet Union, hundreds of children were murdered by medication overdose or poison injection.¹ The main perpetrator, as it happens, was a female doctor, Mathilde Weber (1909-1996), incidentally much loved in the surrounding community, which after the war pleaded in large numbers for her amnesty—a salient sign not least of the potent emotional

¹ The Kalmenhof additionally served as a so-called “intermediate institution” (Zwischenanstalt) to which children with disabilities from other charity homes who had been targeted for death were temporarily “re-located” (so as to veil the murder plans) before being deported to gas chambers or other killing sites. Christoph Schneider, Der Kalmenhof in Idstein: NS-“Euthanasie” und ihre Nachgeschichte (Paderborn, forthcoming 2024); and Lutz Kaelber, “Child Murder in Nazi Germany: The Memory of Nazi Medical Crimes and Commemoration of ‘Children’s Euthanasia’ Victims at Two
efficacy of venomous Nazi antidisability propaganda.\textsuperscript{2} But the striking durability of Dr. Weber’s popularity into the 1950s was hardly the only postfascist drama swirling around the Kalmenhof; there have been several others. One of these involved the only very belated acknowledgment that the Kalmenhof had been a site of deliberate death. Stunningly, the ignorance locally was only rectified via a quite winding and indirect knowledge-path. A well-meaning Protestant pastor from Idstein arriving in Auschwitz in 1981 with a group of teenagers sponsored by \textit{Aktion Sühnezeichen} (Action Reconciliation Service, a peace organization working for Jewish-Christian understanding in the aftermath of Nazism) was led through the camp landscape by a Warsaw-born survivor-doctor who, inquiring of the youths about their town of origin, suggested they might want to look for a mass murder location in their very own backyard.\textsuperscript{3} Upon his return home, the pastor then set in motion the processes which led, finally, to the awakening of municipal engagement and the inauguration of a dignified and affecting memorial at the Kalmenhof in 1987.\textsuperscript{4}

Yet, at the moment of my visit in late 2021, a fresh passionate memory-political conflict was simmering, this time between local activists and the regional healthcare administrators to whom the Kalmenhof’s property presently belongs, over both the exact scope of the mass graves of murdered children and the proper handling of the memorial site in general.\textsuperscript{5}

Only in the summer of 2022 would this latter conflict be


\textsuperscript{3} Their guide, Jurek Skrzypek – survivor of Auschwitz, Dachau, and Flossenbürg – had read about the Kalmenhof in Alexander Mitscherlich and Fred Mielke’s eyewitness report on the Nuremberg Doctors’ Trial of 1946–1948, \textit{Medizin ohne Menschlichkeit} (Heidelberg, 1960). In the town of Idstein, the book reports, there had been, in the Nazi era, an “extermination-institution for deformed and brain-damaged children” (211).


satisfactorily resolved. The Kalmenhof hospital, rather than being put on the real estate market as had been feared, will itself now become a “euthanasia” memorial and a setting for serious research and teaching about all the Nazi crimes against people with disabilities.⁶

On that particular November day, however, I was drawn to the site most of all because of the events that unfolded there before the Third Reich. For the Kalmenhof had been established in 1888 as an extraordinary, unique experiment in ecumenical optimism: Jews and Christians together building a residential school for children who were, in the language of the time, “feeble-minded and imbeciles.”⁷ The main founders were a philanthropic Jewish banker, a lawyer also of Jewish heritage (though his parents had converted to Protestantism), and a

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⁷ Jahresbericht Kalmenhof 1890, quoted in Martina Schrapper, “... 100 Anfragen zum Theil dringlichster Art ... Die Gründer der 'Idioten-Anstalt' Kalmenhof in Idstein,” in Schrapper and Sengling, Die Idee der Bildbarkeit, 61–126, here 66.
Protestant pastor who himself had a daughter with cognitive disability. A broader social welfare component informed the entire enterprise, as the substantial correlation between a childhood in poverty and diagnoses of intellectual disability was no secret to contemporaries, and both the banker and the lawyer had extensive prior experience in benevolent projects to improve the lives of the working class. The Kalmenhof became a priority project for them. All the buildings were designed by notable local architects in keeping with the latest technological innovations, and expert pedagogues were hired to provide a combination of classroom instruction with training in practical work skills. The classrooms, dormitories, and gymnasium were supplemented with hands-on workshops, where children and adolescents developed aptitude in cooking, woodworking, shoemaking, and other crafts. 8

I arrived early, walking the grounds while I waited to meet up with the administrator who would give me a tour, trying to match the topography in the present with the maps and old photographs I had studied. I asked an elderly woman passing by which building was the one named after the founding pastor. She pointed it out and then identified the cluster of original buildings as well as the unevenly grassy lawn where the former workshops once stood. I thanked her, commenting courteously that she knew the place well. She explained that she frequently visited people in the nursing home now on site. She asked what I was doing and I said I was a historian. And to avoid potential conflict with this friendly and forthcoming stranger by not mentioning either the Nazi killings or the still-ongoing memory wars, I neutrally (I thought) said that I was especially moved and interested by the Jewish-Christian cooperation in founding the Kalmenhof in the late nineteenth century.

Suddenly, the woman began to regale me with her opinion that “yes, because the Jews have so much incest and marriage among relatives, that is why they have so many mentally disabled children” (“ja, weil die Juden so viel Inzest und Verwandtenehen haben,
Darum haben sie so viele geistig behinderte Kinder”). And: “The first contingent of children here were all Jews, a hundred of them, all from Frankfurt, all those bankers’ children [Bankierskinder].” I couldn’t believe she was serious.9 I responded: “No—the great majority of the residents were Christian, never more than a quarter of the disabled pupils were Jewish. It was two of the founders who were Jewish; it’s the Christian pastor who had the disabled child.” Although I thought she would realize that she’d said something inappropriate, she was unstoppable: “No, no, it’s a Jewish thing, I’ve read all about it in the Bible. Jacob is in love with Rachel, his cousin, but he is told he can’t marry her, he has to marry her sister Leah first, and only then he is allowed also to marry Rachel. So he marries them both. He must have felt sooo great as a man”—at this point she did a little smug swivel-dance with her hips—“having two women at once.”10 I asked where she had gleaned her information but, demonstrably irritated by my obvious discomfort, she was already walking away.

My own reaction to this awkward encounter has evolved recursively, in intermittent fits and starts. Its most immediate echo was with taboo-rupturing rhetoric around disability of the far-right party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which entered the Bundestag in 2017 and has since become a powerfully disruptive force in German politics. Although the party’s most notorious obsession has been with immigration, sly and cruel complaints about advances in disability rights have additionally been recurrent features of AfD campaigns and policy debates.11 In March 2018, the party fused these themes, famously presenting a public “inquiry” (Anfrage) to the

9 Never more than a quarter of the residents were Jewish; over the years the proportion hovered closer to one-tenth. From 1924 on, the Kalmenhof provided a kosher kitchen as well as Jewish religious instruction, and—due to a contractual arrangement that year with the Jewish Welfare Association—as a result, as of 1929–1930, 152 of the 647 residents were Jewish (only 14 of them from Frankfurt/Main, the others from all over the German lands and from places as far away as Greece, Palestine, Egypt, North America, and Russia). *Jüdische Pfleglinge in der Heilanstalt Calmenhof in Idstein i. T.*, *Jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege und Sozialpolitik* 1 (1930), 482–483.


federal government demanding answers with regard to the (phantasmagoric) issue of migrant families producing disproportionately more children with cognitive difficulties because of the (alleged) prevalence of incestuous marriages between blood relatives among the recent refugees.12 Somehow, I first thought, this woman had transposed elements of that more contemporary scandal-controversy around present-day Muslims onto late-nineteenth-century Jews. It was only upon further reflection and research that I came to realize that the AfD must have itself grafted its noxious aspersion-casting accusations against present-day Muslims onto older tropes rooted in antisemitic and antidisability “folk wisdom.”13 (A classic version of their conjunction is in a much-discussed book of 1924 by the notorious antisemite and self-styled Nietzsche acolyte Ernst Mann, who averred that while evidently a Jewish elite of intellectually superior people existed—and they were out for world power—the vast majority of Jews were of a much lower sort, and here incest was to blame: “Contributing to the emergence of this inferior type of human was excessive inbreeding in Jewish circles [die übertriebene Inzucht in jüdischen Kreisen].”)14 Although in the gratifyingly robust rebukes to the AfD for its “inquiry” that instantly ensued in 2018 from secular disability rights organizations as well as both Christian churches, no one mentioned those older tropes, in hindsight it was surely their lingering presence still circulating in the


13 These included not merely the enduring belief long confirmed by geneticists – though the empirical evidence remains inconsistent – that consanguineous marriages heighten chances of producing progeny with cognitive impairments, but also a welter of (mutually contradicting) theories striving to explain why (purportedly) a proportionately higher number of Jews were diagnosed with intellectual disability and/or psychiatric problems, even as Jews represented less than 1 percent of the German population. All through the 1910s–1920s, the arguments were all over the place, but inevitably the very existence of “debate” conferred a sense of legitimacy to the question. See (tendentiously antisemitic) Alexander Pilcz, Beitrag zur vergleichenden Rassen-Psychiatrie (Leipzig and Vienna, 1906), esp. iii–iv, 1–24; and (anxiously balanced) Max Sichel, “Die psychischen Erkrankungen der Juden in Kriegs- und Friedenszeiten,” Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie 55 (1924): 207–228, here 207, cf. 223.

14 Ernst Mann [Gerhard Hoffmann], Die Wohltätigkeit als aristokratische und rassenhygienische Forderung (Weimar, 1924), 116. In the rest of the book, reflections on animal rights, artistic genius, and the dangers of communism jostle with rage at the Weimar Republic and fond hopes that commissions of doctors might soon be permitted to comb through asylums to choose those who would be “consigned to painless annihilation” (164).
culture that contributed to the “inquiry’s” joltingly explosive cultural potency.\textsuperscript{15}

A further thing had struck me right away: how quickly different timescales can collapse into each other when the subject is Jews. I had disputed the woman’s claims about the 1880s; she promptly invoked the Book of Genesis. Not least, however, and perhaps most tellingly: I had mentioned Jews, and had said not a single word about sex. Within two minutes, she had performed her little dance to convey the pleasure of a man enjoying two wives. How did our original conversation about the location of the disability care workshop buildings devolve so suddenly?

Psychoanalysts who are good at their craft will tell you that there is nothing so unfree as associations. Free is the last thing that associations are. Our minds slip-slide metonymically; this is one of the main ways that meaning-making works.\textsuperscript{16} For this woman, in this place, at this particular juncture in German history, the mere word “Jewish” had triggered thoughts first of repellent incest and then of delightful bigamy.

The incident stayed with me, not least because it is highly relevant to the conference theme of “Antisemitism and Sexuality Reconsidered.” The various weird dimensions of the exchange, brief as it was, also raise important questions for historians of Germany, of Jewishness, and of sexuality, among them three that are particularly pertinent as I respond to Stefanie Schüler-Springorum’s keynote address.\textsuperscript{17} First: How can we best periodize key shifts in the entwined histories of antisemitism and sexuality? Second: What are we missing if we do not...
include the category of disability among the intersectional factors that—by however roundabout paths—recurrently connect anti-Jewish animus with the history of sex? Third: How might we reconsider which aspects of psychoanalysis could be valuable conceptual resources for historians when we try to grapple with this nexus of topics?

At each moment of retrospective contemplation over the past year, I have had my own further unfree associations. The old woman gave me a clue, though it took me a while to follow the trail. I will come back to it.

II.

In the standoff to which Schüler-Springorum alludes at the beginning of her essay between those scholars of antisemitism who are “eternalists” (i.e., they are convinced that Judeophobia is “the oldest hatred” and also an ineradicable one) and those we might call “specifiers,” insistent on paying attention to the particulars of place and time, taking seriously not just the distinct historical contexts but also the changing contents of negative emotions, ideas, and actions against those human beings construed by themselves or others as Jews, I most certainly incline toward the “specifiers.” And yet, I do continue to remain struck by what Schüler-Springorum observes is antisemitism’s astonishing flexibility, along with its bonding (or fusion) capacity, the way it can annex and entangle with so many other efforts to imagine and manage human difference. More generally, I find it significant to register the fundamental irresolvability of motivations for antisemitic speech or action. Whether antisemitism is best understood as racism, religious prejudice, an expression of competitive envy, or a cynical excuse for an unleashing of cruelty, and whether Nazism’s ideological formations were sincerely believed (perhaps even anchored, as Schüler-Springorum notes, in corporeal reflexes) or simply opportunistically, strategically deployed: these questions cannot

be conclusively settled. For antisemitism is all of these, and more.

Yet I do want to reflect further on the question of periodization. In her lecture, Schüler-Springorum made the interesting proposal to understand the unprecedented constellation of gendered and ethnic relations being developed in the German lands around 1800 as marking a “Sexual Turn” in the evolution of antisemitism (and in particular she linked this turn with a strong polarization of “clear-cut” male and female gender roles). While I would insist that what counted as “sexual” around 1800 was not yet “sexual” in a twentieth-century sense, I can confirm, from my work on the rise of a religious right in the 1840s led by ultramontane Catholics, that this religious right zealously utilized both sexual innuendo and antisemitic rhetoric so insidiously and successfully that it utterly destabilized gentile liberals and prompted them to become the defenders of Jewish rights and of the separation of church and state they would not have otherwise been. However, in that historical instance, the aspersions of sexual misbehavior were directed against other Christians; Jews were neither sexually deviant themselves, nor were they the cause of Christian deviance.

Notably, then, just as Schüler-Springorum indicated, the two rhetorical strategies were not yet merged, not yet fused.

How different the discourse becomes once we arrive at the 1930s. The twentieth century was indisputably “the century of sex,” and already by the early 1900s, German culture was arguably the most sex-liberal in the world. What would be new about the dynamics in Weimar was twofold: Jews were suddenly perceived to be in charge of the nation’s sexual culture (via their roles both in medicine and in print media), and the ideal of sexual happiness was very widely yearned for, also


21 Dagmar Herzog, Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden (Princeton, NJ, 1996), e.g. 66–68. Note here too the inclusion of references to Turks.

by millions of gentiles, who eagerly sought the information that Jewish sex advice writers were providing. Conservative Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike, fretted constantly that their control over their flocks was eroding, while Jews were associated with a generous and affirmative attitude toward consent and pleasure, toward a diversity of orientations and preferences, and toward female enjoyment separated from the fear of unwanted reproduction. 23

Antisemitic imagery and rhetoric would come to saturate the sexual politics of the Third Reich, in a cacophonous combination of incitement and disavowal. The Nazis quickly positioned themselves as the pleasure-givers, in place of the Jewish sex rights activists they had driven into exile, urging sexual fulfillment for non-disabled, heterosexual “Aryans” while persistently denying that they were doing anything of the sort, by constantly contrasting “natural,” racially approved nudity and pre- and extramarital and marital sexual activity with purportedly dirty and disgusting Jewish sex. Taken aback, Christian spokesmen, in a continually recalibrated triangular relationship with Nazis and Jews, kept trying to promote their own conservative values as a contrast to both “antisemitic” and “semitic” mores. To no avail. It was the combination of shrill indignation at the sex coded as dirty and Jewish (albeit accompanied by titillating images of naked full-bosomed blondes, innocent about-to-be-violated gentile maidens, and pornographically detailed narratives of sexual crimes) with the robust injunctions to shake off inherited bourgeois values and religious distrust of sexual joy that was the distinctive innovation of Nazism. 24 The seeming contradiction—accusing Jews of undermining proper mores while railing against church-induced “unmanly prudery”—proved highly functional for the regime. 25 It also offered moral legitimation (so brilliantly interpreted by Schüler-Springorum in her


24 Dagmar Herzog, Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany (Princeton, 2005).

analysis of the “race defiler” shaming rituals) for the pleasure in cruelty taken by those who violently humiliated individuals caught pursuing love or sex across the newly vehemently insisted-upon Jewish-gentile divide.

Yet in addition, a striking amount of Nazi commentary obsessed over what was thought to be the Jew within the German. Jews had managed, so the complaint went, to “saturate the personality” of Germans through to the “erotic deep structure” (erotische Tiefenschicht). It was Jewish “glorification of adultery and sexual uninhibitedness” that had “eaten ... more deeply” into the German Volk than any “purely political teachings” from the Weimar era. A Berlin urologist blamed the pressure on men to please women sexually as having been put in the heads of German men by Jewish doctors. A theologian complained about the “Jewification” (Verjudung) of non-Jews influenced by sex-obsessed Jewish psychoanalysts. A military officer both urged his men to choose “squeaky-clean” brides and warned that any German man still attached to a sexual double standard needed to expel the “poisonous substances of the Jewish moral perspective ... sitting in his bones. Out with them!” A leading women’s magazine lamented, surveying the welter of seductive photographs in other Nazi regime-approved periodicals—it was 1940, seven years into the Third Reich—that those other (Nazi) periodicals were being “Jewish—all too Jewish.” The only explanation? “How deeply the Jewish contamination has worked specifically in this area.”

All this was, of course, grafted onto centuries-old associations of Christians with spirituality and Jews with carnality. Nonetheless—and maybe the short version of what I am doing is shifting Schüler-Springorum’s periodization of the “Sexual Turn” from 1800 to 1900—I think it is clear that the particular contents of Nazism’s sexualized antisemitism were specific to the context of a German society in deep turmoil over the conjunction of a devastating military trouncing in World War I, economic-existential instability, Jewish prominence in

26 Ferdinand Hoffmann, Sittliche Entartung und Geburtschwund, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1938).
31 “Sie meinen: Apart und lustig,” NS-Frauenwarte 8.16 (February 1940).
the realm of culture, and a growing popular preoccupation with sexual happiness. In the first decades of the twentieth-century, across all of Europe, sexuality had become politicized in new ways.\footnote{Herzog, “Reconceiving Sexuality 1900–1914,” in Sexualit y in Europe, 6–44.}

We can be as skeptical as Michel Foucault has taught us to be about the new pressures to conform to a narrow notion of what “sex” even is, or can or should be, fostered by that historic twentieth-century promise of sexual happiness.\footnote{Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, vol. 1, An Introduction (New York, 1980), 6–9.}

And with Theodor Adorno we can be alert to the deficits in all normative notions of a “healthy sex life” and the allergic discomfort with refinements and kinks (associated in the early 1960s, when Adorno was writing, above all with homosexuals and prostitutes) that continually re-stirs punitive affect towards the sexual freedoms of others.\footnote{Theodor W. Adorno, “Sexual Taboos and Law Today,” in Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York, 2005), 71–88.}

This dynamic is blatantly evident in the present day once again—in many nations—in the resurgent backlash against LGBTQ+ rights and against women’s sexual freedoms in particular. Here too we see Schüler-Springorum’s point about the sexual realm as one that almost invariably brings together desire and anxiety, fascination and loathing. And still: We can see clearly the historic specificity of the sexualized antisemitism promoted in the Third Reich.

