

Preface

This is the first purely digital (online-only) issue of the *Bulletin* of the German Historical Institute Washington. Due to budgetary constraints, we have had to discontinue the print edition that used to be mailed to subscribers worldwide. Nevertheless, we very much hope that the *Bulletin* will keep and perhaps even expand its readership in digital form.

This issue features a special thematic focus, but it begins with an article by Christina Matzen, winner of the 2023 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, in which they share their dissertation research with our readers. Matzen's article "Between Criminology and Genocide: Co-Witnessing Incarcerated Women in German History" is remarkable in at least three ways: first, because it brings together the history of gender, crime, antisemitism, and the Holocaust in highly original ways; second, because it relates the story of how Matzen's dissertation research and writing was shaped and reshaped by personal experiences and commitments; and third, because Matzen argues that "the patterns of injustice that plagued Nazi and postwar German prisons – such as racialized hierarchies, lack of accountability, the politicization of bodies, transnational eugenics policies, and violent power structures – are also central to how many criminal legal systems operate today."

This issue's special thematic Forum examines the history of Germany's Social Democratic labor movement in a European and global perspective. As noted in the introduction by James Retallack, Simone Lässig, and Swen Steinberg, the Forum focuses on the relationship between Social Democracy and state violence. The section's first article, by Mona Rudolph, provides a colonial perspective by examining labor practices along the global commodity chain of diamonds from Colonial Namibia to Imperial Germany in the years 1908 to 1913. Challenging distinctions between wage labor

and slave labor, she reveals the cooperation of private enterprise and the German state in establishing and expanding a violent system of exploitation. In the next article, Christine Krüger uses the concept of “securitization” (*Versicherheitslichung*) to investigate the dynamics that connect protest movements and the state institutions that claim to provide public security. Her comparative analysis of dockland labor protests in London and Hamburg during the 1880s and 1890s shows how explicit arguments about security were articulated by striking workers, employers, and state institutions. The third article, by Amerigo Caruso, pursues the securitization framework by examining the use and abuse of the political state of siege during the nineteenth century from a transnational perspective, focusing on France, Italy, Germany, and their colonies. As security forces sought new means to combat subversion, terrorism, strikes, and other perceived threats, he argues, the new emergency provisions were aimed not only at restoring political order but also at instigating authoritarian transformations of liberal regimes.

The Forum’s last two articles address the relationship between Social Democracy and violence through a close investigation of Social Democratic protest culture. Andrew Bonnell shows how Social Democratic street protests against suffrage restrictions in the prewar years were transformed into huge demonstrations against the coming war in July 1914 and analyzes their dynamics by paying close attention to the interaction between party membership and leaders, and between structural factors and the actual day-to-day course of events. Widening the temporal focus, Jens-Uwe Guettel’s study of urban protest and street violence in Germany between 1905 and 1923 shows how SPD leaders struggled in dealing with protesters whose loyalties to the party could be brittle and who sometimes refused to follow their marching orders. His case study of protests in Berlin’s Scheunenviertel before, during, and after the First World War reveals that these protests reflected a delicate mixture

of “bread-and-butter” issues and political questions that rendered political allegiances in such poor, working-class areas elusive.

Finally, this issue reports on GHI conferences on a wide range of subjects, including the history of migration, the history of music, and the globalization of German history. 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 <https://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

