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Preface

This issue of the *Bulletin* showcases the variety of the German Historical Institute's academic programs, with articles on twentieth-century international history, early modern German history, Jewish history, and two articles reflecting on the field of German history and the historical profession. The first article, "After Life: The Legacy of Discontinued International Organizations in the Twentieth Century," presents the 38th Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute, delivered in November 2024 by Kiran Klaus Patel, professor of modern history at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich. Examining the question "What happens when international organizations die?", Patel's lecture uses a case study of the dissolution of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) in 1959/60 and its "rebirth" as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to examine the complex process by which an international organization that has outlived its original function can be simultaneously dissolved and transformed into a new international organization with a different set of tasks. In the postwar era, he argues, this kind of transformation was strongly influenced by the legacy of the League of Nations.

"On the Logic of Autocracy and the Plasticity of History: The Case of Frederick William I, King of Prussia" presents the Gerda Henkel Lecture, delivered at the GHI Pacific Office in Berkeley this past March by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, professor emerita of early modern history at the University of Münster and rector of the Berlin Institute for Advanced Study. In this lecture, Stollberg-Rilinger, who is currently writing a biography of Frederick William I (1688-1740), examines the reign of Prussia's so-called "soldier king," who completely rejected the conventions of his time, in order to illuminate the logic of autocratic rule; and to investigate the

historiographical puzzle of how a monarch who, in the eyes of contemporaries, behaved like a classic tyrant was transformed into the king who taught the German nation true Prussianhood.

"The Power of Photobooks: Crafting (Jewish) History from Below" presents the research of Steven Weiss Samols, postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Cambridge, who won the 2024 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, awarded annually by the Friends of the German Historical Institute for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American University. In this article, Samols explores the role of German-speaking Jews in developing the medium of the photobook. Through a remarkable series of case studies including photobooks on the Vienna Prater (1911), the Vilnius Ghetto (1931), the extermination of Polish Jews (1945), the failed journey of a refugee ship to Palestine (1948), and Freud's apartment in Vienna (1976), Samols examines how Jewish photographers, writers, and publishers used the medium of the photobook to craft a "history from below" that celebrated difference and outsider-status and sought to contest exclusion and antisemitism.

"The Challenge of German Histories: An American Retrospective," originally delivered as the 2024 Gerald D. Feldman Memorial Lecture at the GHI Washington by Konrad H. Jarausch, Lurcy Professor Emeritus of European Civilization at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, presents the distinguished historian's reflections on the state of German history, drawing on his six decades of research and teaching on both sides of the Atlantic. Beginning with an examination of indications of decline of the fields of German and European history in the United States, Jarausch goes on to provide a wide-ranging analysis of the historiography of modern Germany since 1945, concluding with a plea for historians of modern German history to engage with its "extraordinary diversity."

In our final article, former GHI Visiting Fellow Jürgen Dinkel, currently fellow at the DFG Heisenberg Program at the University of Leipzig, examines a central but rarely examined aspect of academic culture. In "Acknowledgments: A History of Academic Gratitude" Dinkel analyzes the transformation of acknowledgments in academic books from the panegyrics of the early modern period through the nineteenth-century's academic ideal of personal reticence (and therefore minimal acknowledgments) to the rise of highly subjective and expansive acknowledgments since the 1990s, which he relates to larger changes in academic culture, including democratization and internationalization.

As always, this issue also reports on GHI conferences on a wide range of subjects, including historical refugee studies, archival studies, Jewish history, and modern German history. The first item in the news section reports on our biggest piece of news: the arrival of the GHI's new director, Ulrike von Hirschhausen, who took up her directorship on October 1 of this year, succeeding Simone Lässig. 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 Bluesky account at @ghiwashington.bsky.social or sign up for our digital newsletter on our website. We look forward to welcoming you at upcoming events in both Washington and Berkeley.

Ulrike von Hirschhausen (Director) and
Richard F. Wetzell (Editor)

Features

After Life: The Legacy of Discontinued International Organizations in the Twentieth Century

38th Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute Washington, November 7, 2024

Kiran Klaus Patel
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich

Life taught Karl Werkmeister a lesson: history sometimes changes its course abruptly and death is never far away.[1] Born in 1898, he attended the Real-Gymnasium in Minden and became a soldier in August 1915. The month he turned 19, in March 1917, he was promoted to lieutenant – a rank with a disproportionally high death rate among German soldiers during the First World War. "Leutnantdienst tun heißt: seinen Leuten vorleben . . . das Vor-Sterben ist dann wohl einmal ein Teil davon,"[2] Walter Flex quipped, and the nationalist German author was soon proven right: a lieutenant just like Werkmeister, Flex was killed in action seven months after Werkmeister's promotion. In contrast to both Flex and the German

1 Research for this project was supported by the European Research Council, Grant Agreement Number: 101096005, for the ERC Advanced Grant project InechO: Hidden Legacies: How Discontinued International Organizations Have Shaped European Governance since the 1910s. I thank the other InechO team members for their feedback to an earlier version: Juliette Gille-Vignale, David Grillenberger, Matthias Kaltenbrunner, Annalena Labrenz, Jane Mumby, and Thomas Süsler-Rohringer.

2 "Being a lieutenant means setting an example for your people . . . dying first is probably part of that." Walter Flex, *Der Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten. Ein Kriegserlebnis* (München, 1960), 16. On the wider context, see Christian Stachelbeck, *Militärische Effektivität im Ersten Weltkrieg. Die 11. Bayerische Infanteriedivision 1915 bis 1918* (Paderborn, 2010), 294–349.

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Figure 1. Karl Werkmeister, right, with Ludwig Erhard, center, and Walter Hallstein, left, 1957. ©IMAGO

Kaiserreich, Werkmeister survived the war. In 1918, he started studying law in Berlin; in 1921, he completed his PhD and joined the German Foreign Office. 1933 marked no significant turning point for him. For the Weimar Republic and soon also the state of Lithuania, where Werkmeister was posted that year, it spelled the end, however. Before he turned fifty, Werkmeister had survived two world wars. He had seen three political systems fall in his home country – and many more beyond its shores.[3]

Werkmeister's postwar career saw fewer ruptures, but the world continued to be in turmoil. He rejoined the Auswärtiges Amt, and during the late 1950s, he served as West German ambassador to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) in Paris, the forum charged with administering the European side of the Marshall Plan. Here, things got rough in December 1958. A meeting of the OEEC Council, the organization's highest decision-making body, had to be interrupted several times. In rapid succession, delegations of various member states accused one another of taking "unacceptable," "unfeasible," and "unreasonable" positions. Early in the meeting, the Portuguese representative saw the "root of the Western alliance at risk" – a formulation that German economy minister Ludwig Erhard echoed during the dramatic culmination many hours later.[4] Werkmeister's handwritten notes, probably the best source for this meeting, show that the OEEC was on the brink of collapse.

3 Entry "Werkmeister, Karl," Auswärtiges Amt, ed., *Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes, 1871–1945*, vol. 5 (Paderborn, 2014), 241–243.

4 Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PAAA), B 20 REF. 200/IA2/290, Werkmeister, Handwritten Notes, 423th Meeting of OEEC Council, December 15, 1958; on Erhard: ibidem, Telex Werkmeister, German Delegation Paris to German Foreign Ministry, December 16, 1958.

While the crisis dragged on for more than a year, Werkmeister regained his cool. The following December, he authored a memorandum that put matters in perspective: "It is undisputed that if the OEEC were to cease its activities, new international organizations would have to be created immediately in order to carry out its tasks."[5] The man who had experienced so many dramatic ruptures knew that an end did not have to be final; that, just like states, international organizations sometimes died – but often lived on in a different form.

5 PAAA, NL 297/45, German OEEC Mission to AA and German Ministry of the Economy, December 1, 1959.

I. The Legacy of Dissolved International Organizations

This leads us to the core of this lecture. What happens when international organizations die? We know very little about their legacies: the subsequent role and impact of people, ideas, practices, and objects that once filled these organizations with life and meaning. While existing interpretations and contemporaneous narratives downplay such legacies, new beginnings frequently echo the work of earlier organizations, and in moments of crisis, experts and practitioners often evoke the fate of earlier forums in their search for solutions. In fact, people and their networks, epistemes and knowledge, artefacts and items tend to linger on even if there is, so far, little research on such hidden connections.

As so often, we have more questions than answers. What does this topic tell us about international organizations and questions of governance more generally? In our own times, in which many post-Cold War truths are being challenged and liberal internationalism is in deep crisis, these questions are far from banal. Many people think that the United Nations is no longer fit for purpose. Only a few years ago, Emmanuel Macron called NATO brain dead, while others have argued that the EU finds itself in a state of permanent poly-crisis. Admittedly, Russian aggression has injected new life into NATO and the EU, but most observers agree that the situation is extremely fragile, even more so since the advent of the second presidency of Donald Trump. Hence, the death and afterlife of international cooperation is shockingly relevant in our own times.

But what are international organizations (IOs) and since when do they exist? Most scholars agree that modern international organizations were first established after the Napoleonic Wars, with the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine presumed to be the oldest such forum.[6] IOs stand for a fixed institutional framework with a stable set of norms and rules that are meant to facilitate the exchange between states and other entities in the international system and aim to coordinate and govern their behavior. IOs can be based on treaties or other instruments governed by international law and have a legal personality in their own right. A particularly interesting sub-type of international organizations are intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). In fact, IGOs are the core pillars of internationalism. They are particularly robust due to their institutional features: Beyond the general definition of IOs, IGOs are organizations of at least three states (or state organs or organizations of states) that have their own organs and hold regular plenary sessions.[7]

What do we know about the history and trajectory of IOs? For IGOs, we have the most precise figures; hence, it is useful to focus on them in order to examine longterm and overriding trends. Ever since the early nineteenth century, the number of newly established IGOs has risen almost continuously, with the cumulative number skyrocketing to more than 350 globally in our own time.

Historians have paid little attention to these changes – and even less to IGO's demise and their legacies and connections to other forms of (international) governance. Notably, not a single IGO was terminated before 1900, but then things started to change. Today, no less than 39 percent of the IGOs established since 1815 (218 out of 561) have been formally dissolved. Spikes of such terminations occurred particularly during the 1910s, the 1930/40s and the 1990s/2000s, broadly in line with major turning points in contemporary history. Prominent examples include Eastern bloc organizations such as Comecon and the Warsaw Pact, but also the European Coal and Steel Community as the earliest predecessor of today's EU. IO deaths occur regularly, even if historical research has paid little attention to them.

6 See, e.g., Martial Libera and Sylvain Schirmann, eds., *La Commission centrale pour la navigation du Rhin. Histoire d'une organization internationale* (Paris, 2018).

7 For various definitions, see, e.g., Lorenzo Gasbarri, *The Concept of an International Organization in International Law* (Oxford, 2021), esp. 1–6; Finn Seyersted, *Common Law of International Organizations* (Leiden, 2008), esp. 37–64.

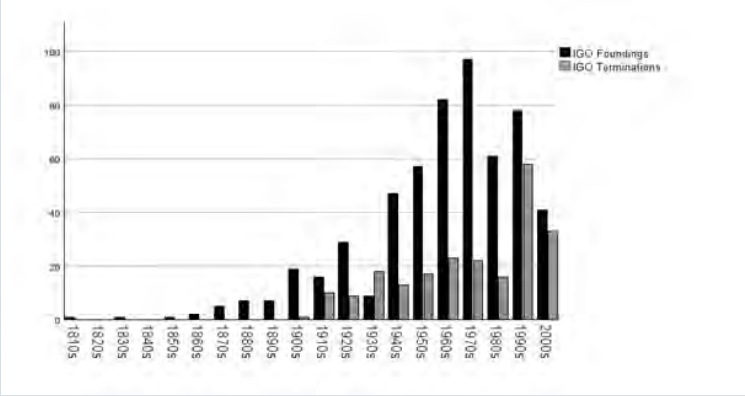


Figure 2. Creation and termination of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), 1815–2010. Table based on data from: Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, "Death of International Organizations: The Organizational Ecology of Intergovernmental Organizations, 1815–2015," *Review of International Organizations* 15 (2020): 340; Hylke Dijkstra, et al., *The Survival of International Organizations: Institutional Response to Existential Challenges* (Oxford, 2025).