III.

Let me return to the woman at the Kalmenhof, and the hint she inadvertently gave me. Psychoanalysis can not only help us think, as Schüler-Springorum urges us to do, about the emotional work accomplished by “counter-images” (the abjected homosexual, the Jew, the woman) in fortifying the sense of self of the person striving to be the purported ideal (heterosexual, Aryan-German, man). It can help us think about how complexly meaning-making works, including: by condensation, substitution, and displacement.\footnote{Laplanche and Pontalis, “Condensation,” “Displacement,” and “Substitute-Formation (or Substitutive Formation),” in The Language of Psycho-Analysis, 82–83, 121–124, 434.}

Because what strikes me now, looking back, is the way the woman condensed and substituted a (fantasized) one
hundred cognitively disabled Jewish children for the historical reality of multiple hundreds of cognitively disabled Christian children. What does this substitution—this displacement and disavowal of the prevalence of intellectual disability among non-Jewish Germans—reveal? Although there were middle-class exceptions (like the pastor’s child), for overdetermined reasons the vast majority of individuals diagnosed with cognitive deficits were gentiles from the poorest strata of society. And apparently, they were an embarrassment for the nation, given the intensity of narcissistic longings to be a Volk that was healthy, beautiful, smart, and strong.36

Christian commentators in the early twentieth century were alarmed and overwhelmed both by the exponentially rising numbers in their own charity institutions for the “feebleminded” and the fact that they were increasingly being accused by rightwing nationalist eugenicists of being themselves responsible for the looming death of the German Volk precisely because of their nurturing care for these biologically deficient beings. Already by 1910, 226 residential institutions were home to 34,400 citizens of all ages.37 Ten years later, in the wake of the humiliating defeat in World War I, an infamous, if immensely influential, little pamphlet authored by the lawyer Karl Binding and the psychiatrist Alfred Hoche called openly for the murder of the “total idiots” among these.38 All through the 1910s and 1920s, experts debated frenetically what percentage of Germans was subpar biologically and should be prevented from procreating; the estimates ranged widely, from 1 percent to 20 percent or more, while the statistical controversy itself concretized the notion that this repulsive infirmity within the nation was both enormous and real.39 In their (largely fumbling and unsuccessful) efforts to explain why murder of the disabled was wrong and simultaneously to counter the charges that in their provision of care for the purportedly defective they were damaging the health of the nation as a whole, Protestant charity spokespersons repeatedly took the occasion to vent their (only seemingly unrelated) frustrations about the rising

36 For the full argument, see Dagmar Herzog, The Question of Unworthy Life: Eugenics and Germany’s Twentieth Century (Princeton, 2024).


38 Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche, Die Freigabe der Vernichtung lebensunwertes Lebens: Ihr Maß und ihre Form (Leipzig, 1920), 53.

liberalization in sexual values and practices. In keeping with the broader Protestant and Catholic chorus of complaint that Jews were at fault for the sexual disorder and licentiousness of Weimar, “the media-Jews” (die Pressejuden) were blamed for encouraging loosening mores among the masses, as Christian commentators developed elaborate theo-biopolitical theories that sexual immorality was the direct cause of so much intellectual disability. There was a “connection,” indeed “a tight one,” “between idiocy and sin”; the apparently burgeoning numbers of citizens with cognitive impairments were, or so it was argued, above all the product of an “overabundance of lust” and “submersion in vice.”40 This interpretive framing, in turn, greatly eased Protestant acceptance of—and subsequently enthusiastic participation in enforcement of—the Nazis’ 1933 coercive sterilization law.

In the aftermath of the second crushing German military defeat in 1945, it would take another forty years for the harm that was done to those nearly 400,000 non-Jewish Germans who were coercively sterilized to be acknowledged as a crime. Ex-Nazi psychiatrists and the West German government adamantly stressed that there was no comparability between what had been done to Jews and what had been done to the handicapped—not because of any investment in Holocaust uniqueness, but to evade having to accept sterilization survivors under the reparations law as human beings persecuted on grounds of “race.”41 Only one early postwar analyst of (what he named) Nazism’s “racial insanity,” physician Gerhard Schmidt, pointed out the intimate imbrication, in the Third Reich, of “racial hatred” (toward Jews) and “racial fear” (toward the disabled among German gentiles).42 It would not be until feminist historian Gisela Bock in the 1980s emphasized the phantasmatic anxiety-cum-arrogance driving the Nazi sterilization project that the argument was finally convincing also to politicians. After all, Bock noted pointedly and perceptively: “The promised ‘race,’ the ‘master-Volk,’ was not a given, it was not the real-existing German Volk, rather [the master race] had yet

42 Gerhard Schmidt, Selektion in der Heilanstalt 1939–1945 (Stuttgart, 1965), 30, 35. The book was originally written in 1947, but Schmidt’s physician peers worked to suppress it and prevent publication.
to be produced.” (“Die gelobte 'Rasse', das 'Herrenvolk' war nicht gegeben, war nicht das real existierende deutsche Volk, sondern sollte überhaupt erst hervorgebracht werden.”) The heterosexual German male ideal, in short, was not only organized against the counter-images of the homosexual, Jew, or female; it was no less organized against the potential deficiency and inferiority lurking within.

In conclusion: A few years ago, in the *American Historical Review* (Schüler-Springorum was part of the same roundtable) Jonathan Judaken called for better historicization of antisemitism. The desiderata he highlighted included: more refined periodization; more careful thinking about comparability with other “phobias”; better contextualization; and less naïve empiricism and more openness to theory. Precisely in their focus on the most diverse possible entanglements of sexual politics and antisemitism, the conference contributors gathered in this issue go far toward advancing that agenda of improved historicizing of antisemitism. Yet there is still more we need collectively to reflect on with regard to what it is about sex that has recurrently made it such a privileged site for processing so many other forms of politics.

One standard answer has long been Foucault’s: Sex is an “especially dense transfer point,” he memorably noted, for other relations of power. All kinds of other things are being worked through in talk about sex. That is not just true for post-Holocaust memory politics in Germany but—as scholars in the last fifteen years have repeatedly shown—also true for the aftermath of other extremely violent systems, many of them lasting centuries and not just a dozen years: from European colonialism to US slavery. But a further reason it has proven so easy to make politics out of sex is because (as the

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44 There are strong echoes here with white middle-class anxieties about less-than-ideal IQ scores among whites—with the ensuing proliferation of Ritalin and Adderall prescriptions, and/or the purchase of doctors’ notes attesting to a white child’s special “giftedness”—analyzed in Michael E. Staub, *The Mismeasure of Minds: Debating Race and Intelligence* between *Brown and The Bell Curve* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2018).


British homosexual rights activist Simon Watney put it in the midst of the HIV-AIDS epidemic of the 1980s) sex is, for human beings, apparently “much of a muchness.” Not a banality or triviality at all, but rather a site of intensity—sometimes great joy, sometimes great vulnerability. And, frighteningly, it is that vulnerability, and the extraordinary opportunity for cruelties it provides, that is yet another source of sex’s exceptional functionality for politics. This, I think, brings a further distinctive element to the multifaceted historical interconnections between antisemitism and sex.

Furthermore, we need to extend the concept of intersectionality. A shout-out must go here to Sander Gilman, who has done phenomenal original work on the mergers of antidisability animus with antisemitism, particularly around the theme of madness or other forms of psychic illness, but also with regard to such physiological matters as obesity, slouchy posture, and the purported flatness of Jewish feet. My hope is that there will be in the future a great deal more research around the question of cognitive disability, with attention to the evident uncertainties within “Aryan” superiority. Yet it is imperative here to register that engagement with the question...
of cognitive disability more generally poses a provocation to our often limited understanding of the myriad ways that intersectionalities can function.

For the intersectionalities of ableism and antisemitism in pre-Nazi and Nazi Germany came in multiple forms, and not only because there was direct coincidence between Jewishness and disability among an estimated 4000 victims of the “euthanasia” program—indeed, the murder of Jewish individuals with disabilities in the carbon monoxide gas chambers of the T4 program turns out to be the first installment of that enormous crime we now call the Holocaust—as well as continuity in the sense of a direct transfer in personnel and killing technology from among the perpetrators of “euthanasia” to the Holocaust of European Jewry. There was also, as noted, the peculiar form of connection by circuitous causation as Christian charity men—stumbling as they tried to explain why people with disabilities should not be killed and why sterilization was the proper moral compromise formation, took the occasion to argue that it was the Jewishly encouraged libertinism of Weimar that was producing so much cognitive impairment among the gentiles. And, perhaps most significantly—although it took several decades to recognize its virulence—there was the connection by complementarity: The insight from Gisela Bock (and before her Gerhard Schmidt) that “racial hatred” of Jews and “racial fear” of imperfections within the would-be master race were twin manifestations of one and the same “racial insanity.” Yet in the end, it is the jaunty Kalmenhof lady’s unashamed, unfiltered articulation of her chain of unfree associations—as she doubled down in reaction to my objections to her version of the national past and my incredulity at her confident assertions that a millennia-old Bible story might have any pertinence whatsoever to the causes of disability in the nineteenth century—that taught me the most about how indelibly, intrinsically, and profoundly, antisemitism and sex remain historically entwined.

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Masculinity and Antisemitism in Our Day

Sander L. Gilman
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We live in an age of the “The New Xenophobia,” where antisemitism suddenly has reappeared in its most corrosive and violent form, and that well before October 7, 2023. Masculinity in all its complex iterations seems—again? still?—to inhabit antisemitic discourse in an ever more present manner. Looking at the world of Donald Trump, MAGA white nationalists, their conspiratorial allies, we in this essay try to tease out not only the “whys” but also the qualities of the manifestations of such hatred and labeling. Trump has sold himself repeatedly as a hyper-masculine figure and has mocked Jews, including his own employees, as somewhat less than his ideal male. Examining such patterns is what historians do best, especially when they acknowledge that they are looking at ever-shifting qualities of mind: as we constantly imagine not only our world but how we know our world and thus how those in our world know us. My own work on COVID-19 has shown that the “lumping” as the primary quality of xenophobia is always contingent.1

On January 6, 2021, “the bearded nutter with the ‘Camp Auschwitz’ sweatshirt and the thug with the ‘6MWE’ T-shirt (which stands for ‘Six million weren’t enough’) rubbed

shoulders with the ‘Q shaman,’ Jake Angeli, he of the buffalo horns, tattoos and stars-and-stripes face paint. Nick Fuentes, who leads the far-right ‘Groyper Army,’ was pictured inside the Capitol next to another fascist who goes by ‘Baked Alaska.’ There were Confederate flags and nooses, but also QAnon signs (‘The Children Cry Out for Justice’), crusader crosses (yes, that red cross on white again), and anti-circumcision placards.2 These read in part: “Circumcision is the Mark of (Work) The Beast=Satan! Sue Your Parents, and the Hospital & The F.B.I. & D. O. J.” “Make America’s Penis Great Again with A Foreskin!”3 All gathered along with Orthodox Jewish anti-vaxxers in fur vests in the Rotunda of the Capital to hear the Jewish physician and Trump supporter Dr. Simone Gold denounce the COVID-19 vaccine while others smeared blood and feces on the walls of the Capitol.

Gold was subsequently charged with “entering a restricted building, violent entry and disorderly conduct” after her image appeared on an FBI wanted poster.4 She quickly became a national heroine of the anti-vaxx movement as well as the Trump camp arguing now that the election had been stolen. Somehow the two positions became intertwined in the logic of the American Alt-Right. In June 2022 Gold was sentenced to 60 days in prison after having raised almost $500,000 for a defense that evidently cost a tenth of that amount. The bulk of the funds went to fund her own anti-vaxx organization. One needs to further add that her medical views were also her religious views. She self-labeled as baalat teshuva, one who returned to being Jewish, and shaped her new religious identity in terms of her understanding of medical practice. By March of 2022, Gold was evoking the Nazis and the Death Camps as proofs of her medical beliefs: “we can understand the truth of the Nazism. ... So when the science does not accord with the Torah, as they are telling you now, tell the scientists to go back to the drawing board. When the propagandists fill you with fear, tell them you reject their words. Human freedom is in more jeopardy, in my opinion, than even 1940, because

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The world was manipulated into thinking there was a pandemic, because the “science” that the public health authorities followed did not comport with her admittedly amateur understanding of the Torah. According to her account, her new belief system concerning COVID and her religious identity were now one: “It’s this emphasis on action that is essential to the Jewish faith.” Action in support of whom? QAnon?

For these concepts fitted seamlessly together in her symbolic register. By the end of 2022, after she was released from prison, she had become a fixture on Clay Clark’s white, Christian nationalist “ReAwaken America” circuit tour. As Amanda Tyler, the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, commented, “The ReAwaken America Tour taps into the unholy well of Christian nationalism to sow doubt about the United States’ election system and the safety of Covid vaccines while equating allegiance to Trumpism with allegiance to God.” Gold made multiple appearances

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at ReAwaken America events and spoke in January 2023 at a
two-day gathering hosted at the Tennessee church of conserva-
tive pastor Greg Locken. Gold announced that she planned
to launch an “antidote” to the CDC in March 2023 and de-
nounced “mainstream systems” as being “totally corrupted.”
Gold’s rhetoric in Tennessee veered into a prophetic style as
she talked up her vision for changing America: “We will create
a separate society that is founded on righteousness, objective
standards of right and wrong, good and evil.”

A new Jew as a
white, Christian nationalist?

QAnon, overtly antisemitic in its rhetoric, rests its moral and
political case on their opponents’ systematic sexual abuse of
children: the medieval (not the nineteenth-century) blood
libel against the Jews made present. The sign on January 6
reading: “The children cry out for justice” references children
who are claimed by QAnon to have been abducted by Demo-
crats and progressives, funded by the Jewish billionaire finan-
cier George Soros, a perpetual target of antisemitic rhetoric in
Europe as well as in the United States. This is a global claim
can be seen in a poster flourished during a far-right Nordic
Resistance Movement march through the town of Ludvika,
central Sweden, on May 1, 2018: “The Jews circumcise their
babies so rabbis can suck blood from the penises of newborns
and according to the Talmud they may have sex with children
from the age of 3.”

Not subtle at all. But two of the other partic-
ips made it also clear that this was the best possible articu-
lation of the intersection between gender, at least masculinity,
and sexuality with antisemitism. Indeed, the notion of a com-
promised masculinity seems at the core of white nationalism
in general. One of the participants in the invasion of the US
Capitol you probably remember. He was Jake Chansley, the
“QAnon Shaman,” dressed in a fur vest with body paint and
horns. His outfit screamed: I am a real man, follow me, which
too many people did, into the House Chamber. According to
Marisa Melzer in the Washington Post, “Chansley represents
a growing pipeline between New Age male spirituality, new

7 Peter Stone, “Far-
right Project that
Pushed Election Lies
Expands Mission as
Trump Ramps Up
2024 Campaign,” The
Guardian, January 30,
2023.

8 Times of Israel Staff,
“Netanyahu Reveals
Secret Hezbollah
Arms Depot, Warns of
Another Deadly Blast,”
The Times of Israel,

9 William F. Pinar, “The
‘Crisis’ of White Mas-
culinity,” Counterpoints
masculinity movements and QAnon.”

The other was Aaron Mostofsky who was one of the first to enter the building also wearing fur pelts, a bulletproof vest and carrying a stolen police riot shield. His father, Kings County Supreme Court Judge Steven (Shlomo) Mostofsky, was the former president of the National Council of Young Israel, an Orthodox synagogue association that has been outspokenly pro-Trump and overtly anti-mask, anti-vax. Aaron “explained to a friend that the fraud in the 2020 Presidential Election was so obvious, even a caveman would know the election was stolen.” Were these two furry men articulating some sort of primitive, lost masculinity, as the ultra-right Republican Senator Josh Hawley had claimed in an op-ed piece and expanded ad nauseum in a book?

This is an effort the Left has been at for years now. And they have had alarming success. American men are working less, getting married in fewer numbers; they’re fathering fewer children. They are suffering more anxiety and depression. They are engaging in more substance abuse. Many men in this country are in crisis, and their ranks are swelling. And that’s not just a crisis for men. It’s a crisis for the republic. Because the problem with the Left’s assault on the masculine virtues is that those self-same qualities, the very ones the Left now vilify as dangerous and toxic, have long been regarded as vital to self-government. Observers from the ancient Romans to our forefathers identified the manly virtues as indispensable for political liberty.

Or were they merely performing Robert Bly’s best-selling 1990 *Iron John*, the “wild man,” the bourgeois fantasy of a newly acquired, rugged masculine identity as a “primitive being covered with hair down to his feet,” as an answer to the “soft and hairless male” shaped by second-wave feminism? Antisemite or Jew or antisemite and Jew—but “real men” together? The reality of identification with the aggressor seems here more than likely. Here the world of the new “misogynist” is linked both to QAnon as well as new notions of Jewish hyper- or hypo-masculinity in the age of Trump. “Male supremacism also intersects with other axes of oppression such as racism,

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While there have been a number of books over the past twenty years on this topic, one of the earliest remains one of the best: Paul Breines, Tough Jews: Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry (New York, 1990).


xenophobia, antisemitism, and heterosexism.” The replacement of the stereotyped feminized Jewish male, symbolically castrated by his Jewish identity, a commonplace of the stereotyping of the Jewish male in Western Europe and the United States (think Woody Allen) by the tough Jew, the Jewish gangster or the stereotype of the hypermasculine Israeli male is a clear move towards answering the antisemitic charge of Jewish demasculinization, a state that makes the male “Jew” even more dangerous. Remembering at all times that one of the strongest anti-public health movements in the United States (a circumcising culture) on the far right was the anti-circumcision movement, antedating the wide-spread anti-vaxxing movement by decades. And equally adapted recently by the radical far-right world of White Nationalism as part of its antisemitic rhetoric, and appearing on January 6, 2023, as part of the rhetoric of the new Right. And, one can add, just as successfully, with the overall rates of infant male circumcision dropping in middle-class communities, just as the rates of vaccination subsequently did. Being truly male is defined over and over as being intact, being a “caveman.” The analogy between the two “furry” men in the Capitol is powerful because each is using the notion of a powerful masculine identity to conform to the politics of QAnon.

