

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)**

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Features