Zooming in a bit further, diagnosing the sheer fact and moment of their demise is more difficult than one might think at first glance. Continuing with the organicist metaphors of life and death, it is possible to distinguish different causes and forms such as suicide, murder, and misadventure along with death as an effect of sudden or protracted illness; moreover, there are dormant organizations (formally alive, but unable to take action)[8] and near-death experiences from which organizations are able to recover. Some institutions seem to drop off the face of the earth but continue to live on under a different name or after having been merged with or integrated into other entities. Finally, there are some for which organicist metaphors may not suffice: these organizations simply expire, having been created by contracting states that only established them for a finite period. However, the body-state analogy and, transposed to our topic, biologistic or organicist metaphors for international organizations remain important, in particular for two reasons: for one, actors in and relevant for modern IOs often built on these narratives; they are ubiquitous in the primary sources as well as the research on IOs.[9] For another, they have a certain heuristic value and help to summarize often highly technical and abstract processes in an illustrative way.

Afterlives are equally complex. There is a wide spectrum including three ideal types: firstly, delimitation, where an organization's connections to earlier IGOs are downplayed or denied. Here, the Warsaw Pact is an example; an organization that ended in 1991 without a clear and obvious successor. Secondly, selective adaptation represents a form of partial transfer where certain connections are emphasized and where earlier IGOs serve as potential

8 See, e.g., Thomas Hale, David Held and Kevin Young, *Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation Is Failing When We Need It Most* (Cambridge, 2013).

9 See, e.g., Kiran Klaus Patel and Kenneth Weisbrode, "Vanished Institutions: Life and Death of Europe's International Organisations – Introduction," *Journal of Modern European History* 23 (2025): 116-128; Maria Josepha Debre and Hylke Dijkstra, "Institutional Design for a Post-Liberal Order: Why Some International Organizations Live Longer than Others," *European Journal of International Relations* 27 (2021): 311–339.

learning opportunities. This is the dominant form, underlining the role of legacies, with the transition from the League of Nations to the United Nations serving as an important example. Thirdly, there is direct adoption, where links or continuities to earlier IGOs are essential. Here, two post-Soviet organizations come to mind, the Eurasian Economic Community (2000–2014) and the Eurasian Economic Union, established in 2015; but this type is rather rare.

Assessing institutional deaths and afterlives is not a mere act of historical necrophilia. It helps to move the analysis beyond the dominating focus on individual forums and raises some more general concerns regarding the afterlife of IOs: Which vectors connect the dead with the living? How robust is international cooperation?

II. From Crisis to Metamorphosis: From the OEEC to the OECD

With this, let us return to Werkmeister and a more detailed example – the transition, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, from the aforementioned Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) to today's Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). During this period, the OEEC experienced a near-death experience resulting in a metamorphosis, for which the legacy of an earlier, dissolved IO – the League of Nations – turned out to be crucial. The League served as a reference in three concrete ways: it was the deterrent counterexample in the context of the key question of the organization's legal personality; it was an inspiration to deal with a specific set of legal issues; and it was a cautionary tale preempting more radical alternatives. One of the best guides to understanding metamorphoses continues to be the Roman poet Ovid, in this case particularly his account of the fate of Daphne – to which we will return later.

To understand this metamorphosis and the triple role that the League of Nations played in it, some context on the OEEC's history until the late 1950s is necessary. The Organisation for European Economic Co-operation was set up in April 1948, during the early Cold War, in the context of the Marshall Plan. Based in Paris, it

was responsible for allocating the $13 billion in aid provided by the United States under the Marshall Plan. By 1952, the OEEC had fulfilled its original mission but this did not lead to its discontinuation. By then, the organization had started to acquire several new roles, mostly in the fields of trade liberalization, education, and development. This dynamic growth of powers is typical for IOs: Once instituted, their secretariats often push for an expansion of their roles, not least because of their interest in institutional self-preservation.

By 1958, however, the OEEC had entered a potentially lethal crisis. The main reason for this development was a conflict among its member states about Western Europe's future economic governance. During the second half of the 1950s, the alphabet soup of Western European IOs thickened, and the OEEC with its eighteen member states risked getting lost in the fog. The first challenge came from a new organization established by some of the OEEC's own members. In 1957, the Benelux countries, France, Italy, and West Germany created the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom. The EEC especially raised fundamental questions for the OEEC. Not only were their acronyms confusingly similar, but the EEC was also all about trade liberalization – just like the OEEC. But the EEC's ambitions were larger, aiming to establish a common market with external tariffs. The six EEC countries thus formed an exclusive mini club within the club, comprising more than half the population and economic output of all the OEEC countries.[10]

Fragmentation did not end there. In response to the formation of the EEC, seven other OEEC member states (Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) planned an institutional alternative – a strictly intergovernmental free trade zone that was constituted on January 1, 1960, under the name of European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Iceland, Ireland, Greece, Spain, and Turkey remained outside of both the "Inner Six" and the "Outer Seven." If one adds these "forgotten five," the OEEC found itself straddling three camps.[11] Instead of one Western European organization in charge of trade, there were now sev-

10 See, for instance, Matthieu Leimgruber and Matthias Schmelzer, eds., *The OECD and the International Political Economy since 1948* (Cham, 2017); Matthias Schmelzer, *The Hegemony of Growth: The OECD and the Making of the Economic Growth Paradigm* (Cambridge, 2016).

11 Kiran Klaus Patel, *Project Europe: A History* (Cambridge, 2020), 13–49.

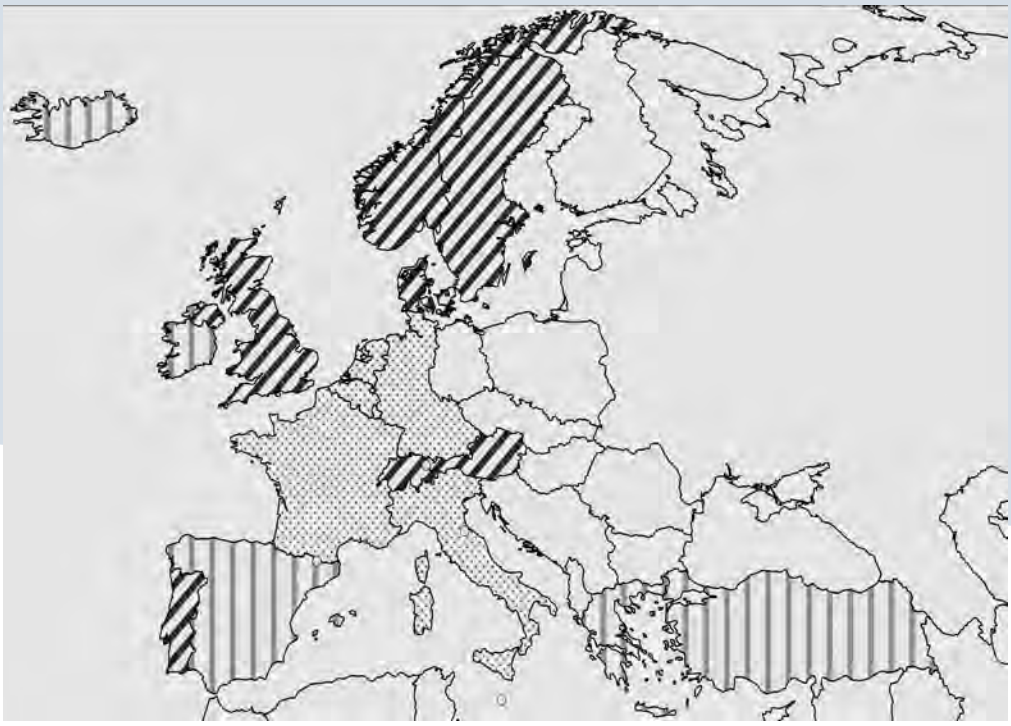


Figure 3. The OEEC's eighteen member states: The six, the seven, and the five, 1960. EEC: dotted areas; EFTA: diagonally striped areas; OEEC: vertically striped areas plus the other two markings.

eral with partly overlapping membership and competing profiles. Trade, often considered a glue between nations, became a bone of contention threatening the OEEC's very existence.

Faced with this challenge, the OEEC's secretariat launched several attempts to find a solution and overcome this division within Western Europe, but these efforts were of no avail. They deepened the conflict instead of mending it, revealing that the OEEC had overplayed its hand. The OEEC managed neither to avert the creation of new blocs among its members nor to retain the role of a meaningful mediator between diverging interests. The members' inability to come up with a solution threatened its very *raison d'être*. While tariffs and trade were the concrete issues leading to the OEEC's crisis, the fundamental matter was more profound: It was about the very nature of economic governance and cooperation in Western Europe.[12]

There was also an important transatlantic dimension to the situation. The late 1950s saw a discussion on how the Western world might be able to counter what was then called the "Soviet economic challenge," i.e. Moscow's aid programs for the Global South.[13] The global Cold War forced the West to come up with a meaningful response, and while debates initially gravitated towards NATO, eyes soon turned to the OEEC. Many pundits and politicians in

12 Richard T. Griffiths, "'An Act of Creative Leadership': The End of the OEEC and the Birth of the OECD," in: idem, ed., *Explorations in OEEC History* (Paris, 1997), 235–256; Matthew Broad and Richard T. Griffiths, *Britain, the Division of Western Europe and the Creation of EFTA 1955–1963* (Cham, 2022).

13 Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy, 1953–1961* (Baltimore, MD, 2019).

Washington felt that the United States and Canada should become full members; they wanted to repurpose the OEEC and turn it into a global development organization. This added further pressure on the OEEC.[14]

These debates formed the backdrop of the Council session in December 1958 mentioned at the beginning of this lecture. While Werkmeister was busy taking notes, the British diplomat Paul Gore-Booth called it "the worst conference I have ever attended."[15] The United States Mission in Europe reported home that a "disastrous breach in Europe" was avoided by a whisker.[16] The OEEC Council, which brought together top representatives from the member states, did not reach any decision, and for many months its chairman Hugh Ellis-Rees did not convene another meeting, trying to avoid "another display of disunity."[17]

As the crisis lingered, the major Western powers finally sprang into action, with Washington taking the lead – though formally, the United States was not even a member. After careful preparation, the heads of state and government of France, West Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States issued a joint communiqué in late December 1959, i.e. roughly one year after the organization's near-death experience. They called for an "informal meeting" to discuss the organization's fate.[18] The following January, the member states adopted a resolution containing good news for the organization: the idea was not to discontinue it but to define precise ways "to ensure the continuities of cooperation in the fields where no change is called for," while also considering new directions. Moreover, a group of experts was installed to explore future options and to come up with recommendations.[19] Finally, there was a roadmap on how to overcome the crisis.

A "Group of Four Wise Men," as they soon came to be called, was charged to rethink the OEEC: Randolph Burgess (US Permanent Representative to NATO), Sir Paul Gore-Booth (Deputy Under-Secretary at the British Foreign Office), Bernard Clappier (Director of Foreign Relations at the French Ministry of Economics and Finance), and Xenophon Zolotas (Director of the Bank of Greece). All four were seasoned experts of international economic governance and

14 Griffiths, "An Act of Creative Leadership".

15 Paul Gore-Booth, *With Great Truth and Respect* (London, 1974), 251.

16 Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), *1958–1960,* Western European Integration and Security, Canada *(WEISC)*, vol. VII, part 1, doc. 43, Telegram US Mission at NATO and the European Regional Organizations to State Department, December 16, 1958.