But one can only understand this if one recognizes that the far Right, as we have noted, sees masculinity in general under attack and that masculinity in this world is defined by the genitalia. Weakened genitalia means weakened masculinity. Tucker Carlson, on his special entitled “The End of Men” “included footage of a naked man standing spread eagle with a red light shining right at his crotch. Carlson’s use of the term ‘testicle tanning’ apparently was referring to red light therapy that was directed specifically towards one part or perhaps two parts of the body.” To recuperate the genitalia, and thus to recuperate today’s faltering masculinity, use the tanning beds in your neighborhood beauty salon. As with the fear at the end of the nineteenth century that the degeneracy
of a people, represented by the feminizing of men, was the precipitating cause of the decline of nations, Carlson is convinced that the vanishing of the real American male is the result of their physically weakened genitalia. Would that they had had tanning beds in the salons of nineteenth-century Berlin and London!

That moment on January 6, 2021, showed that xenophobia was indeed a Venn diagram of hatred that enables those who inherently despised one another to find common enemies. Thus, the notion of a hegemonic masculinity is both confronted by and reinforced by the presence of antisemitism, of male Jews who mask their identity as non-conforming. Here I am bracketing the question of the role that women have in this culture. Clearly sexualized and often reduced to cliches of an imagined Ur-patriarchy, they form an analogous set of contradictions, with fecundity replacing aggression, with abortion replacing circumcision in our Venn diagram.

**Structures of Stereotyping**

But how can we critically examine such models of difference? Every community and those who constitute them define themselves in terms of their own symbolic register and against what they perceive as its antithesis. Sigmund Freud in his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) outlined his take on this after the First World War. British psychotherapists, including some of his English followers such as Wilfried Trotter, appropriated a psychology of difference popularized by Gustave Le Bon to define the valorous “Tommy” crusading against the inherently evil “Boche.” And Freud was in those terms indeed a “Boche.” Freud, as was his wont throughout his career, saw this antithesis as a universal rather than a national problem, as a psychological rather than a political one: “We are no longer astonished that greater differences should lead to an almost insuperable repugnance, such as the Gallic people feel for the German, the Aryan for the Semite, and the

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white races for the coloured.” In his 1921 essay, he began with the claim that had long been established in the psychological literature of the late nineteenth century concerning collective behavior that “a group is extraordinarily credulous and open to influence, it has no critical faculty, and the improbable does not exist for it.” But what he adds is that collectives “think in images, which call one another up by association (just as they arise with individuals in states of free imagination), and whose agreement with reality is never checked by any reasonable agency.”

For Freud this concretization of the crowd’s fears is a problem to be overcome, but for him the irrationality of the fear of the Other is not “unnatural.” Is fear of difference an aberration or a natural phenomenon? And, as we shall discuss below, how are these various phenomena linked?

In the 1980s I argued in Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness (and I was not the first) that such splitting mirrors the process of individuation that the infant manifests, defining the “good” caregiver (our community) and the “bad” (The Others) now in a greater symbolic context. What I noted then was that if this were true, and I assumed that it was, this would actually not be a very interesting claim. In other words, this would be banal, if this was simply a stage of human development that shaped the antithesis that we later construct as social beings. Are we merely employing infantile fantasies of control and fear when we, now integrated into a greater community with our superegos now developed, define our world as consisting of in- and out-groups? What I argued is to show that what is truly important is not the underlying structure but its real time manifestation in historical and social terms. That is, even if splitting is “normal,” the xenophobias, including antisemitism, can be pathological. Freud’s need to universalize such phenomena meant that he stresses the adaptive behavior as one necessary to the preservation of the ego. But such attempts are always fraught as they focus inward rather than outward into the world of relationships that defines the ego despite itself.


Whether geographic, “racial,” cultural, or narrowly political, xenophobia seems to be a category that arises when “we” define “them”. The social fascination with the “phobias” had its origin in nineteenth-century medicine, which quickly devolved into social metaphor, as such diagnostic categories of behavior tend to do rather quickly. As antisemitism becomes a part of the evolving “science of race” so too does the science of sexual pathology—both defining the normal in all spheres. If this is imbedded in the transition from a theological to a scientific model of antisemitism, a truism of antisemitism research over the past fifty years, then the science of sexuality, in which Freud is clearly embedded, reacts to andreshapes the xenophobic labeling of a pathological “Jewish masculine sexuality,” once thought of as the result of the Jews’ backwardness in rejecting Christianity, and replaces it, or perhaps better, has it morph into an innate biological fact. (This is equally true of the stereotypes of female Jewish sexuality, the “belles dames sans merci,” the Jewish woman as seducer and corrupter that haunts much of the discussion of Jews and syphilis at the same moment. She, however, is often contrasted with the empathetic, asexual Jewish woman: Veronica, who wipes the sweat from Jesus’s brow with her cloak. That never happens with Jewish masculinity.)

But of course, this notion of the permanent nature of Jewish difference versus the malleability of the Jews, a hallmark of the theology of the early Church, simply replicates itself in the seeming shift from theological to biological models. And this in the age in which, within biological models of sexuality, there are both permanent and transitional models, all of which take on pathological qualities based on whether they are seen, from the perspective of the observer, as dangerous or benign. Think of the rapid movement of labels for sexual pathologies from Richard Krafft-Ebbing in 1886 into Victorian and Wilhelminian popular sexual discourse: “sadist” and “masochist” being terms that today we rarely even see as diagnostic.21 That these metaphoric flights of labeling

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using the “phobias” are a complex historical phenomenon was shown in our study of the labeling of racism as a mental illness. Thus, the nineteenth-century origins of other such “phobias” as Hebrewphobia (Richard Lalor Sheil in 1848) or, for very different audiences and purposes, Judeophobia in 1882 by Leon Pinsker change the meaning of the phobic.²²

You cannot have a theory of mind without a theory of history; you cannot have a theory of history without a theory of mind. Historians imagine, whether they admit it or not, how individuals (and the collective that they inhabit) process the world in which they live; every psychological theory of mind is filtered through the historical and cultural context in which both the imagined individual and the collective (as well as the historian) functions. Thus, when we speak of human sexuality, we are simultaneously imagining how we as human beings deal with that historically defined category and how that historically defined category brackets that which we experience as sexuality. Freud labeled this the function of the superego, but it is substantially more for it not only shapes and focuses how we, consciously or unconsciously, deal with ourselves as sexual beings (however we wish to define this) but also shapes, through our imagination those limits on precisely those experiences.

The Sense of the Past

That today’s pathologizing of masculine sexuality and the rise of modern anti-Judaism in the age of nineteenth-century scientific racism should be linked is of little surprise as all form a Venn diagram of the Other in the time. What we need to focus on is the antithesis: How are healthy peoples and their healthy sexuality delimited? Remembering that the Halle philosopher Hans Vaihinger, well before Georges Canguilhem and Michel Foucault, observed the creation of the “celebrated statistical fiction ... of a normal, average man. This fiction is not of value for statistics alone, for in medicine we meet the average man

in whom all abnormal deviations have disappeared.”

Health and illness, the normal and the deviant, already in the late nineteenth century are asymmetrical: one is not the opposite of the other nor is it defined by it and vice-versa.

Let me use an example from Heinrich Kaan’s Latin study of sexual pathology of 1844 and the evocation of the new science of sexuality. For Kaan it is the ecological difference that defines Jewish sexuality: “The circumcision of the Jews, which is a prophylactic against prematurely developed sexuality, finds (in this disposition of regional climate) its explanation.”

For Kaan masturbation, a sexual deviation that leads to further pathologies, a given since the early eighteenth century, is a reflex of climate and those of a Southern climate, such as the Jews, are more “subject” to it than Kaan’s fellow inhabitants in Northern climes. Ecological arguments function widely in the age of science, indeed lay the groundwork for much of the late twentieth-century notion that climate shapes the world and its inhabitants and shifts in climate, usually seen as negative, have impact on the health of human beings. Ernst Haeckel systemically defined this more broadly in terms of the context of animal development in the 1860s and labeled it “ecology.” By the close of the century, the French philosopher Ernest Renan then employs it to define Jewish difference as “peoples of the desert.” Renan saw in the Jews the survival of the “nomadic nomos” of the Jews into modern times.

Renan expanded this ecological view in his 1887 History of the People of Israel, seeing the Jews as having kept to themselves to maintain their “purity of blood.” What keeping to oneself meant was decoded by the anti-clerical Italian physician Paolo Mantegazza evoking the Jews’ sexual practice of circumcision:

Circumcision is a shame and an infamy; and I, who am not in the least anti-Semitic, who indeed have much esteem for the Israelites, I who demand of no living soul a profession of religious faith, insisting only upon the brotherhood of soap and water and of honesty, I shout and shall continue to shout at the Hebrews,
until my last breath: Cease mutilating yourselves: cease imprinting upon your flesh an odious brand to distinguish you from other men; until you do this, you cannot pretend to be our equal. As it is, you, of your own accord, with the branding iron, from the first days of your lives, proceed to proclaim yourselves a race apart, one that cannot, and does not care to, mix with ours.27

While circumcision is seen as creating a communitarian identity, this is seen negatively, separating the Jews from their peers and redefining masculinity. Indeed, the entire debate about circumcision from the Enlightenment on is not merely a continuation of the Pauline attempts at creating a “universal” church, but at defining acceptable and unacceptable notions of male sexuality, now in the realm of “science,” which according to popular myth replaced “religion” at the core of modern thought.

Accordingly, Johann David Michaelis, the noted Orientalist of the German Enlightenment, detested the practice from a theological position, fueled by Paul’s antagonism. Michaelis, also living amid a scientific world that firmly believed in male masturbation as the origin of a myriad number of physical and psychological ailments, relied on the understanding that circumcision had no curative powers to reverse or prevent illnesses due to masturbation as an argument against its conferral of any advantage. Paul’s views now underpinned by Michaelis’s “scientific” understanding of sexuality. Circumcision, he states, is not a cure for male masturbation. Michaelis notes that the character of the Jewish male is not improved even if their contemporaries claim that they have a diminished sexual urge through the removal of the prepuce.28 We, he implies, know better. In the debates both about human sexuality and about the nature of the Jews, here overlapping, the key always is the notion of an inherent, deviant masculine character that shapes and is shaped by the collective.

By 1860, a London practitioner, Dr. Fowler, writing in the Lancet could claim the complete efficacy of circumcision in med-

28 Johann David Michaelis, Orientalische und Exegetische Bibliothek (Frankfurt am Main, 1773), 94.
ically combating one of the widest-spread etiologies of illness of the time, male masturbation:

Has the operation of circumcision any effect in diminishing the habit or practice of onanism amongst the male children and the young lads of the Jewish community? Practising in a neighbourhood where this community abounds, I do not remember ever having had either a confessed or even a suspected case of this description amongst our Hebrew brethren. I wish I could say the same respecting juvenile Christians.29

One of the only persistent factors in debates on circumcision is the coexistence of extreme opinions on its efficacy. Does it improve the health of Jewish males already at risk from a wide range of potential diseases or does it exacerbate them, leading to a further collapse of Jewish masculinity? Is it community building or community destroying? The American physician Peter Charles Remondino projects his nineteenth-century fascination with circumcision as hygiene into the world of the Egyptians: “In ancient Egypt ... the nobility, royalty, and the higher warrior class seem to have adopted circumcision as well, either as a hygienic precaution or as an aristocratic prerogative and insignia.”30 While arguments relying on the health exception to show the dangers of circumcision persist, the image of the health exception that Remondino successfully argues for in late nineteenth-century America contributes to the creation of a climate that makes the United States into a circumcising culture. Indeed, the notion of a healthy or a damaged masculinity because of the practice is one of the keys to understanding Anglophone ambivalence about Jewish masculinity.

In the 1920s, a debate in the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland saw a Dr. Solomons defend the practice of circumcision: “Most educated people ask to have their sons circumcised.” It helps “in preventing masturbation.” Circumcision is advised as “a real help to the weakest spot in the human character.” The “ordinary schoolboy was not taught to keep himself clean.” Solomons argued that the procedure did not

29 Robert Fowler, “What are the Effects of Circumcision?” The Lancet 75 (1860), 382.
30 Peter Charles Remondino, History of Circumcision from the Earliest Times to the Present (Philadelphia, 1891), iii.
require anesthesia: “In fact it was harmful.” Our Darwinian physician Hastings Tweedy argued the case against Solomons and stated that circumcision does not “reduce sexual desire.” Such claims were regularly made throughout medical science in the nineteenth century, advocating circumcision as a preventative against a range of diseases from the evils of masturbation to sexually transmitted diseases. Jewish males, following this argument, are exemplars of how one can, in the age of eugenics, “improve the race” through medical intervention.

But the antisemitic undertone of this medical debate was also apparent in the time. As an anonymous author stated in the leading German pediatric journal, *Journal für Kinderkrankheiten*, in 1872: “The circumcision of Jewish children has been widely discussed in the medical press as is warranted with topics of such importance. But it is usually discussed without the necessary attention to details and the neutrality that it deserves. Indeed, it has not been free of fanatic antisemitism.” No discussion of circumcision within medicine was without an ideological perspective. Antisemitism and sexuality are linked, especially in the new age of “Sexual Science,” well beyond the more specific interests of Magnus Hirschfeld and his clinic. And, as I argued decades ago, Jewish masculinity was perceived as damaged or effeminate, because of circumcision, or, indeed, as hypermasculine, in a most destructive vein, for the same reason. Modern civilization is built upon such notions of sexual difference, which is simultaneously defined as “racial” difference.

Sigmund Freud spends virtually his entire career critiquing the notion of “Civilization” that rests on these two poles of the healthy as opposed to the normal. In his 1910 essay on “The Taboo of Virginity” he evoked the British anthropologist Ernest Crawley’s notion of difference defining the difference between male and female sexuality:

> each individual is separated from the others by a ‘taboo of personal isolation,’ and that it is precisely the minor differences in
people who are otherwise alike that form the basis of feelings of strangeness and hostility between them. It would be tempting to pursue this idea and to derive from this ‘narcissism of minor differences’ the hostility which in every human relation we see fighting successfully against feelings of fellowship and overpowering the commandment that all men should love one another. Psycho-analysis believes that it has discovered a large part of what underlies the narcissistic rejection of women by men, which is so much mixed up with despising them, in drawing attention to the castration complex and its influence on the opinion in which women are held.34

Here the question of female sexuality as damaged by what is perceived as sexual excess, by masturbation, lies at the back of Freud’s dichotomy. Freud writes in “Some Psychic Consequences of the Anatomical Difference Between the Sexes,” “the elimination of clitoral sexuality is a necessary precondition for the development of femininity.” In abandoning clitoral sensuality, in nineteenth-century terms, masturbation without a specific reproductive goal, for vaginal sexuality, the imagined woman is abandoning her infantile fantasy of having a penis, and thus castrating herself. This is inherently a psychic process, but his model was “physical” circumcision, as is evident from what Marie Bonaparte reports in her essays on female genital mutilation composed shortly after Freud’s death. She notes in her discussion of the excision of the clitoris in “primitive” societies that this “seemed to Freud a way of seeking to further ‘feminize’ the female by removing this cardinal vestige of her masculinity. Such operations, as he [Freud] once said to me, must be intended to complete the ‘biological castration’ of the female which Nature, in the eyes of these tribes, has not sufficiently effected.”35 In other words, the mirror image of male circumcision. Male circumcision alienates the psyche from its normal course; female circumcision allows it to take its course.

By 1921, Freud returned to this notion of inherent but opposing difference, but now thinking not of the antithesis of male

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and female sexuality but between the stereotypes of national and political difference:

The same thing happens when men come together in larger units. Every time two families become connected by a marriage, each of them thinks itself superior to or of better birth than the other. Of two neighbouring towns each is the other’s most jealous rival; every little canton looks down upon the others with contempt. Closely related races keep one another at arm’s length; the South German cannot endure the North German, the Englishman casts every kind of aspersion upon the Scot, the Spaniard despises the Portuguese. We are no longer astonished that greater differences should lead to an almost insuperable repugnance, such as the Gallic people feel for the German, the Aryan for the Semite, and the white races for the coloured.36

By 1930, with the rise of Austro-Fascism and the growing awareness of the politics of antisemitism, in what was and is perhaps his most widely-read essay, “Civilization and its Discontents,” Freud then moves difference into his discussion of masculinity as defined by antisemitism:

It is clearly not easy for men to give up the satisfaction of this inclination to aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it. The advantage which a comparatively small cultural group offers of allowing this instinct an outlet in the form of hostility against intruders is not to be despised. It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness. I once discussed the phenomenon that it is precisely communities with adjoining territories, and related to each other in other ways as well, who are engaged in constant feuds and in ridiculing each other—like the Spaniards and Portuguese, for instance, the North Germans and South Germans, the English and Scotch, and so on. I gave this phenomenon the name of ‘the narcissism of minor differences,’ a name which does not do much to explain it. We can now see that it is a convenient and relatively harmless satisfaction of the inclination to aggression, by means of which cohesion between the members of the community is made easier. In this respect the Jewish people, scattered everywhere, have rendered most useful services to

the civilizations of the countries that have been their hosts; but unfortunately all the massacres of the Jews in the Middle Ages did not suffice to make that period more peaceful and secure for their Christian fellows. When once the Apostle Paul had posited universal love between men as the foundation of his Christian community, extreme intolerance on the part of Christendom towards those who remained outside it became the inevitable consequence. To the Romans, who had not founded their communal life as a State upon love, religious intolerance was something foreign, although with them religion was a concern of the State and the State was permeated by religion. Neither was it an unaccountable chance.\textsuperscript{37}

In a very different manner, so does the sociology of the time, as mirrored in works of its founders, such as the textbook \textit{Sociology} (1908) by Georg Simmel (a baptized German Jew) with its now famous appendix on “The Stranger.” Who is strange and how did they come to be so, asks Simmel, and answers by imagining the mindset of those who both label and are labeled as a stranger as well as their social location. Mind as a reflex of social location: the symbolic register of difference defines the political. Freud’s fascination with circumcision and masculinity has been well documented; Simmel’s notion of how you define yourself as a “stranger” in complex ways echoes this debate.\textsuperscript{38} Freud is both opposed to circumcision in practice as well as in theory. Refusing to have his sons circumcised, he also denounced the circumcision of boys practiced in his fantasy of secular America as a “cure or punishment.”\textsuperscript{39} Difference matters, whether as a religious or, as in the United States, primarily a hygienic practice. Difference defines masculinity, defines belonging, and frames the very notion of xenophobia.\textsuperscript{40} Circumcision is a form of social isolation and thus for Freud a form of castration as it makes one perpetually different. How antisemitism figures in such debates is not limited to the rise of modern medicine and sexual science in the nineteenth century.