17 FRUS, *1958–1960, WEISC*, vol. VII, part 1, doc. 87, Telegram from the US Mission at NATO and the European Regional Organizations to the US State Department, December 13, 1959.

18 OEEC, *A Remodelled Economic Organization. A Report by the Group of Four* (Paris, 1960), 7.

19 OEEC, *A Remodelled Economic Organization*, 8.

Figure 4. The "Four Wise Men" Visiting the OEEC, March 1960. © OECD

diplomacy. Their work from late January to early April 1960 was crucial for the OEEC's fate. At this technical level, the legacy of the League of Nations as an earlier, discontinued International Organization came to play a crucial role.

III. The Threefold Legacy of the League of Nations

During the reform debate, the depth of the rupture between the old and the new was one of the most controversial points. Paris and Washington insisted on a clear cut-off. Both governments wanted all existing OEEC decisions and resolutions to expire. The successor organization should build only on those stipulations that all member states explicitly agreed to. A single objection would therefore suffice to veto any aspect, and the organization should be under the full intergovernmental control of its members.

Most other governments disagreed. They preferred a continuation of the OEEC's existing legal personality: all its acts were to live on, unless a new decision was taken to change them.[20] In the end, and after intense consultation with the various sides, the Group of Four proposed a compromise on this issue. Article 15 of their draft convention stipulated that the "legal personality possessed by the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation shall continue in the Organisation, but decisions of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation shall require approval of the Council to be effective after the coming into force of this Convention."[21]

20 This built on a 1950 debate about associating the United States and Canada to the OEEC when similar issues had been discussed, see Historical Archives of the European Union, Florence (HAEU), OEEC–425.

21 OEEC, *A Remodelled Economic Organization*, 67.

Revealingly, the Group of Four spoke neither of full continuity nor a new start, neither rebirth nor metamorphosis. Instead, they used the more technical term "reconstitution." Their report stressed that any of the alternatives might lead to "practical difficulties."[22] During the thorny intergovernmental negotiations that followed the Group's work, draft Article 15 was particularly controversial. In the end, however, the Group's proposal paved the way for future developments: The final version of Article 15, on which today's OECD has been based since 1961, retained this key sentence and adopted the Group's term "reconstitution." It merely added that the need for approval did not pertain only to the OEEC's decisions, but also its "recommendations and resolutions" – a minor amendment.[23]

The experience of the League of Nations was key to this approach, which provided the bridge from the OEEC to the OECD. The Group of Four, as well as legal experts at the time, insisted that the OECD was not the OEEC's successor. In 1962, Hugo J. Hahn, at the time a consultant at the OECD and soon to become its legal advisor, maintained that the transition did not involve the "suppression" of the earlier organization but rather "its reconstitution while maintaining its moral personality." This approach "permits to avoid the well-known succession problems which arose at the time of the creation of the UN with regard to certain tasks as well as the rights and burdens inherent in the League of Nations' patrimony."[24] In a memorandum dated January 28, 1960, the OEEC's legal advisor Alexander Elkin had already suggested taking that route.[25] Avoiding the technical problem that had haunted the League became the procedural vehicle of the OEEC's metamorphosis into the OECD.

Upholding the OEEC's legal personality through its transformation helped to avoid financial complications, and the same held true for other issues, such as the ownership of the Château de la Muette as the OEEC's seat, and even more mundane questions such as its energy and water supply. More importantly, this approach allowed all the agreements the OEEC had concluded under international law to simply live on. There was direct continuity for the personnel, too.[26] On the other hand it was also easy to end redun-

22 OEEC, *A Remodelled Economic Organization*, 55.

23 https://www.oecd.org/about/document/oecd-convention.htm#Text (last accessed February 2, 2025).

24 Hugo J. Hahn, "La reconstitution de l'O.E.C.E. et sa continuation dans l'O.C.D.E.," *Annuaire français de droit international* 8 (1962): 751–762, here 756.

25 HAEU, OEEC–425, Memorandum Elkin to Sergent, January 28, 1960.

26 Hahn, "La reconstitution de l'O.E.C.E. et sa continuation dans l'O.C.D.E.," 756–758.

dant aspects and introduce new elements. This flexible transition was considered preferable to the League's more definite end. The term "reconstitution," etymologically encompassing the return to an original order and change through re-establishment, appeared to be a perfect choice.

Technical legal expertise from an IO prevailed over political interests of the Western superpower. For all the knowledge they could mobilize from their home countries, especially from Washington, the Four Wise Men depended on the OEEC's bureaucracy. As internal documents show, it provided them with the technical knowledge they lacked.[27] Already in early March 1960, Burgess was "complaining that nobody had made any suggestions for changing the present structure of the O.E.E.C., and that all the witnesses who had appeared before the Group of Four had seemed to be rather satisfied with present arrangements."[28] This, indeed, was the *cantus firmus* from the Château de la Muette. Even the most measured papers, weighing all the pros and cons of new start or continuity, emphasized the legal and practical superiority of the latter.[29] Providing endless lists of what would have to be reinvented in the event of a completely fresh start helped win the argument. In the end, the Americans and the French changed their minds and allowed the OEEC's legal personality to live on. This was clearly a David v. Goliath moment: Archival records show that in a meeting in late March 1960, Alexander Elkin managed to change Burgess' mind. This choice was extremely controversial but in the end, knowledge made the decisive difference.[30]

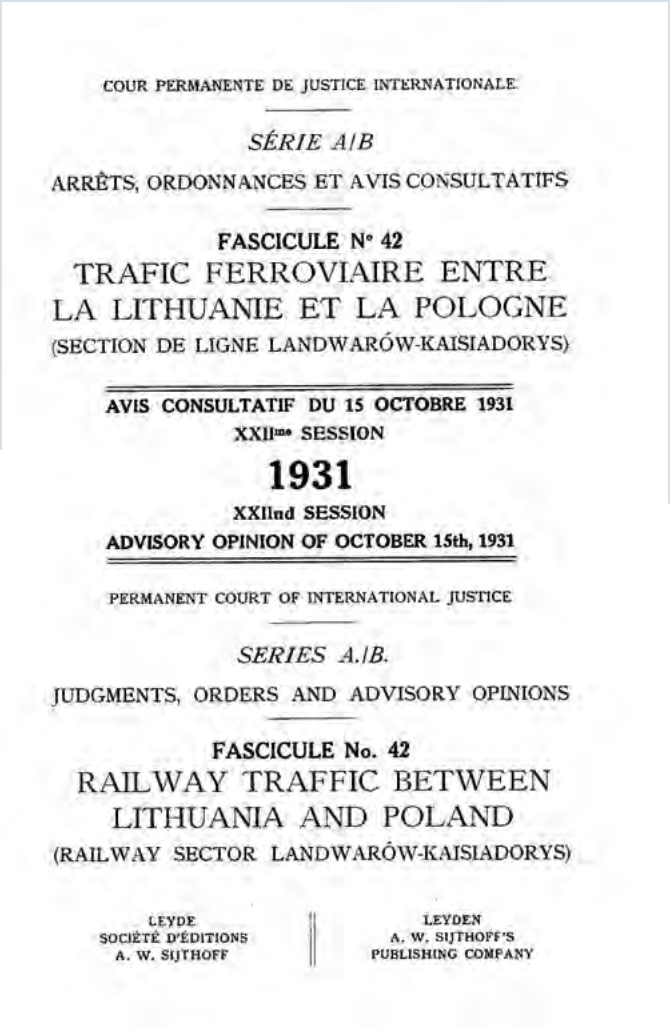
The League became an important reference in a second way, too. An update was necessary for those parts of the OEEC that were to be discontinued or modified, as in case of the association treaties with Yugoslavia. Distinguishing between the living and dead parts of the OEEC was a precondition for a swift and frictionless "start" of the OECD. The legal footwork made all the difference, and here the devil was in the detail. In this choice over life and death, experts knew their history well. One category concerned measures that decision-makers did not want to continue formally, but where the OECD signatories were reluctant to renounce the underlying political or legal principles.

27 See the various minutes in HAEU, OEEC–436; also ibidem, OEEC–240.

28 HAEU, OEEC–425, Memorandum Cahan to Sergent, March 1, 1960.

29 See for example HAEU, OEEC–425, Cahan to Ellis-Rees, February 4, 1960, and, most importantly, ibidem, Secretariat, Reform of the O.E.E.C., March 2, 1960.

30 HAEU, OEEC–425, Memorandum Black to Sergent, March 23, 1960.



COUR PERMANENTE DE JUSTICE INTERNATIONALE

SÉRIE A/B

ARRÊTS, ORDONNANCES ET AVIS CONSULTATIFS

FASCICULE N° 42

TRAFIC FERROVIAIRE ENTRE LA LITHUANIE ET LA POLOGNE

(SECTION DE LIGNE LANDWARÓW-KAISIADORYS)

AVIS CONSULTATIF DU 15 OCTOBRE 1931

XXIIme SESSION

1931

XXIInd SESSION

ADVISORY OPINION OF OCTOBER 15th, 1931

PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

SERIES A./B.

JUDGMENTS, ORDERS AND ADVISORY OPINIONS

FASCICULE No. 42

RAILWAY TRAFFIC BETWEEN LITHUANIA AND POLAND

(RAILWAY SECTOR LANDWARÓW-KAISIADORYS)

LEYDE
SOCIÉTÉ D'ÉDITIONS
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Figure 5. The PCIJ's *Railway Traffic between Lithuania and Poland* Advisory Opinion. Public domain.

In this case, the preparatory committee "resorted to a technique that the League of Nations had already used to obtain, by extra-contractual means, a legal commitment that corresponded to a contractual commitment," as Hahn put it.[31] More precisely, experts were referring to the work of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ). The PCIJ was an institution provided for in the Covenant of the League of Nations; later, it became the predecessor of the UN's International Court of Justice.[32] In its 1931 *Railway Traffic between Lithuania and Poland* Advisory Opinion, the League's Court had stressed that the two states were obliged not just to start negotiations to improve their bilateral relationship, but also to conduct them in a meaningful way. The PCIJ thus highlighted the "principle to comply with the obligation to pursue and to conclude negotiations in accordance with the basic principle of good faith" – an

31 Hahn, "La reconstitution de l'O.E.C.E. et sa continuation dans l'O.C.D.E.," 760–761.

32 Publications of the Permanent Court of International Justice, Series A/B: *Judgements Orders and Advisory Opinions: No. 42, Railway Traffic between Lithuania and Poland,* October 15, 1931, here 116.

approach that the International Court of Justice reconfirmed in a judgement in the late 1960s and again more definitively in a 1996 landmark decision.[33] The duty to negotiate in good faith, in Latin legalese the *pactum de negotiando*, codified in the League context, thus rubbed off on the transition from the OEEC to the OECD and later also on many other issues in international law.

There was a third context where the League's experience loomed large. The 1960 reform debates were haunted by the ghost of Henry Cabot Lodge. Some forty years earlier, Lodge had been extremely successful in his crusade against the Treaty of Versailles and President Woodrow Wilson's plan to create a League of Nations. As the Republican majority leader in the U.S. Senate, Lodge defeated Wilson: the United States never joined the League. Other, similar instances included the failure of the Havana Charter in 1950, when Washington quietly dropped its own attempt to create an international trade organization in view of resistance in Congress. In 1960, such specters were invoked by those who argued against a completely new start with a new convention. In April the OEEC's Deputy Secretary-General Cahan argued that:

> European countries, who have in the past placed their faith upon the promises of different United States Administrations, must feel somewhat reluctant to embark again on the risky business of drafting an international Convention, giving up prepared positions, and giving in to American demands, only in the end to find that all that effort was wasted.[34]

Lodge's specter and later difficulties in negotiations with the U.S. government thus impacted the negotiations. Oddly, Lodge had a revenant. At the time of the reform debates, his own grandson, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., was the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and the grandfather's name thus haunted meetings and files across the North Atlantic.[35] Beyond such strange coincidences, this dimension demonstrates that the U.S. was both the towering hegemon of the Western world and highly fragile in its international commitments due to the threat of domestic resistance insisting on unqualified national sovereignty. Both factors ultimately added weight to Washington's word.