The core of this argument is that the stereotypes of human sexuality as deviant and the images of the Jew as their


\textsuperscript{38} Sander L. Gilman, \textit{The Case of Sigmund Freud: Medicine and Identity at the Fin de Siècle} (Baltimore, 1993).


exemplary presence in the world has neither vanished nor ameliorated. As one review of my recent coauthored COVID-19 book asked: now what do we do about it? How very likely it is that we can change the future employment of such images in a way does not deter us from trying to understand how such images are employed and where our own sets of stereotypes are present. Learning to recognize our own “lumping” may mitigate such experiences but can certainly never eliminate them. We ask how this can be overcome: the answer is critical thinking about the historical nature of the process of creating the Other. Perhaps in examining our own anxieties and mitigating them: but perhaps not. That is the dilemma we face each day as we confront a world that too easily is divided into the “good,” the “bad,” and the “ugly.”

Sander L. Gilman is a distinguished professor emeritus of the Liberal Arts and Sciences as well as emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at Emory University. A cultural and literary historian, he is the author or editor of over one hundred books. His “Gebannt in diesem magischen Judenkreis”: Essays appeared with Wallstein Verlag (Göttingen) in 2022; his most recent edited volume is Jews and Science (Cassden Institute Annual Review, with Purdue University Press, 2022). He is the author of the basic study of the visual stereotyping of the mentally ill, Seeing the Insane, published by John Wiley and Sons in 1982 (reprinted 1996 and 2014) as well as the standard study of Jewish Self-Hatred, the title of his Johns Hopkins University Press monograph of 1986, which remains in print. Before his appointment at Emory, he was a member of the humanities and medical faculties at Cornell University, where he held the Goldwin Smith Professorship of Humane Studies for twenty-five years. He was president of the Modern Language Association in 1995 and was made a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2016.

Conference Reports
Work, Class, and Social Democracy in the Global Age of August Bebel (1840–1913)

Conference at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, May 25–27, 2023. Additional support provided by the Jackman Humanities Institute, University of Toronto, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). Conveners: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), James Retallack (University of Toronto), and Swen Steinberg (Queen’s University/GHI Washington). Participants: Celia Applegate (Vanderbilt University), Stefan Berger (Ruhr University Bochum), David Blackbourn (Vanderbilt University), Andrew Bonnell (University of Queensland), Amerigo Caruso (University of Bonn), Matthew Fitzpatrick (Flinders University), John D. French (Duke University), Jens-Uwe Guettel (Pennsylvania State University), Jürgen Kocka (Freie Universität Berlin), Christine Krüger (University of Bonn), Anja Kruke (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), Janine Murphy (College of the North Atlantic), Steven Press (Stanford University), Mona Rudolph (University of Kiel), Jürgen Schmidt (Karl-Marx-Haus, Trier), Carolyn Taratko (University of Erfurt), Philipp Urban (Ruhr University Bochum), Johanna Wolf (Max Planck Institut für Rechtsgeschichte und Rechtstheorie).

The aim of the Toronto conference on “Work, Class, and Social Democracy” was to investigate recent directions in the histories of work, labor movements, and social democracy, particularly as they relate to global studies since 2000. Participants examined the ways these histories interact with studies of class, race, and empire; possibilities of revolution and political emergencies; food and the body; the
workplace, resistance, and state power; violence and emotions; and religion and modernization. The presentations focused roughly on the lifespan of German socialist politician August Bebel (1840–1913), and geographically on Central Europe and European empires.

The conference began with a welcome from conference organizers James Retallack and Simone Lässig. The first session addressed global entanglements of work, class, and race, with Matthew P. Fitzpatrick providing comments and Swen Steinberg moderating. Steven Press explored the Social Democratic Party’s critique of German colonialism. As Press pointed out, socialist luminaries such as Wilhelm Liebknecht and Bebel were critical of Germany’s colonial enterprise, partly focusing on the actions of men like Adolf Lüderitz, whom they viewed as immoral and scrupulous. Yet, Press argued, there was more to this story. Bebel’s view was more nuanced, seeing colonialism as having the potential to culturally uplift colonized peoples. Furthermore, Bebel thought there were potential benefits to be gained by the German working class through colonialization, even if it originated from untrustworthy colonial treaties signed by Lüderitz and his ilk. Mona Rudolph presented a paper that interrogated the labor regime in the diamond mines of German South West Africa, placing it within a global context. Diamond extraction presented German colonial officials with several overlapping dilemmas: diamonds were spread across the entire colony but the only location where there was an available labor pool that could be exploited was in the Ovambo region, where colonial administration and infrastructure were sparse. The working conditions were “absolutely catastrophic.” Indigenous Ovambo workers were exploited in a brutal system that existed somewhere between the boundaries of free and unfree labor, conditions that were influenced by mining companies on the ground, the local colonial government, the Reich Colonial Office, and consumers abroad, namely in the United States. Both
papers underscored the importance of recognizing the interlocking complexities of European history and colonial history, emphasizing how European actors operating beyond the borders of Europe reshaped categories of race and labor.

Session two, with a comment from David Blackbourn, dealt with the histories of labor movements during periods of emergency. Amerigo Caruso discussed the German General Staff’s plans, commissioned in the wake of the 1905 Russian Revolution, to contain potential mass unrest inside Germany. Caruso found that German officers looked to both contemporaneous and historical practices in France and Italy to learn by example. He argued that the schemes the officers drew up fit into a longer history of reactionary European forces to use states of siege not only to restore order but also to regenerate a moral order in response to democratization. By declaring states of emergency during periods of social upheaval, ever more extraordinary countermeasures were introduced to police urgent security concerns. The product of this process was the gradual delegitimization of labor movements and the discrediting of liberal institutions. Andrew Bonnell presented a paper that asked why the large and widespread German antiwar movement faltered in early August 1914. In part, Bonnell answered this question by noting that once war was declared, a “fatal dynamic of events” occurred which disarmed the antiwar movement. There were also political calculations involved, as reformist politicians sought a positive integration of the workers’ movement into Wilhelmine society, while the Social Democratic Party (SPD) leadership bought into the notion that the war was one of national defense, namely against Russia. Party leaders were wary of the repressive powers that could be enacted by the state. Still, Bonnell noted that the antiwar movement didn’t fully go away. It re-emerged late in the war with the creation of the oppositional USPD, in the strikes of 1918, and the November Revolution.
The first day’s round of panels concluded with a session on “Blood, Sweat, and Food,” with comments from Celia Applegate. Carolyn Taratko explored the fraught relationship between the SPD and the German peasantry. Taratko began by highlighting Bebel’s futuristic hope that advances in technology could one day liberate man from the soil and usher in an age of plenty. Bebel’s view, Taratko argued, arose not out of acquiescence to Marxist theory but because of shifting attitudes of German consumers. Placing the SPD’s “peasant problem” in the context of changing global food supply chains and eating habits, Taratko argued that the party became an advocate of consumer interests, advancing a vision of food security. Similarly, Philipp Urban explored the transition of German society from “production-centric” to “consumption-oriented” and how social democrats responded. Urban traced the attitudes of the SPD toward self-help organizations, particularly cooperatives. Initially rejected by Bebel and a majority of social democrats, by 1910 the party decided to support cooperatives at its congress in Magdeburg. Why the change? Urban pointed to several key developments, including increases in the cost of living, the fact that cooperatives had become a large movement nationally and internationally in their own right, and the theoretical and practical debates over revisionism in the preceding years. Urban argued that the SPD’s embrace of cooperatives was a signpost along its transformation from a party predicated on class struggle and revolution to one based on representing consumer interests and reform.

On Thursday evening, John D. French delivered the conference keynote address, entitled “A Workers’ Emperor and a Workers’ President? Germany’s August Bebel and Brazil’s Luís Inácio Lula da Silva in Comparative Perspective.” How was it that these two men built a mass following among workers and the poor? Focusing on their backgrounds, notably similarities in their educational, occupational, and political trajectories, French probed what he called their political
cunning. Both Bebel and Lula managed to survive politically despite imprisonment, entrenched opposition, and authoritarianism, not only due to their political skill but moreover because they seemed to embody the idea that the working class could emancipate itself.

The conference’s fourth session, which included a comment from Stefan Berger, opened with Jürgen Schmidt offering a paper that detailed the importance of work in how the labor movement perceived and conceptualized society. Work defined much of the working-class world: it delineated between “idlers” of the capitalist class and “workers.” Schmidt then shifted to explore the nature of political work. The rise of mass party politics meant that political work became more time-consuming and more professionalized. Work provided a mental framework for understanding a class-structured society that, coupled with political work, led to a strong organization within the Social Democratic Party that produced success in elections. Johanna Wolf examined the significance of work regulations enacted in factories. Through them, employers made behavioral demands on their employees, producing uneven power relationships that frequently led to labor conflict. While workers sought redress through self-organization, collective bargaining, and the strike, industrial relations also became subject to state control through the Imperial Industrial Code. In this way, modern industrial relations reflected experiences in the industrial workplace, which often codified normative orders and balanced economic interests.

Session five, with a comment by Anja Kruke, included a paper submitted by Christine Krüger but not delivered in person. Krüger’s work examined how labor history could be informed through new perspectives on security as a historical concept. The paper argued that security was a central goal of the labor movement. Drawing on examples from both Great Britain and Germany, namely strikes in London
and Hamburg, Krüger showed how the labor movement deployed the concept of security on behalf of workers, for example by advocating for better health and safety measures. The labor movement also used security as a threat, signaling that workers’ discontent might sooner or later lead to violence and revolution. Security, then, as a method and category of analysis, shows the agency of the labor movement and its importance in class formation. Standing in for Krüger, James Retallack presented a paper that explored the various media incarnations of August Bebel. Depictions of Bebel varied widely depending on time and place, by tone and message. At one point Bebel could be presented as a violent revolutionary “pétroleuse,” an erupting Vesuvius, or as the Moses of the workers’ movement. Exploring these divergent iconographies, Retallack probed the boundaries between celebrity and personality cult. Retallack expressed skepticism that Bebel achieved cult-figure status, as defined by Max Weber, since he lacked charismatic authority. Still, Bebel was an immensely popular speaker who became a global celebrity in the age of mass media. Finally, Jens-Uwe Guettel’s paper sought continuities in mass urban street action, from the suffrage reform demonstrations in Saxony in 1905 to the strikes, riots, and protests of the early Weimar Republic. Guettel argued for social and political continuities, foremost among them the ways in which those on the street could balk at the political goals of would-be leaders or political ideologies, underscoring the contingency at play. Far from being choreographed, street protests often lacked coherence: they were vehicles for self-empowerment and became a space where participants negotiated class positions through performance.

The sixth session charted the themes of class, religion, and modernization. Andrew Bonnell provided comments. Taking a transatlantic perspective, Janine Murphy considered gymnastic societies to explore the question of citizenship and belonging. When the German Gymnastics Federation
banned members of the Workers’ Gymnastics Federation in 1894, it was making a clear statement that reflected middle-class concerns about whether workers could be fully integrated into society. The main gymnastic society founded in North America by revolutionaries of 1848 faced a similar dilemma when new immigrant workers tried to join its ranks. Despite different historical and political contexts, the integration of workers into gymnast societies on both sides of the Atlantic remained precarious. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick explored Bebel’s writings and attitudes toward Islam. In Fitzpatrick’s reading, Bebel positioned Islam as a progressive antidote to the chauvinistic Christianity he believed was pervasive in Germany at the time. In what Fitzpatrick describes as affirmative Orientalism, Bebel offered an alternative history of Islam that gave to it Hegelian world historical significance as the bridge between Greco-Roman antiquity and the modernity of the Renaissance. In so doing, Bebel saw Islam—and not Christianity—as the direct forerunner of socialist modernity. Fitzpatrick added that Bebel’s Orientalism was also a response to the so-called Eastern Question: it was a pro-Ottoman defense against the predations of an aggressive, absolutist Russia he despised.

The conference concluded with a lively roundtable discussion between David Blackbourn, Jürgen Kocka, and James Retallack moderated by Stefan Berger. The participants agreed that the three-day conference had illuminated several exciting new avenues for labor history, particularly as it intersected with other historiographies. The global turn, new histories of capitalism, the history of migration, and memory studies all offer promise to enhance our understanding of the complexities of the German and global labor movements moving forward.

Steven McClellan
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Third Annual International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies

Seminar held at the Centre for Global Cooperation Research, University of Duisburg-Essen, July 4–7, 2023. Co-organized by the University of Tübingen, the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI), and the American Historical Association (AHA), in cooperation with the Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21), University of Duisburg-Essen. Conveners: Jan C. Jansen (University of Tübingen), Dane Kennedy (George Washington University), Simone Lässig (German Historical Institute, GHI). Participants: Al-Khoder al-Khalifa (Jawaharlal Nehru University), Oladotun Awosusi (University of Fort Hare), Stephanie Bode (University of Augsburg), Grecia Chávez Medina (Centro de Estudios Históricos—El Colegio de México), Delphine Diaz (University of Reims), Ilana Feldman (George Washington University), Peter Gatrell (University of Manchester), Victoria Gonzalez Maltes (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris), Annika Heyen (University of Osnabrück), Jannik Keindorf (University of Tübingen), Martin-Oleksandr Kisly (National University of Kyiv—Mohyla Academy), Franziska Maria Lamp (University of Vienna), Michele Magri (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris), Thomas Mareite (University of Tübingen), Alba Martinez (University of Leeds), Egemen Özbek (University of Duisburg-Essen), Sophie Rose (University of Tübingen), Rohail Salman (George Washington University), Phoebe Shambaugh (University of Manchester), Alessandra Vigo (University of Padova), Peter Walker (University of Wyoming).

The aim of the International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies held in summer 2023 was to bring together a cohort of early-career scholars from different countries who
each work on the burgeoning field of refugee history from a variety of perspectives. The seminar underscored the importance of examining refugee experiences through a historical lens, with discussions ranging from the late seventeenth century to contemporary times. After words of welcome from conveners Jan Jansen and Dane Kennedy, the first session opened with a discussion of early modern perceptions of refugees in Europe and North America. Stephanie Bode’s paper offered a comparative analysis of media representations of two seventeenth-century refugee movements in and out of France: English and Irish Catholics who followed King James II into exile in France during the 1680s and 1690s, and the Huguenot réfugiés who departed after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. These migrations were both understood in decidedly religious terms and strongly politicized, with competing narratives of virtuous refugee experiences being instrumentalized in wider debates on fiscal and religious policies. Peter Walker’s contribution on American loyalist clergymen and their self-fashioning as refugee-martyrs following the American Revolution similarly highlighted the conjunction of religion and politics and stressed the emotional dimension of the discourse around compensation and support for loyalist refugees. Suffering, in this context, had moral valence in different ways for different institutions’ humanitarian responses: whereas the Church of England mobilized an early modern mode of religious solidarity in its refugee relief collections, with co-religionists sympathizing with Anglican loyalists’ plight, the operations of the American Loyalist Claims Commission, organized by the British government, were characterized by contrast by a politics of pity rather than sympathy.

The seminar’s first day closed with a keynote lecture by Ilana Feldman, titled “Humanitarian Time and Refugee Presence: On Palestinian Lives in Extended Displacement.” This public lecture explored both the spatial and temporal dimensions of the Palestinian refugee experience following the 1948 Nakba.
Feldman opened with the spatial evolution of several refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan, demonstrating how an initial “humanitarian ordering” of emergency tents made way for increasingly dense, quasi-permanent housing enfolded in the space of the host societies. She then moved on to observations based on local fieldwork on the passing of time among Palestinian refugees, pointing to long periods of consistent destitution being repeatedly punctuated by moments of crisis. Humanitarian activity, meanwhile, has frequently centered on an attempt to structure time in the face of seemingly undifferentiated waiting. The lecture closed with a reflection on generational differences in approaches to time and on the relevance of time in refugee politics, with many Palestinians resisting the notion that the passing of time might resolve the conflict around their claims to a lost home.

The emphasis of the second session was on the United States’ and the United Kingdom’s responses to the European refugee crisis that resulted from the Second World War. Annika Heyen’s paper focused on the Bermuda Conference of 1943 and the Allied powers’ attempt to define the term “refugee” in the wake of Jewish citizens’ flight from Central and Eastern Europe. Her contribution showed how the term “refugee” was deliberately chosen over “Jews” to avoid fueling antisemitic sentiments in both nations. Under this definition, refugees were viewed as individuals who had crossed international borders and were outside their home country, limiting the pool of people addressed by the conference. Victoria Gonzalez Maltes focused on the Displaced Persons (DP) program in the United States, established shortly after World War II, which selected refugees for resettlement based on their ability and willingness to work, particularly as manual laborers. The program, while often seen as a humanitarian initiative, was fundamentally structured like a foreign worker recruitment scheme. The DP Act required refugees to secure a promise of employment, and agricultural quotas underscored the
focus on labor. Advocates emphasized refugees’ work abilities, portraying them as productive workers. This labor-centric approach challenges the common perception of the DP program as purely a humanitarian endeavor.