33 Eglė Bendikaitė, "Interwar Lithuania as a Laboratory of International Law," *Ius Gentium* 2 (2017): 555–580, quote 577; also see Cezary Mik, "*Pactum de negotiando* and *pactum de contrahendo* as International Obligations in the Present International Law," *Polish Yearbook of International Law* XL (2020): 39–59.

34 HAEU, OEEC–425, Cahan, Memorandum, February 18, 1960.

35 Luke A. Nichter, *The Last Brahmin: Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. and the Making of the Cold War* (New Haven, CT, 2020).

In sum, the League of Nations as an earlier, discontinued IO provided guidance on how to save the OEEC in three different ways: first, it served as a counterexample for decision-makers who preferred a metamorphosis – or, in their own parlance, reconstitution – to a fresh start. Second, and only seemingly in contradiction to this first point, the League served as a positive reference for administrative details such as the *pactum de negotiando*. This was not about the OEEC's overall trajectory, but about concrete lessons learned from League-related legal reasoning. Third, the ghost of the United States' failure to join the League and other similar incidents explains why so many precautionary measures were taken. Most importantly, U.S. sovereignty remained uncompromised by joining the OECD. This issue proved crucial in the process in which the U.S. Senate gave its consent to the Convention; it was the only case in the Senate's first two hundred years in which it attached a formal explanation to its ratification, stressing that U.S. sovereignty remained unimpaired.[36] The stakes could hardly have been higher.

36 Kevin C. Kennedy, "Conditional Approval of Treaties by the U.S. Senate," *Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Journal* 19 (1996): 89–172.

37 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoses*, ed. R.J. Tarrant (Oxford 2004), 22. Own translation.

IV. A Daphnian Metamorphosis

There are many forms of metamorphosis, in literature as in real life. The way the OEEC morphed into the OECD resembles the fate of Daphne, whom Ovid describes as a beautiful naiad who innocently becomes the object of a conflict between two gods, Cupid and Apollo. Chased and caught by Apollo, Daphne beseeches her father, the river god Peneus, to help her – which he does by transforming her into a laurel tree. Daphne continues being Daphne, just as the OECD is legally identical with the OEEC. And there are further parallels: the OEEC was also saved by a transformation strongly guided by its (American) father figure; and while not immobile and completely removed from the ardor of worldly and otherworldly creatures, the OECD was also much less the object of passionate projections than its predecessor. And while in Ovid's account, Daphne implored her father "*mutando perde figuram*," to spoil her shape by changing it,[37] similar things happened to the OEEC: Its core remained, but its outer appearance was transformed.

Figure 6. Bernini's Apollo and Daphne (1622–1625). Wikimedia. Public domain.

The analogy only goes so far of course. The world of postwar Western IOs was far removed from the toxic masculinity of the ancient myth. Highly controversial political questions were put in the hands of experts, who then proposed rational solutions and who believed in the added value of multilateral cooperation and international organization. The metamorphosis served the pursuit of legitimate interests through technocratic expertise and legal reasoning. The drama of Daphne, famously captured in Baroque artist Gian Lorenzo Bernini's marble statue, epitomizes the very opposite of the OEEC's fate. Karl Marx, who reserved a special place for metamorphosis in his vocabulary and produced lovely German words such as *Metamorphosenverschlingung* [intermingling of metamorphoses], would have been the first to see such differences.[38]

38 Karl Marx, "Das Kapital," *Karl Marx-/Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe*, 2nd division, vol. 12, Internationale Marx-Engels-Stiftung Amsterdam, ed. (Berlin, 2005), 89; the English translation in: Karl Marx, "Capital," *Collected Works*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, ed., vol. 36 (London, 1997), 119.

What did the OECD's metamorphosis lead to? From a "rather heavy" entity, it morphed into a lighter vessel.[39] In accordance with the new division of labor across Western Europe's IOs, the OECD was a less muscular organization than the OEEC had been. The OEEC had been born of American money and know-how, and it never turned into a progenitor of European federation.[40] The 1960/61 metamorphosis sealed its transformation into a branch of transnational governance building on soft power, into its present role as a global standard-setter and "creator, purveyor, and legitimator of ideas,"[41] while other forums take the lead in negotiating and implementing binding decisions. The OECD focuses on a mode of governance best described as nudging.[42] On important issues it operates as a consultative body, working mostly through agenda-setting and monitoring mechanisms.

The metamorphosis impacted the OECD's policy fields as well as its way of doing things. It continued to focus on economic progress. Even more than before, growth became its mantra.[43] Overall, it kept its role as warden of the West and of liberal capitalism in particular. It provided a durable, non-military institutional forum for the idea of the West.

Beyond the myths and metaphors, three principal factors explain how the OECD emerged out of the OEEC. Firstly, the United States and France, in particular, searched for a new venue to fulfill international tasks that had become pressing by the late 1950s, especially global development. Contrary to their original intentions, they let themselves be convinced that refurbishing an existing vessel was easier than building a new one. This leads directly to the second point: Many other governments wanted the OEEC to live on and argued there was a functional need for it. In this sense, Werkmeister's 1959 memorandum, stressing this functional dimension, really got to the heart of the matter. Both he as well as his deputy, Adolf Sonnenhol, had made careers as diplomats during the Nazi era and reinvented themselves as democrats after 1945. So they obviously knew something about institutional new beginnings and metamorphoses. Thirdly, the self-interest of the OEEC machinery was a crucial factor. Despite stiff resistance from

39 FRUS, *1958–1960, WEISC*, vol. VII, doc. 89, Memorandum of Conversation, December 13, 1959.

40 Matthieu Leimgruber and Matthias Schmelzer, "The Historical Transformations of the OECD," Fabrizio de Francesco and Claudio M. Radaelli, eds., *The Elgar Companion to the OECD*, (Cheltenham, 2023), 9–22.

41 Quote: Rianne Mahon and Stephen McBride, "Introduction," ididem, eds., *The OECD and Transnational Governance* (Vancouver, 2008), 3–22, here 15; also see their volume more generally.

42 In OEEC, *A Remodelled Economic Organization*, 16; on nudging, see Rüdiger Graf, *Vorhersagen und Kontrollieren. Verhaltenswissen und Verhaltenspolitik in der Zeitgeschichte* (Göttingen, 2024).

43 Schmelzer, *The Hegemony of Growth*.

Washington and Paris, the interest in reconstitution ultimately won the day. The continuity of the OEEC's legal personality, combined with substantial changes in its powers, therefore reflected more than political and economic circumstances and the will of the member states. It also revealed the *Eigenlogik* [internal logic] of IOs and underlined the "flexibility of the law of international organisation,"[44] which was more elastic than that of most states in analogous cases of transition.

Conclusion

All this underlines the fragility as well as the resilience of international organizations. Some forty percent of all IGOs no longer exist and the figure for the broader category of the even more vulnerable IOs is probably much higher. For all the attempts to avoid teleological, "whiggish" accounts, research mostly focuses on successful and durable organizations with visible impact. Quite a few IOs die, however, and many of them develop a meaningful afterlife. Research on the League has qualified earlier accounts stressing the organization's deficits and ultimate failure. The hidden and indirect but highly meaningful continuities and references discussed here add an important, hitherto overlooked angle to this conversation, especially if the canvas is widened beyond single organizations to consider the wider landscape of international organizations and political governance.

Secondly, it is particularly the knowledge of past IOs that matters a lot. Alexander Elkin, the OEEC's Russian-born legal advisor, insisted on keeping the OEEC's legal personality intact. He was able to convince U.S. and French ambassadors Burgess and Clappier, representatives of the two most powerful nations involved in the negotiations. The *Eigenlogik* of legal and administrative knowledge and practices came to play an important role. In our own times, international organizations have increasingly come under pressure, also in Europe and the transatlantic world. Unilateral action, coercive measures, and war are regaining importance; multilateralism is increasingly contested.[45] The work of IOs – including their legacies – can be a source of unexpected hope. Their experience

44 Hugo J. Hahn, "Continuity in the Law of International Organization," *Duke Law Journal* vol. 1962, 2 parts (1962): 379–422 & 522–557, here 554.

45 This also holds true for the situation within multilateral institutions, see Julia C. Morse and Robert O. Keohane, "Contested Multilateralism," *Review of International Organizations* 9 (2014): 385–412.

is hardly ever forgotten – and sometimes lives on or reappears in unexpected ways.

Having said this, there is a third and final point that needs to be considered. Even if the media did cover the OEEC's crisis and even if national archives are full of documents, the negotiations and their eventual result had a strong technocratic bent. This technocratic dimension goes a long way in explaining why the knowledge generated by IOs, but also their personnel often have long lives, despite political ruptures, institutional endings, and massive changes in the international landscape. Werkmeister is an obvious example, and the nexus between liberal and illiberal organizations, as well as the history of illiberal IOs more generally, deserve further attention.[46] Overall, the afterlife of IOs offers important insights into international history, questions of governance, and problems of continuity and contingency in history. Looking at the world we are living in today, it is not risky to predict that this topic will only become more important in the future.

46 See, for instance, Evgeny Vinokurov and Alexander Libman, *Re-Evaluating Regional Organizations: Behind the Smokescreen of Official Mandates* (Cham, 2017).

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On the Logic of Autocracy and the Plasticity of History: The Case of Frederick William I, King of Prussia

Gerda Henkel Lecture, GHI Pacific Office, Berkeley, March 11, 2025[1]

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You may be wondering why an American audience should be interested in a European monarch of the eighteenth century – a man most of you have hardly ever heard of, king of a country that does not even exist anymore because it was wiped off the map in 1947. However, it seems to me that the history of Frederick William I of Prussia (1688-1740) offers the potential for general insights beyond his specific case, since much of what is going on these days reminds me of premodern phenomena. Historical analogies can be illuminating because they enable us to look at our own time from a more detached perspective.

First, the case of Frederick William I allows certain insights into the social logic of autocracy and the autocratic personality in general – despite the huge differences between the eighteenth century and the present, which I do not underestimate. Secondly, the so-called Soldier King [*Soldatenkönig, Roi-Sergeant*] is an exemplary figure for demonstrating the plasticity of historiography and the suggestive power of retrospective rationalization.

1 Lecture also delivered at the University of Oregon in Eugene and at the University of Nevada in Reno, in March 2025. Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are the author's.

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A person who rejects the social conventions of his time and whose nonconformity openly questions what contemporaries take for granted will usually be excluded, at best condescendingly smiled at, at worst persecuted or declared insane; he becomes either a harmless eccentric or a rebel and may end up in a hospital or in prison. What is especially interesting is what happens when such an outsider himself gets into the position of a ruler. He is then either domesticated by his new role and adjusts to the societal expectations, or – and this is presumably the rarer case – he retains his nonconformity and even makes it the new norm. This is what happened in Frederick William's case.