In the third session, Franziska Maria Lamp explored postwar migration management, particularly focusing on displaced women in Austria. She delved into the gendered aspects of resettlement programs, emphasizing employers’ preference for female workers as they received lower wages. Lamp highlighted individual cases of DPs who returned to Austria after initial resettlement attempts, shedding light on the bureaucratic challenges, health considerations, and family dynamics influencing their decisions. Gender’s role in migration management was further explored by Alba Martínez, whose paper delved into the gender-based labeling of Spanish refugees in France between 1945 and 1978. She revealed that men were more likely to be considered “true” refugees due to their active anti-Francoist political and military roles, while women were often seen as “companions” to male refugees, relegating their experiences and political activities to the background. The administrative process to obtain refugee status thus reinforced traditional gender roles, perpetuating inequalities. “Unaccompanied” women faced suspicion and marginalization. Yet many of these women resisted these challenges, reclaiming their agency in the process.

The fourth session examined state responses to refugee crises outside Europe. Rohail Salman discussed Pakistan’s response to the refugee crisis during its partition from India between 1947 and 1951, emphasizing the intertwined processes of state-making and nation-building. The bureaucratic exercises of rehabilitating refugees and managing evacuee property became key elements in defining Pakistan’s national identity. The state’s attempts to balance economic viability, administrative challenges, and ideological promises point to the complexities of early state-building.
A look at central state’s control, inter-provincial coordination, and integration efforts underscores how refugee rehabilitation became a tool for national unity. Oladotun Awosusi analyzed the policy history of refugee containment in post-Apartheid South Africa. He noted the significant shift in South African refugee policy between 1998 and 2022 from inclusive practices to exclusionary measures. Initially, the country embraced progressive policies, welcoming refugees and granting asylum seekers rights to work and freedom of movement. However, subsequent amendments, influenced by nationalistic and exclusionary sentiments, have limited these rights, leading to the emergence of “hidden refugees.” The government has increasingly employed tactics such as bureaucratic hurdles, detention centers, and border militarization to restrict entry and documentation of refugee status. Consequently, refugees have faced prolonged uncertainty, fear, and social tensions, while xenophobic attacks further exacerbated their predicament.

The fifth session explored diasporic community networks and solidarities over extended periods of time. Contributions by Al-Khoder al-Khalifa and Phoebe Shambaugh traced how dynamics of support and solidarity both within and across groups changed and shifted. Al-Khalifa discussed reflections through images, stories, and fictional narratives of the experiences of the Armenian refugee diaspora community in Syria from 1915 to 2011. He emphasized how trauma and displacement became historicized, but sometimes also silenced across generations. Shambaugh examined the case of Somali family reunification to Bolton (UK) in 1990 as it exemplified the development of an infrastructure of refugee relief relying on local communities and minority groups throughout the years of the UK Gateway resettlement scheme. In the process, Bolton developed a landscape of ethnic voluntary organizations responding to refugees and shaping the racial and religious politics of the town. Both papers explored the intersections
of displacement and agency, and highlighted how agency was limited by notions of state-building and recurring patterns of refugee reception and management. In Aleppo and Bolton, refugee communities sought to preserve their culture and language across generations while simultaneously having to live up to a public image of community usefulness.

Egemen Özbek gave a special presentation to start the third day of the seminar on the activities of the Academy in Exile, founded in 2017, a joint initiative of the University of Duisburg-Essen’s Institute for Turkish Studies, the KWI (Essen), and the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin). The Academy in Exile supports scholars in the humanities, social sciences, arts, and law at risk of persecution on account of their academic work or commitment to academic freedom, human rights, and democracy. Özbek detailed the process by which the Academy in Exile offers fellowships to these scholars for them to safely pursue their intellectual and/or artistic production, as well as some of the challenges involved in selecting and effectively supporting awardees.

The sixth and penultimate session explored exile politics in the Americas during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Michele Magri discussed the experiences of Italian exiles in the United States during the antebellum period, with a focus on New York and New Orleans. Magri’s contribution stressed the social and political diversity of these exiles (from Bonapartist veterans to pro-Risorgimento liberals) while analyzing the range of solidarity networks and political practices that united them. It examined the exiles’ role in forming notions of Italian national identity as well as their influence over political debates in the United States. Grecia Chávez Medina explored the history of Mexico City as a transnational hub of radical left-wing exile during the 1920s and 1930s. Her contribution analyzed how Communist exiles were welcomed into—and actively contributed to—structures of political solidarity in the Mexican capital, with a focus on International
Red Aid (IRA), a Comintern-affiliated organization. Chávez Medina’s paper thus revealed how the IRA’s assistance to Communist refugees in Mexico City was part of a larger effort to forge a Communist International.

The seventh and last session of the conference explored returns from exile and the complexities of belonging in (post-)colonial contexts. Martin-Oleksandr Kisly presented on how Crimean Tatars articulated their cultural identity around memories of the homeland and narratives about their return—both real and imagined—to Crimea. His contribution shed light on Tatars’ experiences of Soviet displacement, examining contests over the meaning of “homeland” among them. Kisly finally stressed the gap between romanticized narratives on Crimea among Tatar exiles and the practical reality of return. Alessandra Vigo discussed the return of Italian colonists from Africa in decolonizing Italy in relation to notions of Italianness (Italianità). Vigo’s contribution emphasized the returnees’ struggles when seeking to assert peninsular belonging. As many among them did not share identity features considered cornerstones of Italian identity, Vigo showed that returnees often faced derogatory stereotypes and cultural exclusion from fellow Italians treating them as strangers in their own homeland.

The conversations stemming from this seminar, encompassing multiple regions and centuries, have generated numerous inquiries for the field of refugee history. These questions can be distilled, albeit not exhaustively, into three primary themes. Firstly, several presentations underscored the significance of emotional regimes in exploring refugee experiences over time, particularly focusing on how trauma and displacement are remembered or suppressed. They highlighted the cultural and political foundations shaping both personal and public (self-)portrayals of refugees, along with the recollections of homelands and narratives surrounding the idea of return, from the early modern era forward.
Secondly, discussions delved into the temporal dimensions of refugee experiences. Temporality emerges as a crucial dimension influencing various aspects of refugees’ lives and political dynamics in exile, shaping notions of belonging and the prospects of returning home, among other elements. Analyzing the interplay between time and refuge unveils essential facets of refugee experiences, including disparities across generations, solidarity between refugees and non-refugees, and the enduring resilience of refugee diasporic communities. Lastly, the contributions underscored the significance of categorization. Many presentations elucidated the intricate intersections between refugee migration management and broader state- or nation-building projects. They revealed how determinations of refugee status and resettlement programs intertwined with expressions of state sovereignty, often resulting in differential treatment based on factors like class, race, gender, and subjective assessments of “usefulness” as laborers or settlers. The fourth International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies, scheduled for July 2024 in Tübingen, will further explore these diverse questions shaping the landscape of historical research on refugee history.

**Jannik Keindorf, Thomas Mareite**  
(both University of Tübingen),  
**Johannes Pegel** (University of Duisburg-Essen),  
**Sophie Rose** (University of Tübingen)
Latin America’s Contested Pasts in Telenovelas and TV Series: A Cross-Sector Dialogue between Academia, Entertainment, and Society

Conference at the German Historical Institute in Washington DC, September 7–8, 2023, organized in collaboration with GUMELAB, Free University of Berlin (Geschichtsvermittlung durch Unterhaltungsmedien in Lateinamerika: Labor für Erinnerungsforschung und digitale Methoden). Conveners: Mónica Contreras Saiz (Free University of Berlin/GUMELAB), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Stefan Rinke (Free University of Berlin/GUMELAB). Additional support provided by the Goethe-Institut, Washington. Participants: June Carolyn Erlick (Harvard University), Juan Camilo Ferrand (Ferrand Stories), Delia González de Reufels (University of Bremen), Edward Goyeneche Gómez (Universidad de La Sabana), Andreas Gutzeit (Story House Productions), Claudia Lagos (Universidad de Chile), Tatjana Louis (Universidad de los Andes), Holle Meding (GUMELAB), Hannah Müssemann (GUMELAB), Leonardo Pachon (Universidad de Antioquia), Jimena Perry (Iona University), Juan Piñon (New York University/OBITEL), Enrique Uribe-Jongbloed (University of Cardiff/Universidad Externado de Colombia), María Elena Wood (Wood Producciones).

The burgeoning proliferation of telenovelas and TV series delving into the recent history of Latin America and their expanding global influence served as the impetus for the interdisciplinary research initiative known as GUMELAB (the acronym, in German, of Transfer of History through Entertainment Media in Latin America: Laboratory for Memory and Digital Media Research), hosted at the Free University
of Berlin. This initiative, supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung), recognizes the significance of these cultural products as vehicles of historical memory, shaping the collective consciousness and political ethos not only within national borders but also across international audiences.

GUMELAB conceptualized the conference on “Latin America’s Contested Pasts in Telenovelas and TV Series” in collaboration with the GHI to foster an inclusive dialogue about this art form among academia, the entertainment industry, civil society organizations, and television viewers. The conference provided a platform for exploring the complex intersections of history, entertainment, and societal narratives, beginning with a kickoff event open to the public. This event, titled “TV Series and the Public Memory of Colonia Dignidad: An Interdisciplinary Conversation and Screening about the German-Chilean TV Series Dignity,” was held at the Goethe-Institut in Washington, and was part of a broader series of events on public memory and memorial culture co-organized by the GHI and the Goethe-Institut. It included the screening of three clips from the German-Chilean television program “Dignity” (Joyn/MEGA, 2019), an eight-episode television series delving into the history of the Colonia Dignidad, a cult community established in Chile in the 1950s by German emigrants which became notorious for both the sexual abuse of its youngest residents and for its leaders’ collaboration with the right-wing Pinochet government to facilitate the torture and execution of the regime’s political opponents.

Following the screening, GUMELAB researchers Stefan Rinke and Holle Meding interviewed the series’ producers, María Elena Wood and Andreas Gutzeit, who discussed their motivations for exploring Colonia Dignidad’s history and its links to the Pinochet dictatorship on television, highlighting the challenges of balancing fiction and reality in a historical
context. A central theme in the discussion revolved around the role of fiction in portraying historical events. Gutzeit, the program’s showrunner, emphasized that his historical productions prioritize emotional truth over factual accuracy, stating, “we are not looking for the factual truth but looking for emotional truth.” Wood, a producer renowned for her work on series depicting recent Chilean history, echoed this sentiment, highlighting her practice of consulting archives to enhance her audiovisual projects. However, she acknowledged that sometimes sources are lacking or inaccessible, leading to the necessity of inventing elements to fill the gaps, a case where fiction can serve to complement historical narratives.

The conference the next day comprised two roundtable discussions and a presentation of the ongoing results of the GUMELAB project. The first roundtable, moderated by Mónica Contreras Saiz, brought together screenwriters, producers, and academics. The discussion commenced by delving into the significance of the commonly used disclaimer, “Any resemblance to the past is pure coincidence,” prevalent in this genre of television. Beyond its practical function of legal protection, Juan Camilo Ferrand, a scriptwriter of Latin American telenovelas and series, emphasized that this disclaimer ensures the freedom to craft fiction. Gutzeit emphasized the appeal of incorporating real historical figures into television narratives. He noted that these characters resonate more with audiences as they provide recognizable reference points. Gutzeit further remarked, “we never truly encounter a story that has never been told before; rather, it’s always a fresh perspective on a familiar narrative.”

Expanding on this theme, Wood stressed the importance of adhering to legal protocols specific to each country when addressing legal cases in storytelling. She explained that in Chile, “true crime” documentaries can only be developed if
the individuals involved in the crime are public figures who have been officially tried and convicted. Wood argued that in instances where justice has not been served through formal legal action, fiction can provide a platform to rectify this imbalance. She concluded that reality-based TV series and telenovelas serve as a vehicle for vindication, particularly for victims of dictatorship. “In fiction, the guilty can face consequences for their actions,” Wood affirmed, thus ensuring the preservation of honor and dignity for their victims. She emphasized the importance of acknowledging marginalized voices in history, such as those of slaves and women, noting that fiction provides the freedom to amplify these voices which may not be adequately represented in historical archives.

The selection of a particular historical narrative is far from arbitrary; rather, it reflects the personal interests and motivations of the creators involved. The discussion highlighted how the inception of such audiovisual projects is fundamentally shaped by the individual perspectives of their creators, transcending institutional and industrial frameworks. Whether they are scriptwriters or producers, creators are active social agents with distinct viewpoints on the subject matter they aim to explore. Wood further emphasized that this principle applies not only to fictional productions but also to documentary works. In both genres, an interpretation of the past is inherently embedded, challenging the notion of objectivity. As Wood succinctly put it, “It is impossible to remain neutral when telling stories.”

Finally, the panel delved into the educational aspect of these productions. Ferrand emphasized that works addressing historical subjects go beyond mere entertainment; they possess educational value as they simplify complex historical narratives. For instance, when Ferrand penned the script for the renowned Colombian telenovela “Pablo Escobar, El patrón de mal,” he aimed to craft a story
that would appeal to a wide audience, including “[my] father and [my] niece.” He argued this approach contributed to the telenovela’s success, as it made the storyline accessible to everyone. June Erlick, whose research focuses on the telenovela as a social phenomenon in Latin America, noted they can serve as historical teachers for generations who did not experience the events firsthand. She recounted the case of a 10-year-old Colombian boy who claimed to have learned about the historical event known as the Palace of Justice siege for the first time from “Pablo Escobar, El patrón de mal.” In contrast, Andreas Gutzeit asserted that while these productions do entertain, their primary objective is not necessarily educational. He believes that their ability to evoke emotions is what ultimately influences perceptions. Gutzeit explained that in his own productions, he prioritizes capturing the essence of the present rather than adhering strictly to historical accuracy. He contends that instilling moral values through storytelling can have a more profound impact on shaping individuals than simply learning from the past.

The following roundtable focused on methods for researching historical television fiction and was moderated by Hannah Müssemann. Experts in data science, communication science and history reflected on various aspects to consider in methodological designs for studying television fiction. Leonardo Pachón, an expert in data science, shared his work on a GUMELAB project which combines Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques and Big Data analysis to capture how impressions and information about telenovelas and TV series are shared on social networks. The research has the potential to track international viewing routes, identifying who watches what, where, and when, while one of the limitations is the ethical dilemma of working with data that, although publicly accessible, were not intended by their creators for research purposes.
Delia González de Reufels, a historian and editor of the German magazine Research in Film and History, discussed the use of historical archival material within television fiction, particularly in the form of “historical reenactments,” which are almost always removed from their original context. She argued for melding research fields such as media science, media history and media archeology to analyze this phenomenon, also known as “Bildmigration,” and its use in story plots. Juan Piñon, coordinator in the United States of the Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction (OBI-TEL), emphasized the systematization of television fiction production. He explained that OBTEL’s work in the United States is pivotal due to the presence there of a substantial and expanding Latino viewership, already exceeding 60 million. Moreover, drawing from his research on the intersection of corporate dynamics within Latin American transnational media and the established practices of U.S. Latino media, and its impact on Latino representations, he contended that despite changes in viewing formats, production contexts persistently involve white men narrating Latino stories.

Claudia Lagos, a researcher in television fiction from a gender perspective, discussed how fiction which challenges gender norms can effectively elevate issues onto the political agenda, as evidenced by the discourse surrounding gender violence and abortion, particularly when placed in frameworks drawing on feminism and theories of intersectionality. Enrique Uribe-Jongbloed, whose research delves into the portrayal of violence in fiction, discussed findings from audience studies, revealing significant fluctuations in the reception of violence based on gender, noting that scenes deemed highly violent by women may not have registered as such when first conceptualized by male writers, directors, producers, and other personnel. This underscores the imperative to reflect on the ethical responsibility of fiction—what is represented and how—given its profound impact on collective memory. In concluding remarks,
Edward Goyeneche-Gómez highlighted the influence audiovisual representation codes have on historical narratives. These codes tend to reflect contemporary viewpoints rather than faithfully depicting the past, illustrating present-day approaches to historical interpretation.

The event concluded with a workshop on the capacity of television productions like those considered to address controversial and traumatic issues, along with the associated risk of the re-victimization or stigmatization of the social actors depicted in them. Strategies to promote critical consumption of these historical fiction series were also discussed, as well as their impact on the current political landscape. The workshop followed the “world café” methodology, facilitating multiple conversations on complementary topics. Participants were divided into four groups, comprising members of television production teams, viewers previously interviewed for audience studies by GUMELAB, representatives of civil society organizations, and academics.

In response to the question of whether these series can serve as educational material, television production personnel emphasized the importance of distinguishing between responsible entertainment and education. They underscored that responsible entertainment involves contextualizing audiovisual products and focuses more on conveying emotional truths rather than presenting factual information. Conversely, education entails the teaching of concrete facts. Some academics argued that carefully selected TV series can play a complementary role in history education, provided appropriate strategies, including an investigation into their production contexts, are incorporated. Other scholars noted that the usefulness of TV series as pedagogical material may vary depending on the age of the target audience; they may be more relevant for young people, as these TV series are part of their frame of reference, but less pertinent for those with more life experience. Participants
from NGOs and viewers suggested television productions can effectively be used as pedagogical tools, serving as a springboard for addressing significant issues, prompting questions, and preparing future generations to be critical consumers of media.

With respect to controversial and traumatic topics, the members of television production teams emphasized that the depiction of sensitive historical events encompasses both the selection of whom to portray and the manner in which the events are depicted. It involves considering whether to solely depict those who experienced harm as victims or to delve into their entire life stories within the plot. Economic imperatives often influence these decisions, as not all productions are inclined to tackle sensitive issues. Conversely, NGOs and the academic sector highlighted the potential of involving victims in the creative process and listening to their perspectives, which can evoke gratitude or feelings of victimization, contingent upon the execution of this approach.