In the following, I will first briefly illustrate the normative disruption that the king foisted on his realm. Secondly, looking at his childhood, I will show that this disruption was an obsessive and in part consciously provocative act of defiance, a kind of culture war against the contemporary elites. In the third section, I will trace the dialectical relationship between omnipotence and impotence, taking the significant case of the Western provinces of Cleves and Mark as an example. Fourth, I will briefly analyze in how far the king's favorite played the role of a shadow ruler. In the fifth section, I will briefly sketch how contemporaries judged the king. And finally, I will analyze his posthumous historical transformation and show how a personality who was considered a psychopath by the people around him turned into "the educator of the German nation to Prussianhood."[2]

I. Disruption

Frederick William I began his reign with a bang.[3] On the second day after his father's death in 1713, he withdrew to his hunting lodge Wusterhausen, accompanied only by a few confidants – it was strictly forbidden to follow him there – and set about organizing everything according to his own ideas. This new arrangement essentially consisted of an unprecedented excess of downsizing,

2 Carl Hinrichs, *Friedrich Wilhelm I., König in Preußen. Bd.1: Jugend und Aufstieg* (Hamburg, 1941). – On Frederick William I, see: Johann Gustav Droysen, *Friedrich Wilhelm I. König von Preußen* (=*Geschichte der Preußischen Politik,* IV. Theil, 2. Abt.), (Leipzig, 1869-1870); Otto Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk* (Berlin, 1915); Friedrich von Oppeln-Bronikowski, *Der Baumeister des preußischen Staates: Leben und Werk des Soldatenkönigs Friedrich Wilhelms I.* (Jena, 1934); Jochen Klepper, *Der Vater: Roman eines Königs* (Stuttgart, 1937); Wolfgang Venohr, *Der Soldatenkönig: Revolutionär auf dem Thron* (Frankfurt am Main / Berlin, 1. Aufl. 1988, several further editions until 2017); Friedrich Beck, Julius H. Schoeps, eds., *Der Soldatenkönig: Friedrich Wilhelm I. in seiner Zeit* (Potsdam, 2003); Frank Göse, Jürgen Kloosterhuis, eds., *Mehr als nur Soldatenkönig: Neue Schlaglichter auf Lebenswelt und Regierungswerk Friedrich Wilhelms I.* (Berlin, 2020); Frank Göse, *Friedrich Wilhelm I.: Die vielen Gesichter des Soldatenkönigs* (Darmstadt, 2020); Benjamin Marschke, *Frederick William I of Prussia: A Cultural Revolution* (forthcoming).

3 Carl Hinrichs, "Der Regierungsantritt Friedrich Wilhelms I." (1956), in id., *Preußen als historisches Problem* (Berlin, 1964), 91–137.

which also, but by no means exclusively, related to his father's oversized royal court. Frederick William abolished not only almost all court offices but also countless judicial and administrative posts and drastically reduced the salaries of the remaining civil servants. The court artists left the country; the court orchestra was dissolved. The chamber trumpeters became field trumpeters; the king had opera melodies, preferably by Handel, arranged as military marches; the *Lustgarten* was turned into a military parade ground. No detail was too minor not to fall victim to the cutbacks; even the funding for paper, sealing wax, pens, and ink was halved. Among the many radical measures was an order to completely reorganize the entire judiciary within one year in order to abbreviate trials.

It was a shock. The economic consequences of the measures were catastrophic for all classes. They deprived the country of cash and brought the credit system to a standstill. Many merchants, craftsmen, and artists fled the country in a hurry; bankruptcies increased; the real estate market collapsed; the city of Berlin alone is said to have lost several thousand inhabitants. Some of the measures were later quietly revised, while others, such as the judicial reform, came to nothing. But the essential change was irreversible.

The beneficiary of this unprecedented disruption was the military, which was demonstratively placed at the top of the social hierarchy and subsequently expanded to an extent that overshadowed even the army of the hegemonic monarchy of France.

II. Culture War

Perhaps most remarkable about all this is that the king violated traditional political, moral, economic, legal, and aesthetic norms right from the start in a demonstrative manner, fully aware of the provocation. Not only did he refer to himself as "tyrant" and his rule as "despotic" but later he also explicitly identified himself with historical tyrant figures such as Caligula, the Roman emperor notorious for his soldierly behavior and humiliation of the contemporary elites.

It is not without good reason that this transformation has been labelled a "cultural revolution" or "top-down revolution." It was, in fact, a kind of culture war that was directed against both the baroque court of his father, Frederick I, and the elegant salon of his mother, Sophie Charlotte. Frederick William's culture war can be regarded as a kind of revenge for the torments of his childhood and youth. His upbringing was a martyrdom for everyone involved – for the educators as well as the pupil. We have a fantastic source for this: the diary of his Calvinist tutor Jean Philippe Rebeur.[4] Rebeur repeatedly describes the pattern of compulsive behavior that Frederick William already displayed as a child and never changed for the rest of his life. He was helplessly subject to his affects, constantly wavering between opposite extremes. Attacks of raging madness (threatening his chamber staff, for example, "to have them all hanged and their heads chopped off") alternated regularly with emotional outbursts, deep contrition, and crying fits that lasted for hours. The crown prince kicked, strangled, rolled around on the floor, beat his head against the wall, threw a playmate out of a window, and drew his rapier on his teacher, but also on himself, only to beg for proof of love a moment later. The beloved tutor suddenly and unexpectedly died in 1703, when the crown prince was fifteen, and was never replaced. Frederick William fell seriously ill for several weeks; the court physicians could not find a physical cause.

The older Frederick William grew, the more he displayed a demonstrative truculence toward the norms of his environment, such as discipline and demeanor, moderation, loyalty, etc. His mother was deeply worried and attested her son boundless avarice and a complete lack of empathy, in short: a "vicious heart."[5] One sought in vain to teach him the virtues of a good ruler and *honnête homme*: magnanimity, mildness and mercy, control of affects, but also politeness and gallantry toward the female sex.

According to his tutor's testimony, Frederick William especially hated the frivolous roles expected of him on the courtly stage. The crown prince, with his angelic curls, delicate white skin, high voice, and his strikingly feminine good looks, had, for instance, been

4 Heinrich Borkowski, ed., "Aufzeichnungen von Johann Philipp von Rebeur über seine Tätigkeit als Informator Friedrich Wilhelms I.: Vom Mai 1697 bis Januar 1701" *Hohenzollern-Jahrbuch* 8/1904: 214–230; 9/1905: 155-168.

5 Queen Sophie Charlotte to Henriette von Pöllnitz, in Jean-Pierre Erman, ed., *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Sophie Charlotte Reine de Prusse* (Berlin, 1801), 183-4.

Figure 1. Anthoni Schoonjans, *Crown Prince Frederick William as David*, oil on canvas, 1702. Schloss Charlottenburg.

obliged to perform as the biblical David or even as Cupid and had been disgusted by these roles. There was a fierce conflict between the norms of his religiously strict Calvinist tutor and the culture of gallantry and intellectual refinement at his mother's salon, a conflict that apparently overwhelmed the child. His tutor was very successful in just one respect: in inculcating in the Crown Prince a desperate fear of a merciless, wrathful God. Consequently, throughout his life he hated everything connected with the spheres of his mother and his father.

When Frederick William became king at the age of 24, he divested himself of what had tormented him in his youth. From one moment to the next, he saw himself placed in the position of being able to avenge himself for all the past mortifications by turning the uncourtly, rude habitus for which he had been humiliated and punished as a child – namely, the physical and mental attitude of the lower military ranks – into the new norm. For the same reason, he replaced the diffuse gender identity of his youth with a pointedly masculine, homo-social – and at the same time homophobic – habitus.[6]

6 Benjamin Marschke, "Competing Post-Baroque Masculinities. Pietist Masculinity and Prussian Masculinity in the Early Eighteenth Century," in Pia Schmidt, ed., *Gender im Pietismus. Netzwerke und Geschlechter-Konstruktionen* (Halle, 2015), 197–210.

As king, he staged the rituals of the aristocratic and scholarly cultures in grotesque parodistic distortions in order to lead them literally *ad absurdum*. Thus a court jester (so called *Lustiger Rat*, Jolly Councilor) was appointed president of the Royal Academy of Sciences, for example, and awarded the most prestigious titles and honors of the time. Or a distinguished law professor had to discuss the foolishness of his own profession before the assembled university. All of the rituals and requisites of the social order became objects of grotesquery. In this way the king blatantly violated the noble concept of honor which forbade ridiculing those weaker than oneself – since everyone was weaker than the sovereign. What made Frederick William's case special was that the king himself denigrated the social order to which he owed his own legitimacy.

III. Omnipotence and Impotence

Right at the beginning of his reign, the king introduced a completely new style of communication that went against the principles of premodern ruling practice. Princes were traditionally dependent on a certain degree of voluntary acceptance, loyalty, and cooperation on the part of the estates – more precisely, the nobility and the communal elites. Rule had a responsive character; the ruler had to listen to the concerns of "the country" and respond to them – simply because he was dependent on the support of the estates. There were institutionalized participation procedures for this type of responsive governance: assemblies of estates, councils, judicial colleges, etc. A good prince had to abide by the "rights and liberties of the country," which he invoked by oath at his ascension to the throne. He had to be accessible (if only in his own best interest) and listen to advice and complaints.

Frederick William I ignored this basic principle of consensual rule. Most of the time he isolated himself from Berlin in Wusterhausen, surrounded only by a few selected confidants, not accessible to delegates of the estates, foreign envoys, or even his own

ministers. Communication with the authorities in the capital and the provinces took place primarily in the form of the dreaded written orders from the solitude of his study. Administration was to function according to the military model of command and obedience. Frederick William stated this, for example, in a cabinet decree written by his own hand in his personal idiosyncratic orthography (1714): "They shall dance to my tune or the devil take me. I will have them hanged and roasted like the tsar and treat them like rebels. If I order an officer to do something, he will obey. But the damn ink-shitters think themselves superior and will not obey me. I will scorch and burn them like the tsar and deal with them like a tyrant."[7]

I would like to illustrate this autocratic pattern by one significant example, the case of Cleves-Mark, two provinces on the Lower Rhine, which were characterized by a high level of urbanization, lively trade, and proto-industrial labor. In order to better exploit the resources of these territories, Frederick William first disempowered the assemblies of estates there and abolished the communal autonomy, i.e. the core of the territories' "constitution," which he himself had confirmed when he had ascended to the throne.[8] This paved the way for increasing tariffs and a new consumption tax, *Akzise*, that was levied on all trade goods at the city gates. However, these measures soon proved disastrous for trade and commerce. Merchants looked for other trade routes, craftsmen emigrated, and the population shrank significantly. Even the highest royal tax authority had to admit that the complaints from the provinces were not unfounded and spoke out in favor of revising the new tax. They couldn't convince Frederick William, however. Quite the contrary – he threatened the critics among his ministers in an almost untranslatable rant: "I declare all who voted against the tax to be rogues, scoundrels, ignoramuses, dawdlers, useless

7 "Sie sollen nach meiner pfeiffe dance[n] oder der Deuffel hole mir. ich laße sie hengen und Brahten wie der Zahr und tractire sie wie Rebeller . . . wenn ich ein Officier was befehle so werde obediret aber die verfluchte Blagckscheißer wollen was voraus haben und mir nit obediren. ich will sengen und Brennen und [als] tirang mit Ihnen verfahren." *Acta Borussica: Denkmäler der Preußischen Staatsverwaltung im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften. *Behördenorganisation und die allgemeine Staatsverwaltung Preußens im 18. Jahrhundert,* ed. Gustav Schmoller, Otto Krauske, Victor Loewe (Berlin, 1894-1912), vol. II, 130-131 (henceforth cited as *Acta Borussica*).

8 Hugo Rachel, *Die Handels-, Zoll- und Akzisepolitik Brandenburg-Preußens 1715-1740* (Acta Borussica, Reihe Handels-, Zoll- und Akzisepolitik, vols. II,1-2) (Berlin, 1922); Ilse Barleben, *Die Entwicklung der städtischen Selbstverwaltung im Herzogtum Kleve während der Reform Friedrich Wilhelms I.,* phil. Diss. Bonn 1931; Stefan Gorissen, "Preußischer Fiskalismus oder Kampf gegen kleinstädtische Korruption? Die preußische Akzise- und Städtepolitik in Kleve-Mark unter Friedrich Wilhelm I.," in Johannes Altenberend, Burkhard Beyer, eds., *Akzisestädte im preußischen Westfalen. Die Stadtrechtsverleihungen von 1719 und die Steuerpolitik König Friedrich Wilhelms I.* (Gütersloh, 2020), 127–150.

bread eaters".[9] When even the royal commissioner, who had carried out the reform in Cleves-Mark himself, spoke out against the further expansion of the tax, Frederick William rejected his objections with the argument: "Duram [the commissioner] has certainly been bribed"[10] – a charge for which there was no evidence at all.

But even Frederick William could not completely ignore the fact that taxes from Cleves-Mark were decreasing. Even an autocrat could not override elementary market mechanisms. In 1730, he therefore appointed a highly deserving civil servant, a certain Friedrich Wilhelm von Borck, as chief administrative official of the western provinces[11] and Borck immediately embarked on an intensive reform program. However, what had been destroyed over the previous fifteen years could not be repaired quickly. The ministers in Berlin, who received the complaints and knew best about the provinces' plight, did not dare to inform the king. They refused to forward an emergency report from Borck, although they confirmed to each other confidentially "that the people in Kleve are suffering badly. Therefore, it would be good if all the circumstances were confessed to His Majesty."[12]

But the officials' fear of royal disfavor was greater than their love of truth, and not without reason. For what was needed now was a scapegoat who could be blamed for the missing taxes. And that was none other than Borck. He now found himself accused of plundering the subjects, which served as an explanation for their economic misery. The king reacted to these accusations and dismissed Borck immediately without any justification. At the Berlin court, Borck was pitied as the victim of his subaltern officials who had plotted against him in order to exonerate themselves. Borck himself did not even know what he was being accused of. He wrote to the king that he did not want mercy, but only the opportunity to defend himself to restore his honor. The king, however, refused to listen to him, let alone launch an investigation or a proper trial. His friends implored Borck not to insist on his rights but rather to submit unconditionally, for otherwise he risked being thrown into prison or even being executed (as had already happened to other top officials before). An investigation was, in fact, launched

9 „ich declarire hiemit das alle die gegen die accis gesprochen geschrieben absonderl[ich] gegen vottiret vor schelm Hundesfötter Ignoranten Benhasen Dachdiebe unnütze Broht fresser halte". Rachel, *Die Handels-, Zoll- und Akzisepolitik*, vol. II, 30-31.

10 *Acta Borussica,* vol. IV,1, 302.

11 Wilhelm Stolze, "Zwei preußische Oberpräsidenten in Rheinland-Westfalen im 18. Jahrhundert (Friedrich Wilhelm von Borcke und Karl Freiherr vom Stein)," in *Studien und Versuche zur neueren Geschichte. Max Lenz gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern* (Berlin, 1910), 246–250.

12 *Acta Borussica,* vol. II, 418.

– not on behalf of the king but of Crown Prince Frederick –, which concluded that "everything that had been insinuated against him, Borck, consisted entirely of defamation and irresponsible distortion of the facts."[13] The king, however, never admitted his obvious injustice. It was left to his son and successor to fully rehabilitate the impeccable civil servant.

13 *Acta Borussica*, vol. II, 559.

I have presented the Borck case in such detail because it reveals a great deal not only about Frederick William's character but also about the logic of autocracy. The more direct power is concentrated in the ruler's person, the more isolated he becomes. This is the paradox of autocracy (Carl Schmitt). The autocrat insisted on deciding everything himself and disempowered all institutions that traditionally provided the center with bottom-up reports. Complaints were either ignored or the complainants were threatened. If the royal orders did not have the desired immediate effect, the messengers delivering the bad news had to fear being held accountable themselves. Critics risked a lot. As a result, the king lacked reliable information. This made it almost impossible to correct even evidently wrong decisions.

When the problems became obvious, the king's claim to omnipotence created a dilemma: he was confronted with his own powerlessness. For he expected the administration to function mechanically like a regiment on drill: namely, without delays, deviations or alternative suggestions. Concessions and compromises appeared to bend his absolute will as ruler. Like in the military, he wanted to enforce his will through excessive threats of punishment, which created an atmosphere of constant fear but did not lead to the countless orders actually being enforced against all of the obstacles in the real world. Obviously, the administration of a bundle of different provinces functioned differently from that of a drilled regiment. But the king demanded that a guilty party had to be found and punished, and he could withdraw his trust quite suddenly. It was precisely those whom the king himself had endowed with the greatest powers who were exposed to the greatest risk. This led to a climate of intimidation, superficial conformism, and mutual denunciation among the officials. The omnipresent

fear led to avoidance strategies and prevented obvious mistakes from being corrected.

The autocrat's fantasy of omnipotence and his experience of impotence were two sides of the same coin. For Frederick William himself did not actually believe that what he had ordered would be performed obediently. His relationship with almost everyone around him was characterized by mistrust and fear of conspiracy. In this way he paradoxically promoted exactly what he suspected and feared the most, namely that officials were concealing grievances and betraying him. If the autocrat claimed to judge, decide, and control everything himself, then he alone was to blame for the consequences of his decisions. However, this was out of the question for Frederick William, who rejected any accountability. Therefore the civil servants faced an insoluble dilemma: the king expected their blind obedience but shirked the responsibility that he, as an absolute monarch, should have borne for the consequences of his orders. Instead, he blamed the very people who had dared to warn him about the disastrous effects of his actions. As a result, what he achieved was the opposite of administrative efficiency and control. The autocratic regime of mistrust had a tendency to reinforce itself. The key to Frederick William's rule was fear – *terreur* – which is the principle of despotism according to Montesquieu's "Spirit of the Laws;" fear of the king in a double sense: the subjects feared the king, but the king also feared the subjects.

IV. Shadow Ruler

In striking contrast to Frederick William's general mistrust and disloyalty, there was one person whose advice he was willing to follow unconditionally, namely Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, the notorious field marshal with an almost mythical reputation as an invincible war hero, a prince who had transformed his small principality into a model absolutist territory, which, however, resulted in the impoverishment of his subjects and an Imperial Court case against him. Leopold, twelve years older than Frederick William,

Fig. 2. Jakob Samuel Beck, *Portrait of Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau*, oil on canvas, eighteenth century. Schloss Molsdorf.

was the latter's most admired and revered role model – comparable only to the Russian Tsar Peter the Great whom he also admired and imitated – not least because of his fearsome appearance: Leopold was tall, had thick moustaches and an intimidating "dark" face, which the king with his short stature, soft features, light-colored, beardless cheeks and blond curls tried in vain to resemble.

The unlikely friends were united in their passion for perfectly drilled, handsome, exceptionally tall men in dashing uniforms. Together they worked on reshaping the Prussian army into a perfect, geometric, mechanically functioning piece of art.[14] Leopold was the addressee of all of the king's actions; he was the only one with whom the king kept a confidential correspondence. His judgement was the king's highest standard, and the king desperately wished to be recognized by him and proudly presented his successes to him.

But the king was only too aware of the prince's superior military experience while he himself had only conducted one military campaign – with Leopold as supreme commander. He seems to have feared that his friend might challenge his authority and therefore occasionally emphasized his role as sovereign towards him. But this did not detract from Leopold's informal influence – on the

14 Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Ars militaris: The Art of War as Aesthetic Practice in the Eighteenth Century," in Annette Gerok-Reiter, Jörg Robert, Matthias Bauer and Anna Pawlak, eds., *Different Aesthetics. Principles – Questions – Perspectives* (Berlin / Boston, 2025), 151-174.

Fig. 3. Antoine Pesne, *Portrait of King Frederick William I*, oil on canvas, early eighteenth century, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen.

contrary. The king was far too keen to gain the general's recognition. In fact, he followed Leopold's plans in almost all measures, from the most substantial reforms to the minutest details, from the colonization of East Prussia, for example, to the cut of his regiment's uniforms. In cases of conflict, Frederick William took sides with Leopold and did not hesitate to stab his own authorities in the back. Leopold, for his part, knew how to use the king's military and economic passions to direct him. Frederick William fulfilled almost every wish of the prince and his family: for example, he enfeoffed him with extensive estates in Lithuania and set up a regiment for Leopold's six-year-old son.

The relationship between the king and Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau is characteristic of the logic of autocracy as well: the influence of an intimate confidant, on whom the ruler is emotionally dependent but who has no formal responsibility, is all the more effective the less formalized it is. The result is a parasitic exploitation of royal authority by the favorite.

One could enumerate a lot of further evidence. One could, for example, talk about the king enacting laws – such as bans on violent recruiting, selling offices, duels, or forced drinking – which he did not respect himself and which, in fact, he also expected his

own officials to violate – only to hold them responsible if their behavior caused public scandal. One could also talk about the king regarding the whole realm as his private "household," explicitly calling the subjects his property, and running the government as an economic endeavor. One could talk about the king impeding the establishment of a reliable and impartial bureaucracy by denying the officials adequate salaries and any kind of legal security. One could talk about the king's erratic foreign policy, which led to the opposite of what he intended. One could also talk about the king's vindictiveness. Not to mention the unprecedented scandal that he almost had his own son sentenced to death, but then, as is well known, had his son's friend executed as a substitute.[15]

15 See, for example, Timothy Blanning, *Frederick the Great, King of Prussia* (New York, 2015).

16 Ernst Consentius, ed., *Meister Johann Dietz erzählt sein Leben* (Ebenhausen, 1915), 309.

17 Damian Hugo Graf Schönborn-Buchheim, *Acta Borussica*, vol. I, 441ff.

V. Contemporaries

The question arises as to the psychic – or psychopathological– pattern of the autocrat's behavior. However, historians are not psychologists. As obvious as it may be from today's perspective to view the king as a textbook case of a narcissist, we must be careful not to judge historical figures by standards that were unknown in their own time. As historians, we must, instead, stick to the sources. Hence the question: How did his contemporaries judge Frederick William I? People from all social strata provide judgments – from craftsmen to foreign envoys, from newspaper correspondents to members of the royal family. After Frederick William I had acceded to the throne, we read, for example, that "truly, a miserable and gloomy time has broken out," that everyone suffered "from the distress always increasing here," or that in Berlin there was "no end of lamentation and complaining."[16] The emperor's envoy reported that the "confusion and displeasure" were "indescribable and everyone . . . whether farmer, burgher, courtier, from the civil or military estate [is] so desolate and so dissatisfied, that it can't be believed."[17] Fifteen years later, a traveler through Germany wrote "He [Frederick William I] perpetrates an abominable tyranny on his subjects. . . . . He places scoundrels in his courts, to whom he gives a salary of 200 florins, so that they sell justice in order to live. . . . Merchants do not dare to travel to his states because they

Fig. 4. Frederick William I, possibly a self-portrait as an old and a young man, 1736. Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Potsdam-Sanssouci.

are plundered, insulted, and forced to serve in the army by the officers. Almost all tradesmen flee. . . . Poverty reigns in his states, and he himself behaves ridiculously." In short: "It is a misery to be a subject of this prince."[18] The author of the travelogue was none other than Montesquieu.

In other words: contemporaries perceived the king just as he provocatively staged himself, namely as a "tyrant" according to the European tradition, as expounded from Aristotle to Fénelon, whose "mirror of princes" had guided the crown prince's education. Frederick William fulfilled most of the criteria of a tyrant in an almost textbook manner – but, notably, not all of them. His chastity, his industriousness, his austerity, and his fear of God did not fit the classical pattern. These were the virtues that the Enlightenment authors of the later eighteenth century already praised in the king because they interpreted them as *bourgeois*.[19]

The ultimate motive of all the king's actions, as he himself put it, was "to be respected and admired by the whole world."[20] But exactly that was not in his power, and in this he failed completely. The most famous war hero of the time, Eugene of Savoy, ridiculed

18 Charles-Louis de Secondat Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu, "Voyage de Gratz à La Haye" (*Oeuvres complètes*, présenté et annoté par Roger Caillois) (Paris, 1949), vol. II, 847f.