The conference and workshop provided a platform to delve into the intricate intersections of history, entertainment, and social narratives. Suggestions for critical engagement in the depiction of historical events included their integration into educational contexts, establishing guidelines to verify factual accuracy, and the formation of advisory groups for script development. The conference acknowledged the power of telenovelas and historical series to stimulate dialogue on contemporary issues and influence perceptions of the world, particularly among younger audiences. In summary, the conference underscored the importance of critically examining both the production and consumption of these television dramas, recognizing their role in shaping historical and social narratives.

Tatjana Louis
(Universidad de los Andes)
Seventh Annual Bucerius Young Scholars Forum: Indigenous Migration

Workshop held September 22–23, 2023, at the GHI Washington Pacific Office at the University of California, Berkeley, followed by a joint field trip to Sitka, Alaska. Sponsored by the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius. Conveners: Holly Guise (University of New Mexico), Sören Urbansky (Ruhr-Universität Bochum), and Nino Vallen (GHI Pacific Office). Participants: Stefan Benz (University of Bonn), Colton Brandau (University of California, Davis), Ian Halter (University of Oregon), Amy Kerner (University of California, Berkeley, and GHI Pacific Office), Lea Kröner (Freie Universität Berlin), Chechesh Kudachinova (University of Mannheim), Chenxi Luo (Washington University in St. Louis), Hillary MacKinlay (Georgetown University), Maria Momzikova (University of Tartu), Akasemi Newsome (University of California, Berkeley), Rachel Nolan (Boston University), Tamara Polyakova (University of Wisconsin-Madison and Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland), Jorge Ramirez-Lopez (University of California, Los Angeles), Sandra Sánchez (Yale University), Fabio Santos (University of California, Berkeley, and GHI Pacific Office).

The 2023 Bucerius Young Scholars Forum focused on Indigenous migrations. Taking a trans-epochal and transregional perspective, participants contributed a wide range of empirically rich studies to situate Indigenous sources and histories in relation to traditional imperial histories and the history of knowledge production. Nino Vallen offered introductory remarks to give direction and coherence to the process of collective inquiry. Namely, how can Indigenous agency change historical narratives? What are the shapes (linear? circular?) and effects (on families, communities) of Indigenous mobilities? Is it possible to narrate stories of
Indigenous experience from an Indigenous perspective, and how? And in doing so, how should scholars engage with colonial and Indigenous epistemologies?

The first panel, “Forced Migrations,” sketched a new roadmap for Indigenous global history through two vastly different cases: seventeenth-century Russian encounters with a range of Indigenous groups in the colony they called Siberia (Chechesh Kudachinova, “Moving Bodies, Mobile Lives: Framing Forced Indigenous Mobilities and the Production of Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century Siberia”) and the forced migrations of Indigenous Guatemalans in and from Central America and the United States (Rachel Nolan, “From Genocide to Drought: Indigenous (Maya) Migration from and Deportation to Guatemala, 1980s to the Present”). While the papers drew on very different modes of analysis—oblique reading of colonial Russian archives in one case, and ethnographic interviews for the other—both juxtaposed anti-Indigenous violence, by colonialism or by anti-immigration policy, to the knowledge and skill of Indigenous actors. Thus, Russian settlement by forts can be reframed as a countermove to the tremendous mobility of Indigenous people in the contested region, and Indigenous Guatemalan activist responses to climate crises may be conditioned by deeper histories of genocide survival.

In the second panel, “Negotiating Colonialism,” Colton Brandau and Lea Kröner brought different temporal scales to the centering of Indigenous agency under Russian and Canadian rule, respectively. Brandau examined Indigenous Qikertarmiut memories in Russian pre-Siberia over nearly a century, with particular attention to Qikertarmiut lexicon of the natural world (“‘Curiosity Drove Us to Examine It More Closely’: Qikertarmiut Memories of Movement under Russian Colonialism, 1784–1851”). Lea Kröner’s paper, on Indigenous converts and missionaries in what is now British Columbia, reconsidered the voices of Indigenous converts whose choices can appear, in retrospect, to perpetuate religious
institutions of colonial oppression (“Mobility and Agency: Indigenous Missionaries on the North Pacific Coast during the Nineteenth Century”). The discussion circled around the power and limits of the sources—what, exactly, do Indigenous language terms or acts of conversion disclose?—and the emerging theme of shifting colonial attitudes toward Indigenous mobility.

“Fighting for Sovereignty” was the theme that connected the two papers of the third panel, encompassing studies on Fiji and the United States-Canadian borderland. Hillary MacKinlay’s paper, “Indigenous Actors, Imperial Politics, and the Birth of the Kingdom of Fiji, 1867–1871,” examined violent political change in Fiji. By acknowledging the different positionalities of coastal and interior Indigenous communities, MacKinlay described the role they played in the rise to power and its eventual concession by Cakobau, a short-lived monarch whose reign preceded the establishment of British Empire sovereignty over the islands in 1874. Sanchez’s paper, “Deportation and Blood Quantum: Tribal Border Crossing Rights, 1928–1940,” was concerned with the legal institutionalization of immobility in between Canada and the United States, strongly tied to longstanding racial stereotypes. Unpacking these processes of bordering and othering, Sánchez emphasized the historical cross-border mobility of Native people, criticized the citizen/non-citizen binary prevailing in migration studies and politics, and asserted that national borders disrupted long-standing Native political relationships and landscapes. Besides proving the necessary diligence in giving nuance and voice to otherwise forgotten Indigenous actors in migration histories, both papers and the subsequent discussion also illustrated the centrality of space and place.

In the fourth panel, “Connecting to the Homeland,” homelands figured centrally, but differently, in the ways migrants made meaning far from their places of birth. Chenxi Luo’s
paper, “When Distance Turned into Disputes: Manchu Migration, Translocal Homeland, and Slavery-Related Disputes in Early Qing China, 1600–1722,” focused on the early Qing Dynasty. The paper showed how migrations to inner China worked in the service of a newly established imperial system to create possibilities for enslaved people to build their lives with newfound autonomy, far from their masters. As one discussant put it, in the Qing Dynasty, distance opened the door to “mischief at home.” By contrast, in Jorge Ramirez-Lopez’s paper, “How Indigenous Migrants from Southern Mexico Made Oaxacalifornia,” Indigenous migrants from Oaxaca made their Mexican villages into national anchors of activist solidarity. Discussants took particular interest in the way Lopez’ interviews with migrants connected Indigenous practices of community responsibility born in Mexico to a US-based Indigenous rights movement. In both cases, distance from the homeland reconfigured its meaning and opened new horizons of action and activism.

Under the theme of “Indigenous Knowledge Producers,” the fifth panel connected studies zooming in on two allegedly peripheral sites of migration and knowledge production: Alaska and Karelia. Ian Halter, in his paper “Shores of Knowledge, Waves of Ignorance: Settler Agnotologies and Alaska Natives’ (Epistemic) Mobilities, 1860 to 1897,” explored the tension between knowledge and ignorance in the context of the United States’ colonial acquisition of Alaska in 1867. In an “epistemic environment in which the most influential voices on Alaska were often the worst informed,” Halter argued, ignorance was instrumental to suppressing the intimate knowledge held over generations by Native communities. Tamara Polyakova’s paper, “‘Russian’ Cold: Fighting for Karelia, 1918–22,” looked at the battlegrounds of the Russian Civil War, specifically in Karelia, through the lens of cold: both a reality and an exaggerated social construction, climate conditions were employed as a strategy to point out the northern region’s need to be “domesticated.”
Both papers, the comments, and discussion added an epistemological dimension to the symposium, calling for radical deconstructions of even the most taken-for-granted knowledges and instead recentering Indigenous knowledge producers and productions.

The last panel of the forum addressed the theme of “Storytelling Migration.” Maria Momzikova’s paper, “How Do Indigenous Myths Represent Colonial Relations? Russian vs. Nganasan Supernatural Beings in Nganasan Mythological Narratives,” examined how the Russian colonization of social worlds encompasses myths, resulting in colonial hierarchies of mythological beings. The research of Stefan Benz, entitled “(Re-)Negotiating Indigenous Presence and Arrival: Indigenous Hip Hop Claims the US American City,” reinscribed Indigenous perspectives into US history by analyzing the output of Litefoot (Cherokee) and Sacramento Knoxx (Anishinaabe), two rappers illustrating Indigenous rhythmic sovereignty—resistance to the settler state enacted through cultural expressions—in the mid-1990s as well as in recent years. Both papers raised important questions about how to incorporate both historical and contemporary representations and cultural expressions of Indigenous groups and individuals into a pluralized historiography of the topic at hand.

This year’s Bucerius Young Scholars Forum was followed by a joint field trip to Sitka, Alaska, in order to connect the academic discussion with historical and current struggles over mobility experienced by different Indigenous groups and individuals at the crossroads of the Russian and American empires. Two highlights of the trip included the public screening of the documentary “Indigenous Resistance: Now and Then,” followed by an exchange with Sitka’s community at the Sheet’ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi Tribal Community House, and a tour with curator Jacqueline Fernandez-Hamberg at the Sheldon Jackson Museum, home to artifacts representing
all Alaska Native cultural groups. At the end of the field trip, all participants offered their reflections on how the forum brought together a variety of histories, shining light on different regions and informed by different research methods. Participants agreed they felt compelled to step beyond their usual boundaries in a productive way. Overall, both the symposium in Berkeley and the field trip in Sitka showed the importance of filling the gap in standard migration theory and historiography with Indigenous voices and experiences across temporal and spatial scales.

Amy Kerner and Fabio Santos
(GHI Pacific Office and University of California, Berkeley)
Sources of Mobility: Interventions Critical of Tradition (17th–20th Century)

Section of the 54th Deutscher Historikertag, Leipzig, September 21, 2023. Conveners: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Swen Steinberg (Queen's University, Kingston). Participants: Dagmar Freist (University of Oldenburg; in absentia), Ursula Lehmkuhl (University of Trier), Gabrielle Robilliard-Witt (University of Oldenburg), Joachim Schlör (University of Southampton).

Starting from the basic assumption that people have been on the move at all times but that the knowledge of these mobile groups has rarely lasted into the present, the section “Sources of Mobility: Interventions Critical of Tradition (17th–20th Century)” organized by Simone Lässig and Swen Steinberg argued for a new approach to migrant testimonies as sources at the intersection of migration and mobility history, the history of knowledge, and digital history, which can be analyzed with new digital methods for indexing and analysis. The section was aimed at both a specialist audience as well as students and teachers.

In the introduction, Simone Lässig emphasized that historiography, insofar as it has paid attention to the topic of migration at all in the past, has rarely focused on marginalized groups. While male intellectuals, entrepreneurs, and politicians are overrepresented, women and adolescents are barely mentioned. Lässig attributed this gap in part to the fact archival institutions are often state-run entities which rarely collect testimonies from “ordinary people” that could serve as a basis for academic research. In addition, women, children, or less educated people rarely wrote and if they did, their legacies were not considered particularly valuable.
The evaluation of previously neglected corpora could provide a starting point for addressing this issue. The comprehensive digitization of historical data opens up new perspectives on the history of migration, though these are often accompanied by new requirements. Digital tools can be an effective means of generating informative data sets from such collections, Lässig argued, but ought to be accompanied by sound digital source criticism. Lässig further noted that migration history is not only a history of people, but also a history of things: objects migrated with their owners and are therefore themselves evidence of mobility processes.

The first paper was presented by Gabrielle Robilliard-Witt, in lieu of Dagmar Freist who was unable to participate. Freist’s paper discussed the innovative archiving concept developed by the “Prize Papers Project” she leads at the University of Oldenburg. The Prize Papers Project is an archive of early modern documents obtained from more than 35,000 ships impounded by the British Navy from the 1650s through the 1810s. This compendium of documents was inventoried by contemporaries for legal reasons and is now being researched, digitized, and made accessible in open-access formats. With regard to the context of this archive’s origin, it can be noted that capture was legitimate in wartime under certain circumstances—for example, for ships of nations that were at war with the British.

As an example, Robilliard-Witt presented the letter book of a Jewish merchant from the Moroccan port city of Salé dating back to the time of the Thirty Years’ War. The merchant’s correspondence with his patrons in Amsterdam, originally written in Portuguese, reveals various aspects of Jewish-Muslim coexistence in Morocco: the sender reports on acquaintances and political contacts who supported him in his search for accommodation and personal care. However, business activities and shipped goods were also meticulously
documented to provide legal protection against harm. A central, recurring figure in the letters is the Portuguese merchant Jacob Curiel (also known as Duarte Nunes da Costa), with whom the author stayed. This name and others reveal a correspondence and trade network stretching from the Iberian Peninsula to North Africa and Brazil. At the same time, the letter book provides a fragmentary insight into the everyday life and knowledge culture of the early modern Jewish diaspora.

Migration correspondence was also the focus of the second talk by Ursula Lehmkuhl, who characterized the exchange between mobile and immobile groups as the (im)material cultural heritage of sending and receiving societies. Lehmkuhl argued the decades-long exchange of letters between nineteenth-century transatlantic migrants has the potential to reveal continuities and ruptures in a longue durée context, for example, citing material collected by the “Auswandererbriefe” project she directs (www.auswandererbriefe.de/) and the GHI’s Migrant Connections project (www.migrantconnections.org). Recovering these “hidden histories” from correspondents’ lifeworlds and everyday actions, however, requires unconventional research and analysis practices: new approaches must be developed toward collecting material, as the sources are often not found in archives, but instead places such as private family collections or for sale at flea markets. In addition, authorship is not always clear, which requires close cooperation between academic researchers and citizens who may be able to provide biographical contextual information through personal knowledge or genealogical research. Using citizen science projects for this work is already showing some success, for example to transcribe 19th-century Kurrentschrift into machine-readable text.

Lehmkuhl cited the digital humanities as a second important cooperation partner. On the one hand, digital anonymization
strategies can help manage the private and intimate information revealed by the sources. On the other hand, the nonstandardized orthography and syntax of the migrant correspondents pose challenges for handwritten text recognition (HTR) platforms. Consequently, the development of software tools at the interface between digital history, digital humanities, and citizen science should be promoted to obtain interpretable information. Finally, Lehmkuhl discussed shifts in scholarly evaluation of the usefulness of these everyday historical testimonies, changing from a critical attitude on the part of social historians in the 1980s and 1990s to a new appreciation of micro-historical perspectives in the 2010s.

In the subsequent discussion, the possible disadvantages of dealing with digital sources on migration history were addressed. A distinction was noted here between researching political history and the everyday history of migrants’ lives. In the case of political documents, personal contact and exchange with archivists remains indispensable. In the field of political and administrative history, their expertise cannot be replaced by the search function in digital collections. In addition, attention was drawn to the challenges of digital source criticism, which would also require a modification of preliminary graduate training in historical studies.

The second part of the section was opened by Swen Steinberg. At the center of his presentation was the concept of “transit,” whereby migration is understood not only as a process of departure and arrival but also encompassing the intermediate phase of transition as an object of historical analysis. Steinberg was particularly concerned with the experiences of unaccompanied minors experiencing transit as an unplanned and highly contingent phase of their lives. As people in transit were often excluded from many processes which leave traces in state archives, the question of the source basis arose once again. To meet this challenge,
Steinberg focused on a case study of Alfred Bader, who as a Austrian Jewish teenager fled National Socialism in the 1930s via a *Kindertransport* to England and eventually arrived in Canada, where he was placed in an internment camp.

Bader’s diary from his internment period melds discussions of the uncertainties of everyday life in transit with his reflections on the process of growing up. Bader’s diary entries were often framed as letters written to others he knew and constituted one of his few opportunities to conceptualize contact with the outside world, which was in fact impossible due to strict postal censorship in the camp. Bader also described his encounters with violence during his travels, which served to outline the foreign and hostile milieu of living in transit. Bader’s emotional and physical experiences continued to burden him even years after his release; he tended to suppress discussion of his experiences in transit and in internment, but the memory evidently remained present in his mind: Bader likely added “In Memoriam” to the cover page of his internment diary years later, in 1949.

Although individual cases remain difficult to research, Bader’s experience is representative of a marginalized group of actors with little agency and decision-making power who had to deal with questions of identity, origin, and gender in an unplanned life situation. Steinberg’s paper gave particular insight into the relationship between his experiences of transit and of adolescence, and how these reinforced each other and sharply revealed the feelings of uprootedness which often accompany migration.

Finally, Joachim Schlör reported on his research into Jewish family archives on the Internet, which are maintained by private individuals and use open-source principles to share family finds and heirlooms. Autonomous collecting and preserving has been an integral part of Jewish agency since the
Holocaust. Schlör interpreted the emergence of virtual platforms for mutual exchange as part of a transitional phase in which the family archives currently find themselves which is also linked to generational change. Due to expulsion, migration, and diaspora, Schlör argued, Jewish cultures of remembrance are rarely tied to a specific house or location. Rather, the archives and their objects have shifted over time—a situation which Schlör argues illustrates the concept of the representation of displaced persons by their displaced things, as Lässig had postulated. Schlör saw the popularization of digital archiving as an opportunity to meet the challenges of source-based research on Jewish migration.

As an example, Schlör presented the Facebook group “JEWS—Jekkes Engaged Worldwide in Social Networking,” whose members can upload and comment on private photographs and documents from their family archives. The group currently has 2,400 members, most of whom identify as “Jekkes”—Jews of German origin—and communicate in German. The group is also open to researchers, who can gain insight into previously untapped source material and learn about details mentioned in documents or shown in photographs of archival objects (or archival photographs). They can also contribute their specialist expertise to deciphering or translating posted documents. Whether the Facebook group can actually be understood as an archive is difficult to assess, as the shared documents have not been formally inventoried or turned over to an official body. Nevertheless, it offers a forum for German-Jewish migrants to pursue a communal project through the practice of collaborative collecting and using digital networking to create a “virtual compatriot community” for uprooted members of the Jewish community.

The ensuing discussion returned to Steinberg’s concept of transit and the question of when the underlying phase of transition actually begins. The discussants emphasized that
the onset of contingency can be an indicator for the begin­ning of this unplanned phase of life. In addition, with refer­ence to the family archives presented by Schlör, educational barriers to access were discussed, which can influence the opportunities for development and participation in such collaborative communities.