19 Benjamin Marschke, "A Conspicuous Lack of Consumption. Money, Luxury, and Fashion in King Frederick William I's Prussia (c. 1713-40)," in Mary Lindemann, Jared Poley, eds., *Money in the German-Speaking Lands* (New York / Oxford, 2017), 96–120.

20 Frederick William I, Instructions for his successor (1722). *Acta Borussica* vol. III, 445.

the bizarre Prussian army, in which height and beauty were more important than military experience. Emperor Charles VI simply called him a fool. Members of his beloved Royal Regiment deserted in large numbers. Subjects and foreigners as well as court officials suspected "that the king isn't right in the head."[21] The court physicians diagnosed that he intermittently showed symptoms of mental illness – as we know now, he suffered from porphyria, a severe hereditary disease with symptoms of mental aberration.[22] And even his closest confidants – including Leopold von Anhalt – wrote behind his back that he showed signs of insanity. A unique double portrait from 1736, four years before his death, painted by the king himself in a phase of severe illness, might be interpreted as a self-portrait of the old king having painted himself as a young man, with the empty eyes of the former as a hint to his suffering and despair.[23]

21 See, for example, Christophe Louis de Seckendorf, *Journal secret* (Tübingen, 1811), 70; 87-88.

22 Claus A. Pierach, Erich Jennewein, "Friedrich Wilhelm I. und Porphyrie," *Sudhoffs Archiv* 83/1 (1999): 50–66.

23 Generaldirektion der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten Potsdam-Sanssouci, ed., *Friedrich Wilhelm I. Der Soldatenkönig als Maler* (Potsdam, 1990).

VI. Posterity

Finally, we need to address a puzzling historiographical question: How did it come about that a monarch who blatantly trampled on the fundamental norms and values of his time and who, in the eyes of his contemporaries, exhibited the signs of a classic tyrant could mutate into "the German nation's educator to Prussianhood"?

One key explanation is the indisputable fact that Frederick William's disruptive measures changed the conditions of rule and assembled the resources of money and soldiers from which his son Frederick II ("Frederick the Great") could then profit in his wars of expansion. Frederick II's military success subsequently gave the father's actions a higher meaning. The son's glory overshadowed but also enhanced the image of the father, who now appeared as the necessary forerunner, the pioneer of Prussia's and later Germany's rise to power. Although his father had humiliated and traumatized him more than anyone else, Frederick II himself paved the way for this interpretation. In a historical narrative by his own hand, Frederick not only appeared as the one who outdid his father in military matters but also as the magnanimous concilia-

tor, resolving the radical father-son conflict in higher harmony.[24] As a smart historian of his own dynasty, he shaped his father's image for generations to come. The glorious son became the chief witness of the moral and political rehabilitation of his despotic father. The political and military success of the son retroactively lent his father's obsessions an ethical aim and purpose.

Another explanatory factor is that many Enlightenment authors of the late eighteenth century sympathized with Frederick William's thrift, industriousness, and anti-court, anti-ceremonial affects – by interpreting them as "bourgeois virtues." This, however, was a misunderstanding. The fact that Frederick William was a declared enemy of court culture and the nobility's privileges in no way made him a friend of the middle class; on the contrary, he despised the middle class just as much. Yet the opinion of the enlightened public about the Soldier King was ambivalent. Although they appreciated his austerity, they were repulsed by his predilection for physical violence, his lack of self-control, his misogyny, and all the other behavioral abnormalities that were difficult to square with enlightened ideals. In the age of the Napoleonic Wars, Frederick William's image was exaggerated in a nationalistic and anti-French manner – especially by the king's first professional biographer, a friend and admirer of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel named Friedrich Förster, who depicted Frederick William as "a king who built a solid dam against the further advances of the universal dominion of Frenchness in Germany." This national achievement, according to Förster, "justified everything that we will now have to report about arbitrariness, harshness, passion, and apparent barbarism under this government." Frederick William "should be less accused of despotism than the nation [should be accused] of a slavish attitude."[25] In other words: The effeminate nation needed a severe male master. It was not Frederick William who ruled but the *Weltgeist,* "world spirit", ruling through him.

There were critical voices, too – from liberals of the early nineteenth century such as Heinrich Heine to socialist critics of Prussian-German militarism in the early twentieth century such as Franz Mehring.[26] Against this kind of criticism, Prussian histo-

24 „Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg," in Johann David Erdmann Preuss, ed., *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand* (Berlin, 1846-1856), vol. I.

25 Friedrich Förster, *Friedrich Wilhelm I. König von Preußen*, 5 vols. (Potsdam, 1834-1835), vol. I, 2, 169.

26 Heinrich Heine, "Französische Zustände" (1832) (=*Werke und Briefe*, vol. IV) (Berlin / Weimar 2.ed., 1972); Franz Mehring, *Zur deutschen Geschichte bis zu der Zeit der Französischen Revolution 1789* (=Gesammelte Schriften, vol. III) (Berlin, 1963).

rians insisted on Frederick William's highest moral dignity. Otto Krauske, for example, co-editor of the monumental *Acta Borussica*, wrote in 1901: "Many traits that were previously seen as the whims of an unpredictable, arbitrary ruler had a deeper, moral origin."[27] And the eminent historian Otto Hintze stated in 1915: "We know that this system of government was not based on personal arbitrariness or despotic whim, but on a great political necessity," namely Prussia's rise to power and later the formation of the German nation state.[28] Historians thereby ignored that Frederick William himself had not had any notion of an abstract sovereignty of the state, not to mention German unification. The National Socialists, finally, explicitly celebrated Frederick William's deviance. What they esteemed about him should be obvious: contempt for the rule of law, rabid anti-intellectualism, the militarization of society, male bonding, paradoxically combined with homophobia, "necessary cruelty," the claim to "nothing but the blindest discipline."[29] As a "royal revolutionary," Frederick William was especially suited to be a role model for National Socialists. He allowed them to appropriate the glorious tradition of the Hohenzollern dynasty and at the same time to symbolize a revolutionary rupture. This was very much in line with the intended closing of ranks between the Nazis and the old conservative elites as it was staged at the "Day of Potsdam" in 1933, when Hitler shook hands with Hindenburg. Nationalist historians – not only Nazis – discovered in Frederick William "the same spirit that just now was in the process of building something great."[30] Carl Hinrichs, the acclaimed author of an unfinished biography of the king, wrote in the foreword to the first volume in 1941 that Frederick William laid "the origins of its [Germany's] feared and admired effectiveness, organization, order, discipline, and methodology — in short, its Prussian education."[31] Historians on the opposing side of the war saw this similarly: in 1941, a biography of Frederick William was published in New York with the title "The Potsdam *Führer*."[32]

But the comparison breaks down in one essential point: all his life, Frederick William showed no taste for wars of expansion – as is well known, these were first engaged in by Frederick II. To appro-

27 Otto Krauske, "Vom Hofe Friedrich Wilhelms I.," *Hohenzollern-Jahrbuch* 5 (1901): 173–201.

28 Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk*, 282.

29 One example among many: Otto Weber-Krohse, "Friedrich Wilhelm, König in Preußen," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 5 (1934): 646-665, 758-774.

30 Oppeln-Bronikowski, *Friedrich Wilhelm I.*, 7.

31 Hinrichs, *Friedrich Wilhelm I.*, Vorwort.

32 Robert Ergang, *The Potsdam Führer: Frederick William I, Father of Prussian Militarism* (New York, 1941).

Fig. 5. Film still from *Der alte und der junge König*, dir. Hans Steinhoff, 1935. The scene shows Emil Jannings as Frederick William I and Werner Hinz as Crown Prince Frederick.

priate both kings for their own purposes, the National Socialists needed to dissolve the father-son conflict in harmony. It was no coincidence that when *Deka Film*, the production company founded by Josef Goebbels, made its very first propaganda film in 1935, the title was *Der alte und der junge König* [The Making of a King]. The film glorifies the son's absolute submission to the father, without whose brutal hardness the son could not have become "the Great." The Nazi daily newspaper *Der Völkische Beobachter* jubilated: "This is a film. The German film. Finally . . ."[33]

If the Prussian-German historians praised Frederick William as the man who taught the German people true Prussianhood, the Allied winners could take that literally after the war in 1947, when they wiped Prussia from the map on the grounds that "it had long been the bearer of militarism and reaction." In postwar Germany, suddenly no one wanted to know anything about such a continuity. Historians, however, repressed the memory of how energetically they themselves had contributed to this narrative of continuity. This is not the final chapter of the story though. It is not surprising that Frederick William is currently experiencing a certain renaissance among the new German Far Right. Professional historians tend to normalize him and warn against "critical exaggeration."[34] In my opinion, there is nothing to exaggerate, the sources are bizarre enough. Trivializing this king does not do him justice; it ignores what makes him interesting in the first place. I am convinced that his biography can teach us something about the logic of autocracy and about the power of historical post-rationalization and posthumous glorification. I would like to

33 *Der Völkische Beobachter*, February 7th, 1935.

34 See, for example, Frank Göse, Jürgen Kloosterhuis, eds., *Mehr als nur Soldatenkönig: Neue Schlaglichter auf Lebenswelt und Regierungswerk Friedrich Wilhelms I.* (Berlin, 2020); Frank Göse, *Friedrich Wilhelm I.: Die vielen Gesichter des Soldatenkönigs* (Darmstadt, 2020).

conclude with a quotation from the great Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt's *Reflections on History*:

> The crimes of the man, therefore, who bestows on a community greatness, power and glory, are condoned . . . but he must then continue to be great and realize that he will bequeath to his successors a fateful legacy, the necessity of genius, if what has been won by force is to be preserved until the world regards it as a right. Here everything depends on success. . . . Yet from the fact that good came of evil, and relative happiness of misery, we cannot in any way deduce that evil and misery were not, at the outset, what they were.[35]

35 Jacob Burckhardt, *Reflections on History,* transl. M.D. Hottinger (London, 1943), 198-199, 213. Burckhardt, who was a Swiss citizen and not a subject of the German Empire, could afford to turn down an appointment to the most prominent German professorship of history, the succession to Leopold von Ranke at Berlin University, in 1872.

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The Power of Photobooks: Crafting (Jewish) History from Below

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In one of the most famous and frequently repeated anecdotes in histories of photography (and the Holocaust), Susan Sontag recalls her "negative illumination" upon seeing images of liberation from Nazi-run concentration camps.[1] Sontag explains in her seminal work *On Photography* that she saw those horrible pictures as a twelve-year old in a Santa Monica bookshop. What is hardly ever remarked upon in the many retellings of this anecdote, however, is that Sontag's revelation happened through a specific medium and form of encounter. She saw the pictures in a photobook. Sontag's recollection and the historiography of photography it prompted have a profound socio-cultural history, binding the victims she observed to the material form in which she encountered them.

In fact, history — and Jewish history in particular — has long been communicated through photobooks, a vernacular form of media that Jewish authors and publishers themselves helped pioneer and shape. I use the term "photobook" to describe published volumes where text and photographs coexist, but where

1 Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, (New York, 1977), 14. Photo historian Susie Linfield echoes Sontag in affirming her own, quite similar revelation. Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago, 2010), xiii.