In her concluding summary, Lässig noted the phenomenon of “migrating archives” as the section’s common thread and a theme which calls traditional notions of “the archive” into question, to a certain extent. At the same time, she reem­phasized the challenges associated with the great linguis­tic and orthography variety found in such sources. To make the “hidden histories” in private sources speak for them­selves, not only epistemic virtues and understanding of legal nuances are required, but also an ethical approach to data to meet the scholar’s responsibility towards the sources and their personal content.

Aron Schulze
(technical University Dresden)
Borderlands of Ebb and Flow: Shared Histories and Imperial Encounters between China and Russia, 1600s to the Present

Workshop at the University of Hong Kong, December 13–15, 2023. Co-sponsored by the German Historical Institute, Washington, Ruhr University Bochum, and the University of Hong Kong, with additional support from the Louis Cha Fund for Chinese Studies and East/West Studies. Conveners: Sergey Glebov (Amherst College/Smith College), Loretta Kim (University of Hong Kong), Rachel Lin (University of Leeds), Willard Sunderland (University of Cincinnati), and Sören Urbansky (Ruhr University Bochum). Participants: Daigengna Duoer (University of California Santa Barbara), Yuan Gao (Georgetown University), Chia Yin Hsu (Portland State University), Kamal Kariem (Williams College), Aleksandr Turbin (University of Illinois at Chicago), Tomohiko Uyama (Hokkaido University), Miin-ling Yu (Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica), Stephanie Ziehaus (University of Vienna).

On the 14th of December, 2023, the first day of the “Borderlands of Ebb and Flow” workshop commenced with welcoming remarks from Roland Vogt, the Head of School of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Hong Kong. The plenary session continued with presentations about the three key concepts which had guided the workshop’s conceptualization. Loretta Kim outlined the first concept, “shared history,” emphasizing the workshop’s intention of going beyond China-Russia state to state relations as well as simplistic, lopsided perspectives. “Shared history” transcends mere co-existence by highlighting cooperative behavior. This approach takes inspiration from the field of entangled history and focuses on the meaning of exchanges through interaction to break out of the molds of China studies and Russia
The concept of “shared history” shows a desire to de-categorize and de-essentialize products and natural resources that have formerly been seen as symbols of separate cultures. Kim pointed out the challenges to this multilateral approach, such as attaining proficiency in both languages, familiarity with archives, and loyalties to one’s “home” field.

Rachel Lin followed by discussing the second key concept, “intersection,” which embodies the workshop’s shift away from bilateral approaches by looking at interactions locally and internationally. Lin pointed out the immediate urgency of such an approach in a contemporary climate when nationalistic rhetoric is strengthening. She argued that the utility of using “intersection” to approach the histories of a shared landscape is that it does not presuppose cooperation. Through the lens of “intersection” it is possible to explore parallel and overlapping understandings of frontier, competing policies of colonial solidification, and the nationalizing moment of imperial management. At the same time, it is important to consider that both sides tapped into global and international ideas in their approach to frontier management. Lastly, the concept of “intersection” substantiates the decolonizing and centering of the metropolis, which was a main concern for this workshop.

Sören Urbansky concluded with an overview of the third key concept, “borderlands.” He explained that characteristics of the frontier, understood as the sparsely populated area beyond the imperial zone, persist even after the border has been established. One such key component of the frontier is the diverse population, as the borderland continues to be populated by people not of the country’s ethnic majority. Several borders remain within the borderland, while incomers recognize the national border. Another key feature is that territorial control is not established by the borderland, as the openness and closeness of borders is constantly contested.
The workshop was structured in breakout sessions, to allow in-person and online participation as well as a more in-depth discussion on the paper drafts. Each breakout session comprised three groups, whose members were reconfigured each session to give all participants the opportunity to comment on each paper. The second day, December 15, included a session spent on organizational matters regarding potential publication possibilities and discussion of the cross-references between papers.

Two workshop papers focused on the Russian and Qing empires in Central Asia. Yuan Gao focused on irrigation projects along the Ili River both before and after 1881, when the Qing and Romanov empires agreed on the Sino-Russian borders in the Treaty of St. Petersburg. Her paper examined the construction and maintenance of an “Imperial Canal” (huangqu 皇渠) network by the Qing in the upper Ili Valley. She contrasts the Qing’s costly endeavor of maintaining irrigation in Central Asia with the irrigation project plans envisioned by the Russian/Soviet technocrat Evgenii Skorniakov in the lower Ili Valley. Gao revealed the dynamics of geopolitics and colonization along the Sino-Russian border during a time when ideas such as nation-states, borders, and citizenship were emerging rapidly. The paper provided insights into the complex interactions between the two empires and their differing visions for the development of their territories in the arid borderlands of Central Asia.

Tomohiko Uyama’s paper on Xinjiang’s border focused on the ambiguity Central Asians had and still associate with China. He explored the experiences and observations of people who crossed the borders between today’s Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan and Xinjiang. These people include Shoqan Wālikhanov (1835–1865) and other Kazakh intellectuals; Kazakh and Kyrgyz refugees who fled to China because of the suppression of the 1916 uprisings, the Russian Civil War, famine, and the forced collectivization of agriculture;
Xinjiang Muslims who immigrated to the Soviet Union to escape conflict, hunger, and oppression; and people from Central Asia and China who visited each other’s countries after the fall of the Soviet Union. He concluded that due to China’s unwillingness to effectively use Xinjiang Muslims as intermediaries with Central Asia, Central Asians have perceived and continue to perceive China as a “civilizational other.”

Three papers discussed knowledge production on the Northern Manchu-Russian borderland, its people, and its religions. Daigengna Duoer focused on the Japanese Empire and the production of knowledge about “Lamaism,” a term widely used in early twentieth-century Japanese discourses to discuss Buddhism in Mongolia and Manchuria. She showcased how, following the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, there was an explosion of Japanese-language publications on “Lamaism” (ramakyō) which peaked in the 1930s after Japan’s annexation of eastern Inner Mongolia and its establishment of the Manchukuo puppet state. The Japanese Empire urgently sought to generate knowledge about the powerful religious institutions of “Lamaism,” which were remnants of Qing imperial arrangements in Manchuria, Mongolia, and Tibet, to assert control over Inner and Central Asia. These Japanese discourses on “Lamaism” were diverse products of historiography and ethnography that show a strong desire to know the geopolitically relevant Other, especially in competition with knowledge production in the Soviet Union and the Republic of China. The paper discussed some examples of these discourses as well as how Russian and Chinese discourses on “Lamaism” related to the Japanese ones.

Kamal A. Kariem’s paper concerned V. K. Arsen’ev’s ethnographic writing on the Ussuri krai [territory] during the late Russian Empire. In service to the empire, Arsen’ev strove to categorize the demographic diversity of the region by intentionally constructing Indigenous peoples as separate from
East Asian populations (especially Chinese settlers) in the region according to differences in their relationships to the Russian Empire and to nature. For Arsen’ev, Indigenous peoples came to be both helpful for nature and helpful for empire, while Chinese settlers and other East Asian peoples became bad for both. Thus, Arsen’ev embarked on a theorization of Indigenous peoples as not only different from other East Asian peoples within the region but as opposed to them. Kariem’s argument traced these lines of separation from the late empire into the early Soviet Union through various genres of writing with an eye on how these histories and constructions are mobilized, edited, and forgotten today.

Stephanie Ziehaus argued that one of the main shared features of Russian and Qing empire building was the institutionalization of ethnicity (and ethnic groups) as an administrative and social unit via the establishment of native self-governance systems. Her research focused on the establishment of native self-governance institutions such as the Russian Inorodnoe Upravlenie and the Qing’s Butha Eight Banners in the Manchu-Russian contact zone of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century as a process of imperial (dis)entanglement. The integration of local Barga and Khori Buryat people’s social organization structures, via extended kinship ties, in both empires highlights the shared history not only of borderland peoples, but transimperial connections across borders that conceptually remain detrimentally demarcated in historiographical studies of empires. The Buryats in both the Romanov and Qing empire provide an ideal perspective on studying the imperial borderland as a cultural contact zone between the empire and its constituents as well as between empires.

Two papers covered the economic aspect of the borderland in trade relations and currency reforms. Aleksandr Turbin explored ethnic and national nuances of “Russian” trade in the imperial borderland. His paper focused on government
policy and public discourse surrounding the nationalization of the Romanov Empire from the second half of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. Turbin re-evaluated Russianness amidst the fundamental ethnic and socio-political diversity of the imperial space in the Russian Far East. Exploring various forms of legitimate representatives of Russian trades, such as Chinese merchants and the leased port of Dalny, allows for a better understanding of how national identity was constructed in the late imperial period. Chia-Yin Hsu studied the persistence of the old (silver) regime in the Soviet Far East and the cross-border trade with Manchuria in the early 1920s. She showed how various currencies such as the Japanese yen and imperial silver ruble coins persisted after the formation of the Far Eastern Oblast. Policies to monetarily “unify” the new oblast with Soviet Russia promoted the newly created Soviet money, the *chervonets*, as a trusted “hard currency” by manipulating exchange rates and banning imports from Manchuria. In effect, Soviet authorities carried out a protectionist policy against Manchuria to safeguard the *chervonets*, shutting down Chinese and Russian commercial ties to enact the currency “unification” of the FEO with the Soviet Union.

Two other papers focused on political influences on borderlands and the metropole while also examining the effects of transborder transfers of knowledge. Anran Wang’s paper focused on grassroots dynamics in Sino-Soviet-Mongolian Relations from 1956 to 1966 by concentrating on the Chinese border town of Ereenhot, in the middle of the Gobi Desert, where the Trans-Mongolian Railway linking the Soviet Union to Mongolia enters China. The paper, based on documents of local party-state organs in Ereenhot, scrutinized the ways routine work and life in the community evolved from the inauguration of the railway in 1956 to the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, a period when relations underwent rapid changes from socialist brotherhood to ideological and military antagonism. Wang argued that the border town expe-
rienced impacts from these changing international relations in a manner distinct from the rest of China. The paper contrasted the growing tensions in border-crossing formalities in Ereenhot with the Sino-Soviet-Mongolian honeymoon period and highlighted the paradoxical continuation of daily life, unhindered by ideological interference, in the period of Sino-Soviet antagonism.

Miin-Ling Yu's paper explored the autonomy of the CCP in relation to the Comintern after the Zunyi Conference in January 1935. By focusing on the Moscow Trials (1936–1938) and two diplomatic pacts—the Soviet–German Non-Aggression Pact and the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact, the paper questioned the CCP's claims of enjoying full autonomy from the Comintern. In its persecution of internal enemies, the CCP followed the Comintern line set by the infamous Moscow trials. Soviet authorities demanded that China's government publicly denounce Trotskyists, Fascist Germans, or Japanese special agents, and the CCP followed through with eliminating Chinese Trotskyist-Fascists. The author questioned the CCP's varying levels of autonomy in internal party affairs when these opposed the Comintern's foreign policy objectives, illustrated by the shift in Soviet interpretations following the pacts signed in 1939 with Germany and 1941 with Japan. The author furthermore pondered the questions of China's sovereignty and autonomy in regards to Sino-Soviet relations and introduced a political framework into the discussion on borderlands.

In all these papers the underlining key concepts of the workshop—shared history, intersection, and borderlands—were recurring features. Omnipresent was the shared aspect of imperial competition as well as cooperation in knowledge production, trade, and irrigation projects, as well as the methodological approach of decolonizing research priorities by centering local peoples' perspectives—such as the Mongols, Buryats, and Indigenous people. These papers
underscore the relation of borderlands to the designs and demands made by the governing metropole and cover the multifold aspects of the borderland—ranging widely from the religious, economic, and political to the ethnic and the social.

**Stephanie Ziehaus**  
(University of Vienna)
New Staff Publications

Monographs


Journal Articles and Book Chapters


Other Publications


**Staff Changes**

**Viola Alionov-Rautenberg**, a historian of German, Jewish, and Israeli history, joined the GHI Pacific Office as a research fellow in January 2024 from the Koebner Minerva Center for German History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her research project at the GHI will examine the place of songs and singing in Jewish migrant communities.

**Ursula Baur** joined the GHI as an Administrative Assistant in April 2024 after working as a teacher of philosophy and German at a Gymnasium near Stuttgart. She previously attended graduate school and served as a teaching assistant at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

**Virginia Klotz**, who joined the GHI as an Administrative Assistant in October 2022, left in March 2024 to pursue other opportunities.

**Fellowships and Internships**

**Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships**

The GHI awards short-term fellowships to European and North American doctoral students as well as postdoctoral scholars to pursue research projects that draw upon primary sources located in the United States. We are particularly interested in research projects that fit in the fields of: German and European history; the history of German-American relations; the role of Germany and the United States in international relations; or (for European doctoral and postdoctoral students only) North American or Pan-American history, including the history of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Proposed research projects should make use of historical methods and engage with the relevant historiography. We especially invite applications from doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars who currently have no funding from their home institutions. The fellowships are usually granted for periods of one to four months.
The GHI also awards long-term fellowships for periods ranging between six and twelve months to strengthen key research interests at the institute in four thematic areas which are intended to be broad in scope: the history of knowledge; the history of migration, kinship, and belonging; the history of race and ethnicity; and the history of the Americas. In addition to these opportunities, the GHI also offers the following fellowships: a Binational Tandem Research Fellowship for the History of Migration, based at the GHI Pacific Office at the University of California, Berkeley; the Fritz Thyssen Pre-Dissertation Fellowship in German history, for students at universities in western North America; and the Gerda Henkel Fellowship for Digital History, offered in collaboration with the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. For further information about these programs and current application deadlines, please check our website at www.ghi-dc.org/fellowships.

Internships

The GHI Internship Program gives German and American students of history, political science, and library studies an opportunity to gain experience at a scholarly research institute. Interns assist individual research projects, work for the library, take part in the preparation and hosting of conferences, and help with our publications. Internship opportunities are also available for students of public relations, public administration, and public management. Interns receive a small stipend. The program is very flexible in the sense that the GHI tries to accommodate interns’ interests, abilities, and goals. A two-month minimum stay is required; a three-month stay is preferred. There is a rolling review of applications. For further information, please check our website at www.ghi-dc.org/internships.

Fellowship Recipients

Short-Term Research Doctoral Fellows

Tamar Aizenberg (Brandeis University)
The Third Generations: Grandchildren of Survivors, Grandchildren of Perpetrators, and Holocaust Memory
Lena Christoph (University of Vienna)
The Philippines as a Place of Transit and Destination: Jewish, Russian, and Chinese Displaced Persons in Search of Old and New Homes, 1945–1952.

Rosalie Racine (Université de Montréal)
The Female Experience as Defendants in West German Post-war Trials: A Comparative Study

**Short-Term Research Postdoctoral Fellows**

Ricardo Borrmann (University of Bremen)
The Transpacific Exchange of Films and Film Materials after World War II: Are Latin American Film Archives Global?

Martin Deuerlein (University of Tübingen)
Strategien der Indigenität, 1837 bis 1982

Almuth Ebke (University of Mannheim)
Das Andere der Moderne: Historisch-kritische Bibelforschung, Geschichtsdenken und das Konzept der Moderne, ca. 1830–1920

Menja Holtz (Technische Universität Braunschweig)

**Horner Library Fellows**

Kirsten Becker (Universität Münster)
Symbolic Communication of Colonial and State Legislatures in North America, c.1760–1800

Jane Chang (University of Tennessee, Knoxville)
Intermingling of the Old and New: The Formation of a New German-American Medical Culture in Colonial Pennsylvania (1730–1810)

Gabriel Wolfson (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen)
Deutsche Feldrabbiner im Ersten Weltkrieg: Erlebnis – Erfahrung – Deutung
GHI Research Seminars and Colloquia, Fall 2023

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<td>September 11</td>
<td>Research Seminar</td>
<td>Michelle Lynn Kahn (University of Richmond)</td>
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<td>Transatlantic Neo-Nazism: Propaganda, Violence, and the Perils of Free Speech</td>
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<td>September 19</td>
<td>Digital Cultural Heritage DC Meetup Careers Chat</td>
<td>Suzanne Chase (Georgetown University), Megan Martinsen (Georgetown University), Amaobi Otiji (Library of Congress), Crystal Sanchez (Smithsonian Institution), and Purdom Lindblad (Previously: Maryland Institute of Technology in the Humanities)</td>
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<td>September 27</td>
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<td>Delia González de Reufels (Universität Bremen)</td>
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<td>Schools as Laboratories: On Writing a Transnational History of Latin American School Hygiene</td>
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<td>October 30</td>
<td>Washington Area German History Seminar</td>
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<td>The Masculinists: Far-Right Bisexual Politics in Germany, 1890–1945</td>
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<td>November 15</td>
<td>Research Seminar</td>
<td>Raphael Rössel (GHI Washington)</td>
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<td>&quot;An evil that should be entirely rooted out&quot;? Hazing at Nineteenth-Century US Military Academies</td>
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Fellows’ Symposium, October 11–12, 2023

Panel 1  
Amy Kerner (GHI Pacific Office Tandem Fellow / Previously: UT Dallas)  
Human Rights Activism and Forced Disappearance from Argentina’s 1976 Coup to the International Criminal Court  

Ezra Rudolph (GHI Visiting Fellow / Georg-August-Universität Göttingen)  
Not in our Names! Survivors of Terrorism as Public Stakeholders in Germany and the United States since the 1980s

Panel 2  
Mimi Cheng (GHI Visiting Fellow / Previously: Freie Universität Berlin)  
China on the Horizon: Art, Science, and Cartographies of Empire  

Jonathan Dentler (GHI Visiting Fellow / Institut Catholique de Paris)  

Axel Jansen (GHI Washington Deputy Director)  
Conservative Religion and American Biomedicine: The Vatican Endorses Adult Stem Cell Research, 2008–2013
Panel 3
Maximilian Klose (GHI Visiting Fellow / Previously: University of Freiburg)

Fabio Santos (GHI Pacific Office Tandem Fellow / Free University of Berlin)
Fugitive Freedoms and Multidirectional Mobilities in the Caribbean

Jeroen Dewulf (UC Berkeley Institute for European Studies Director)
“Wouldn’t it be Smarter to Let the Malay Colonize Europe?” Postcolonial Critique, Anti-Globalism, and Racism in the Travel Books of the Bohemian-German Author Richard Katz (1888–1968)

Panel 4
Jana Keck (GHI Washington Research Fellow)
Migrant Connections: A Digital Research Infrastructure for Historical Research on German Migration to the United States in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Wouter Kreuze (Gerda Henkel Digital History Fellow at GHI Washington & Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media / Previously: University College Cork)
The Genesis of a News System: The Travel Routes of the Handwritten Newsletter Network

Amanda Madden (Assistant Professor, George Mason University / Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media)
Mapping Violence in Early Modern Italy, 1500–1700: The Curious Case of the Anti-Bandito Stones
Spring Lecture Series

Knowledge in the Shadows: Intelligence, Hidden Pasts, and Historians in the United States and Germany

Organized by Jana Keck and Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş in cooperation with the International Intelligence History Association, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the German Association for American Studies, and the International Spy Museum.

The 2024 spring lecture series at the German Historical Institute Washington invited guests on a journey through the captivating research field of “Intelligence History.” Featuring leading scholars in the field, the four lectures offered insights into the covert realm of classified information, clandestine knowledge, and power dynamics and the role these have played in the history of the Americas and Germany in the twentieth century. To what extent have secret agencies and their practices of gathering information influenced international politics and the course of history? On the home front, how have the delicate relationships between secrecy and democracy evolved over time, evident in public debates and the treatment of individuals today known as “whistleblowers”? The lectures delved into these questions, shedding light on the intricate interplay between secrecy and democracy and its impact on society. The lectures also addressed the meta-level of research, highlighting the epistemological challenges faced by intelligence historians. How do scholars navigate inaccessible archives and information? What innovative perspectives, (digital) methods, and data-driven approaches promise new insights into the world of secret services and declassified files? These inquiries formed the cornerstone of the lectures and their exploration of new horizons in the history of intelligence.
February 22  A Frank and Open Discussion about the Secret World of Spying
Alexis Albion (International Spy Museum)

March 21  From Abundant Papers to Limited Pixels: Digitization and Intelligence Reduction in the Brazilian Serviço Nacional de Informações (SNI) in the Late 1970s
Debora Gerstenberger (University of Cologne)

April 18  Spy vs. Spy: West German Counterintelligence and GDR Espionage
Michael Wala (Ruhr University–Bochum)

May 23  The History and Future of State Secrecy
Matthew Connelly (Columbia University)
## Calendar of Events, 2024–2025

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<td>January 23</td>
<td>Reparative Digital Cultural Heritage Work</td>
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<td>Digital Cultural Heritage DC Meetup</td>
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<td>Speakers: Fallon Carey (Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition), Liz Flowers, Yolanda Hester, and Ricky Punzalan (University of Michigan)</td>
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<td>January 24</td>
<td>Degrees of Order, Measures of Freedom: Modern German History and the Challenge of Postmodern Historiography</td>
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<td>Gerda Henkel Lecture Tour</td>
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<td>Lecture at Stanford University</td>
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<td>January 29</td>
<td>Trust in Museums: Potential, Challenges, and Societal Importance</td>
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<td>Conference at GHI Washington</td>
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<td>Conveners: Ren Haak (German Embassy in Washington) and Simone Lässig (GHI Washington)</td>
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<td>February 13</td>
<td>Degrees of Order, Measures of Freedom: Modern German History and the Challenge of Postmodern Historiography</td>
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<td>Gerda Henkel Lecture Tour</td>
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<td>Lecture at University of Colorado, Boulder</td>
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February 20  Memories of the German Colonialism in Tanzania
Lecture at GHI Pacific Office
Speaker: Nancy Rushohora (University of Dar es Salaam)

February 22  A Frank and Open Discussion about the Secret World of Spying
Spring Lecture Series at GHI Washington
Speaker: Alexis Albion (International Spy Museum)

February 23  Degrees of Order, Measures of Freedom: Modern German History and the Challenge of Postmodern Historiography
Gerda Henkel Lecture Tour
Lecture at University of California, Los Angeles | Speaker: Paul Nolte (Free University of Berlin)

February 23–24  6th West Coast Germanists’ Workshop: Globalizing German History in Research and Teaching
Workshop at University of California, Los Angeles | Conveners: Anna-Carolin Augustin (GHI Washington), Glenn Penny (UCLA), and Isabel Richter (GHI Pacific Office)

February 28  Contesting Political Spaces: Thoughts on a World History of Street Protest
Research Seminar at GHI Washington
Philipp Gassert (Mannheim University)
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| February 28| Marxists and Other Migrants: African Intellectual Pathways from the German Democratic Republic | Lecture at GHI Pacific Office  
Speaker: Sara Pugach (California State University, Los Angeles)                                                                 |
| March 5    | Degrees of Order, Measures of Freedom: Modern German History and the Challenge of Postmodern Historiography | Gerda Henkel Lecture Tour  
Lecture at University of California, Berkeley  
Speaker: Paul Nolte (Free University of Berlin)                                                                 |
| March 7    | Ugliness as Political Construct                                                          | Virtual Lecture, GHI Pacific Office  
Speaker: Moshtari Hilal                                                                                                                                 |
| March 7    | Fellowship Colloquium                                                                      | Colloquium at GHI Washington  
Speakers: Tamar Aizenberg (Brandeis University) and Annika Bärwald (University of Bremen)                                                                 |
| March 7    | Crisis or Transformation? From Good-Old Democracy to Rough Democracy, ca. 1970–2020       | Gerda Henkel Lecture Tour  
Lecture at University of Nevada, Reno  
Speaker: Paul Nolte (Free University of Berlin)                                                                 |
March 14–16 6th Conference on Digital Humanities and Digital History: Exploring Epistemic Virtues and Vices – Data, Infrastructures, and Episteme between Collaboration and Exploitation
Conference at the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH)
Conveners: GHI Washington, Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH), in collaboration with the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI), the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM), and the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

March 14 Germany in the World, 1500–2000: Reflections on a Theme
Public Book Talk at UC Berkeley
Speaker: David Blackbourn (Vanderbilt University)

March 18 The Other Enslavement: Notes on Unthinkable Europeans in Unequal Europes
Lecture at GHI Pacific Office
Speaker: Manuela Boatcă (University of Freiburg)

Lecture at GHI Pacific Office
Speaker: Felix A. Jiménez Botta (Miyazaki International College)
March 21  From Abundant Papers to Limited Pixels: Digitization and Intelligence Reduction in the Brazilian Serviço Nacional de Informações (SNI) in the Late 1970s  
Spring Lecture Series at GHI Washington  
Speaker: Debora Gerstenberger (University of Cologne)

March 27  “The Zone of Interest”  
Film Screening and Discussion at Columbia University  
Speakers: Fabien Théofilakis (Columbia University), A. Dirk Moses (City College of New York), and Richard F. Wetzel (GHI Washington)

April 14  Music, Knowledge, and Global Migration, ca. 1700–1900  
Symposium at the University of California, Berkeley  
Conveners: Tina Frühauf (Columbia University/CUNY Graduate Center), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), and Francesco Spagnolo (Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, UC Berkeley)

April 18  Spy vs. Spy: West German Counterintelligence and GDR Espionage  
Spring Lecture Series at GHI Washington  
Speaker: Michael Wala (Ruhr University–Bochum)
April 24  
A Place on the Map: A Global History of the Arctic  
Research Seminar at GHI Washington  
Speaker: Kristina Spohr (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars / London School of Economics)

April 26  
German Blood, Slavic Soil: How Nazi Königsberg Became Soviet Kaliningrad  
Lecture at GHI Pacific Office  
Speaker: Nicole Eaton (Boston College)

May 6  
From Gay Crimes to Hate Crimes: Transatlantic Activism in Germany’s Violent ‘90s  
Washington Area German History Seminar  
Speaker: Christopher Ewing (Purdue University)

May 9  
The Challenge of German Histories: An American Retrospective  
15th Gerald D. Feldman Memorial Lecture  
Speaker: Konrad H. Jarausch (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

May 10  
Capturing Difference, Making History: The Photobook as a Jewish Artifact  
32nd Symposium of the Friends of the German Historical Institute  
Speaker: Steven Samols (University College London), winner of the 2024 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize
Research Seminar at GHI Washington  
Speaker: Benjamin W. Goossen  
(George Mason University)

May 20–21  Fugitive Histories and Migrant Knowledge in Latin America and the Caribbean  
Workshop at the University of California, Irvine  
Conveners: Kevan Antonio Aguilar (University of California, Irvine), Amy Kerner (GHI Pacific Office), Fabio Santos (GHI Pacific Office), and Chelsea Schields (University of California, Irvine)

May 22  A Lecture on “Racial Mixing” in Nazi Berlin: The Anthropologist Eugen Fischer and the Nazi Regime  
Washington Area German History Seminar  
Speaker: Richard Wetzell (GHI Washington)

May 23  The History and Future of State Secrecy  
Spring Lecture Series at GHI Washington  
Speaker: Matthew Connelly  
(Columbia University / Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, University of Cambridge)
May 28  Civil War – Isolationism – Trumpism: Challenges to Democracy in American History and Politics
Online Panel Discussion
Speakers: David Blight (Yale University), Susan Herbst (University of Connecticut), moderated by Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson (University of Augsburg)

June 5  Migrant Melodies: Jewish Refugee Songs as a Transnational Archive of Emotions
Research Seminar at GHI Washington
Speaker: Viola Alianov-Rautenberg (GHI Pacific Office)

June 6  Voting Authoritarians into Power
Panel Discussion at GHI Washington
Speakers: Udi Greenberg (Dartmouth College), Irfan Nooruddin (Georgetown University), Árpád von Klimó (Catholic University of America); moderated by Aslı Aydıntaşbaş (Brookings Institution) and Richard F. Wetzell (German Historical Institute)

June 23–25  29th Annual Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar: German History in the 19th and 20th Centuries
Seminar at the Harnack Haus, Berlin-Dahlem
Conveners: Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University), Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Technische Universität Berlin), and Richard Wetzell (GHI Washington)
June 28–29  Archives in/of Transit: Historical Perspectives from the 1930s to the Present
Workshop at the University of Southern California
Organized by the GHI Washington (Anna-Carolin Augustin, Simone Lässig, Swen Steinberg) in collaboration with the Einstein Papers Project / California Institute of Technology (Jennifer Rodgers); Holocaust Research Institute, Royal Holloway University of London (Dan Stone); Queen Mary University of London (Jane Freeland); USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research (Wolf Gruner); and the Wiener Holocaust Library (Christine Schmidt, Toby Simpson)

Seminar at the University of Tübingen
Organized by the University of Tübingen with the American Historical Association and the GHI Washington, in cooperation with the Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21)

July 14–18  Making a World of Many Worlds: Identities, Activisms, and Comparisons
Summer School at GHI Pacific Office
Organized by the GHI Pacific Office, the Maria Sibylla Merian Center for Advanced Latin American Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (CALAS), and the Collaborative Research Center “Practices of Comparing” (SFB 1288), Bielefeld University
September 5–6  Science and Democracy in Political Crises, 1900–2024
Conference at GHI Washington
Conveners: Alexander Bogner (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), Axel Jansen (GHI Washington), Carsten Reinhardt (German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina), Heidi Tworek (University of British Columbia)

October 21–22  8th Bucerius Young Scholars Forum: Histories of Migration – Transatlantic and Global Perspectives
Conference at GHI Pacific Office
Conveners: Benno Gammerl (European University Institute Florence) and Isabel Richter (GHI Pacific Office)

Conference at GHI Washington
Conveners: Andreas Greiner (GHI Washington) and Stefan Rinke (Free University of Berlin)

2025

February 13–14  Refugees in Global Transit: Encounters, Knowledge, and Coping Strategies in a Disrupted World, 1930s–50s
Conference in Mumbai, India
Conveners: Simone Lässig (German Historical Institute Washington), Sebastian Schwecke (Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies, Delhi), and Swen Steinberg (Queen's University, Kingston), in collaboration with Maria Framke (Erfurt University), Jens Hanssen (Orient-Institut Beirut), and Christoph K. Neumann (Orient-Institut Istanbul)
March 19–21

7th Conference on Digital Humanities and Digital History: Real-Time History – Engaging with Living Archives and Temporal Multiplicities

Conference at GHI Washington
Organized by the GHI Washington in collaboration with the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH), the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM), Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe, the Chair for Digital History at Humboldt University of Berlin, and NFDI4Memory
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May 2019, 326 pages, 23 illus.
ISBN 978-1-78920-217-5 Hb $135.00/£99.00
eISBN 978-1-78920-218-2 $34.95/£27.95
What motivates people to give to those in need? How do their actions reflect the historical moment in which they occur? Founded in 1945, the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE) allowed U.S. citizens to send humanitarian aid to friends, family, and strangers overseas. Germany was the most popular destination for CARE packages, with numbers exceeding those of all other European destinations combined. Maximilian Klose examines why Americans were more likely to give aid to their recently defeated enemies than to their allies or to the victims of Nazi aggression. Embedding a diverse selection of case studies in the social, cultural, and political debates of the early postwar era, the study finds that these acts of giving were much more than altruistic deeds. In fact, donors used humanitarianism for their own purposes. Humanitarianism was at least as much about the donor as it was about the recipient.

Winner of the 2023 Franz Steiner Prize in Transatlantic History and the Dissertation Prize awarded by the German Historical Association's Working Group on International History

THE AUTHOR

Maximilian Klose is a historian of modern American foreign relations. He received his PhD from the Graduate School of North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin in 2021 and has held positions and fellowships at Freie Universität's John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, the University of Freiburg and the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC.
Nazi persecution drove numerous Jewish historians to flee from Germany and Austria to the US. After 1945, they advocated for the academic study of National Socialism and the Holocaust. In the US, they quickly became pioneers in 19th- and 20th-century German history. Although these scholars tried to exchange ideas with historians who remained in Germany, some of their books went unnoticed for decades in their country of origin. There were many reasons for this disregard: the main controversies revolved around who was allowed to write German history, how German history should be written, and especially whether and how the Holocaust should be researched. Only a new generation of scholars and growing public interest promoted intellectual exchange between the two groups. The émigré historians made significant contributions to academic research into National Socialism and the Holocaust.

They sought to uncover all aspects of the German past in order to strengthen consciousness for democracy in the present and future.

**THE AUTHOR**

Anna Corsten is a research associate at the Chair of Modern History/Contemporary History at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena. Her research focuses on Nazi and Holocaust studies, the history of knowledge, the history of property, and transatlantic history.
In the decade after World War I, German-American relations improved swiftly. While resentment and bitterness ran high on both sides in 1919, Weimar Germany and the United States managed to forge a strong transatlantic partnership by 1929. But how did Weimar Germany overcome its post-war isolation so rapidly? How did it regain the trust of its former adversary? And how did it secure U.S. support for the revision of the Versailles Treaty? Elisabeth Piller, winner of the Franz Steiner Preis für Transatlantische Geschichte 2019, explores these questions not from an economic, but from a cultural perspective.

How many bombs does it take for a society to break apart? Sophia Dafinger, in this German-language book, investigates a group of expert social scientists in the US who saw the Second World War as a grand research laboratory. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey is the starting point for the question of how the lessons of the aerial warfare were formulated, learned, but also forgotten again – from the theaters of war in Europe and Asia to Korea and Vietnam. Dafinger shows how self-confidently the “experts of aerial warfare” acted and how relevant their guidance was in the organization of political and military war planning.

The American Civil War (1861–65) was a conflict of transatlantic proportions. It also had tangible consequences for Central Europe that have not yet received much scholarly attention. Utilizing perspectives from economic and cultural history, Patrick Gaul focuses on the cross-border effects of this war. Gaul makes it clear that not all German-speaking participants were unreserved supporters of the Northern states or advocates of emancipation for the slaves.

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Julius Wilm

Settlers as Conquerors
Free Land Policy in Antebellum America

TRANSATLANTISCHE HISTORISCHE STUDIEN – VOL. 58
284 pages
€ 61,– / § 92,–
978-3-515-12131-6 HARDCOVER
978-3-515-12132-3 E-BOOK

In early America, the notion that settlers ought to receive undeveloped land for free was enormously popular among the rural poor and social reformers. Well into the Jacksonian era, however, Congress considered the demand fiscally and economically irresponsible. Increasingly, this led proponents to cast the idea as a military matter: land grantees would supplant troops in the efforts to take over the continent from Indian nations and rival colonial powers. Julius Wilm’s book examines the free land debates from the 1790s to the 1850s and reconstructs the settlement experiences under the donation laws for Florida (1842) and the Oregon Territory (1850).

Katharina Scheffler

Kulturdiplomatie zwischen Nordamerika und Afrika
TRANSATLANTISCHE HISTORISCHE STUDIEN – VOL. 57
419 pages
€ 71,– / § 107,–
978-3-515-11285-7 HARDCOVER
978-3-515-11286-4 E-BOOK

In the 1960s, Operation Crossroads Africa (OCA) was the largest private volunteer organization in Africa. Founded in 1957, OCA initiated numerous aid projects in various regions of Africa. On the basis of extensive archival research and interviews with contemporary witnesses, Katharina Scheffler examines the early years of the organization. In this German-language study, Scheffler illuminates OCA’s founding, as well as the institutional and social hurdles that had to be overcome in the beginning. She pays special attention to the experiences of volunteers themselves and their role as unofficial ambassadors of America, on the one hand, and as pioneers for intercultural understanding, on the other.

Elisabeth Engel

Encountering Empire
African American Missionaries in Colonial Africa, 1900–1939

TRANSATLANTISCHE HISTORISCHE STUDIEN – VOL. 56
303 pages
€ 58,– / § 87,–
978-3-515-11117-1 HARDCOVER
978-3-515-11119-5 E-BOOK

In Encountering Empire, Elisabeth Engel traces how black American missionaries – men and women grappling with their African heritage – established connections in Africa during the heyday of European colonialism. Reconstructing the black American ‘colonial encounter’, Engel analyzes the images, transatlantic relationships, and possibilities of representation African American missionaries developed for themselves while negotiating colonial regimes. Illuminating a neglected chapter of Atlantic history, Engel demonstrates that African Americans used imperial structures for their own self-determination. Encountering Empire thus challenges the notion that pan-Africanism was the only viable strategy for black emancipation.

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Raphael Rössel

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Anna-Carolin Augustin, Sebastian Bischoff, Kristoff Kerl

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