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photographic images are the main focus or a significant section. These are not private albums never intended for public viewing; they are documents created by authors, editors, and publishers with specific readerships in mind. Photobooks facilitate a sustained and particular visual encounter with a subject and possess distinctive properties. They are portable artifacts and are more durable than other photographic media like magazines, newspapers, and exhibitions. These works, ready to be pulled off shelves in homes and libraries, acquire an intimate significance while their images provide a stable, ready-made source for adaptations in other media.

Despite their importance, photobooks have not been studied as much as other photographic formats. To be sure, art historians have traced a canonical history that emphasizes the origins of the medium and its significant artistic achievements.[2] It is generally recognized that the first photobook was Henry Fox Talbot's *The Pencil of Nature,* published in 1844 in London.[3] The book showed cityscapes and monuments from across Europe and was a landmark in the history of illustrated book printing, even if it was not a financial success at the time. The great photobook era, according to art historical accounts, came nearly a hundred years later, in the 1920s and early 1930s, when photo-illustrated mass journalism became ascendent.[4] It was a period of both ubiquitous press photography and avant-garde modernists who used pictures to offer entirely new perspectives on their societies. Photographers and publishers, especially in Weimar Germany, reimagined news events, portraiture, and urban modernity. Today their books are highly coveted art objects that fetch large sums.[5]

Yet these canonical — and now classic — art volumes are by no means the only kind of photobook. Most photobooks, in fact, are less venerated, and hardly anything is written about them.

2 There are several historical anthologies of photobooks. Perhaps the most prominent among them is Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Vol. 1* (London, 2004). See also, Andrew Roth, *The Open Book: A History of the Photographic Book from 1878 to the Present* (Gothenburg, 2004).

3 See Vered Maimon, "Displaced 'Origins:' William Henry Fox Talbot's The Pencil of Nature," *History of Photography*, 32, no. 4 (2008): 314-325. See also Graham Smith, "H. Fox Talbot's 'Scotch Views' for Sun Pictures in Scotland (1845)" in *The Photobook from Talbot to Ruscha and Beyond*, eds., Patricia di Bello, Collette Wlson, and Shamoon Zamir, (London, 2020), 17-34.

4 This is the subject of a monograph by Pepper Stetler, *Stop Reading! Look!: Modern Vision and the Weimar Photographic Book* (Ann Arbor, 2015). For an inkling of how dominant the photo-illustrated press was at that time, the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* (*BIZ*) had circulation figures of 1.85 million, see Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton, 2007), 203.

5 Original editions of now-classic works from this era, such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's *Malerei, Photographie, Film* (1925), Germaine Krull's *Métal* (1928), or August Sander's *Antlitz der Zeit* (1929) have each sold for tens of thousands of dollars at auction houses like Christie's and Sotheby's.

Photobooks are, after all, a mass medium. They have been used not just by artists but by amateurs, journalists, states, and businesses — really everyone — and for all kinds of purposes. Coffee table books, for example, are often a commercial form of photobook that has been a staple of Western homes since the early postwar years. The publishing houses that popularized those glossy, oversized works, such as Phaidon or Thames & Hudson, have roots in the networks of German experimental publishing and among the mobile Jewish emigres at the heart of my research.[6] Coffee table books are not artistic objects per se but they do permeate lives in fundamental ways by offering interpretations of the world outside and influencing other media well beyond the books themselves.

My dissertation and now book project, *Capturing Difference, Making History: The Photobook as a Jewish Artifact*, explores how German-speaking Jews advanced the medium of the photobook and then used it as a tool of crafting a "history from below," a term coined by British Marxist historians in the postwar era to refer to a historical approach that centers the perspectives of ordinary or marginalized people. History from Below is a way of recovering and elevating those perspectives through a use of vernacular sources. Jewish photographers, editors, and publishers achieved a form of making History from Below by turning the photobook into a dynamic story-telling site that celebrated difference. They progressively deployed the medium to document Jewish experiences, centering themselves as protagonists in those stories. Over time, the same photobooks provided the basis for multi-media adaptations and transpositions (through films, plays, museums, and more). Those transpositions popularized Jewish history for all kinds of publics, helping to spread the perception that the twentieth century as a whole was in fact a lot about what had happened to the Jews.

The roots of this development are to be found in the German-speaking world, where early twentieth-century experimentation in visual storytelling and publishing made the evolution of the photobook possible. In the aftermath of the Second World War, that culture went global. *Capturing Difference* details this trajectory by focusing on five particular volumes, case studies that together cover

6 Phaidon Press was originally Phaidon Verlag, a Viennese firm (Ludwig Goldscheider and Bela Horovitz) that sold to a British publisher (George Allen & Unwin) just before Nazi annexation of Austria. Thames & Hudson, founded by the Neuraths, were also Viennese and re-established their firm in late 1930s London. Two bestselling works from these firms exemplify the spirit of democratizing art through photobooks in the early postwar period: Ernst Gombrich's *The Story of Art: With 370 Illustrations*, (published with Phaidonin 1950) and the decades-long *World of Art* series begun in 1958 by Thames & Hudson.

the period from the 1910s to the 1970s. While each photobook captures an aspect of Jewish life, they focus on very different topics: Vienna's Prater Park in the 1910s, Vilnius's Jewish quarter in the 1930s, the atrocities of Nazi-occupation and the Holocaust, a founding myth of Israel in the 1940s, and finally the memorialization of Freud's Vienna home in the 1970s. These books were all produced by a German-speaking network in which social marginality and visual-textual expertise merged; and they built on one another's foundations. I locate the origins of this evolution at a particular moment around the turn of the century, when the photobook began evolving into a dynamic format for storytelling. Jewish outsiders and their sense of outsiderness were key in propelling that project forward. This process is apparent in one particular work, the subject of my first dissertation chapter, a 1911 book titled *Wurstelprater*.

I. Crafting a Form of Difference

The *Wurstelprater* book merged several Jewish genres and areas of interest: street photography, the feuilleton, and experimental publishing.[7] *Wurstelprater* is a small book, five by seven inches, and it showed a very different side of Vienna from the kind of city well publicized in the media of the time. This is not the city of the Ringstrasse monuments or wide boulevards that you would find in picturesque postcards of the period. Nor is it an image of the Prater park that we might expect to find based on its title. Instead, the book offers an immersive experience in what was then a much-maligned section of a public park known in the press for its sex traffic, sensational murders, and just strange types of people — a lot of whom were foreign.[8] The book celebrates these people, especially the show-booth entertainers and their performances in the park.

Wurstelprater guides the reader along a tour of the Prater over the course of a day, pausing to see performances and finding clues to what motivates the artists. In this journey, the reader encounters a wide range of types: a mountain climbing "giant," a "fortune teller," a "woman without a torso," a "marine diver," a group of "jugglers," as well as many kinds of spectators just absorbed in the

7 Felix Salten and Emil Mayer, *Wurstelprater* (Vienna, 1911).

8 See Nancy M. Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Vienna*, (London, 2017), 147-151 and Daniel Mark Vyleta, *Crimes, Jews, and News: Vienna 1890-1914* (New York & Oxford, 2007).

Figure 1. A group of unidentified spectators, photo by Emil Mayer, from *Wurstelprater* (Vienna: Brüder Rosenbaum Verlag, 1911), 27.

act of watching (see figure 1). The book is explicitly satirical and the reader is never supposed to be convinced by the individual performances. Each portrait is intentionally and humorously candid. The self-styled marine diver is revealed as delusional, just a man who puts his head in an underwater bucket. The fortune-teller explains to the narrator that she does not possess any mystical abilities but that she inherited the gig from her dead husband and uses it to make ends meet. All of these vignettes are really classic *Judenwitze* ("Jewish jokes") premised on the humor of exclusion from the mainstream. They make fun of the fact that the entertainers can neither fit in nor fully perform their act, and the book attempts to visualize this humor, bringing it into focus.

At the same time, all of the characters are afforded a certain dignity. They are explicitly celebrated for being different and for tolerating one another's strangeness. They sing each other's songs, dance together, and look forward to seeing the same performers every year.[9] Through the book, the Prater becomes a space that can momentarily suspend wider sociopolitical tensions. This vision of suspended judgement and a more tolerant society was a projection of its authors more than anything rooted in reality: it is what some acculturated Jews hoped imperial Vienna to be like. Contemporary reviews of the book understood it to be a fanciful cultural artifact, something full of whimsy and perhaps a little embellished by the nostalgia of its authors.[10] And we know that it really was fantasy because in reality the park was denigrated by the press, and the highly personalized show-booth culture the book depicts was widely

9 Salten, *Wurstelprater*, 39, 44, and 47.

10 This was the theme of multiple reviews: "Wurstelprater," *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, (June 2, 1912), 3-4 and "Bücherschau," *Pester Lloyd Morgenblatt*, (February 11, 1912), 34-35.

considered a blight and something to avoid. For this very reason city authorities progressively demolished this space and replaced it with other attractions such as cinemas and Ferris Wheels.[11]

The particular Jewish perspective that the book puts forward was inventive in a formal sense, too. The text and images that form the book had already appeared separately and ephemerally in different media forms. Two different authors (and the publisher, Brüder Rosenbaum) stitched them together in the new format of a photobook. This was a major step forward in making photographs the center of storytelling. The book's photographer, Emil Mayer, was an amateur who meticulously captured Viennese street life throughout the early twentieth century and published widely on new photographic processes. Mayer was especially interested in the marginalized and the outcast. He frequently captured, for example, new Eastern Jewish immigrants to city.[12] Most of Mayer's photographs were unpublished and remained unseen for several decades. The photographs Mayer used in the 1911 book, however, had already been shown before, when he had used them in a series of popular shows and lectures around Vienna. During these shows he described his particular process for taking pictures, a process that included a personally modified and elaborate, hidden camera apparatus to obscure himself so that he could take candid snapshots of ordinary life. Mayer himself actually appears in the book, staring at the reader while a group of boys are captivated by an entertainer.[13]

The text of the *Wurstelprater* photobook was written by the *feuilleton* writer Felix Salten and was much older than Mayer's pictures. The book brought together and republished a dozen articles on the Prater that Salten had first published in the 1890s. Salten is better known today as the author of the 1923 novel, Bambi — which he wrote as a political allegory about the condition and treatment of European Jews.[14] Coming together in a photobook, Salten and Mayer combined street photography and the *feuilleton* to provide an immersive experience that readers would never have encountered before. Text and images did not simply support but actively shaped one another in order to showcase a space where marginality and difference were respected and even venerated.

11 For how a crackdown on street and park entertainments was part of this urban agenda, see Robert Wistrich, "Karl Lueger and the Ambiguities of Viennese Antisemitism," *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 45, (1983): 251-263.

12 These were later published in Emil Mayer, *Damals in Wien: Menschen um die Jahrhundertwende* (Vienna, 1995).

13 Salten, *Wurstelprater*, 9.

14 For the fuller connections at work in Salten's writings, see Paul Reiter, *Bambi's Jewish Roots* (London, 2015) and Beverly Driver Eddy, *Felix Salten, Man of Many Faces* (Riverside, 2010).

In other words, this unusual book reveals the photo essay in book form as emerging from specific Jewish affinities. This particular vision was not to last. Vienna, of course, became less multiethnic after 1918 in the wake of the Austrian empire's dissolution. The specific section of the park detailed in the book was effectively demolished during the First World War to make way for an armaments exhibition.[15] In addition to these ruptures of border and space, both Salten and Mayer were torn from the city they loved. After the Anschluss in 1938, Salten fled to Switzerland, where he died in 1945.[16] Mayer took his own life in May 1938 as a means of escaping Nazi occupation.[17] In Nazi Vienna, a revisionist history of the Prater published in the official press "aryanized" the park, landing a final blow to the turn-of-the-century vision propagated in *Wurstelprater*.[18]

Yet Mayer and Salten's collaboration foreshadowed more than impending tragedy and the destruction of a particular imaginary. Their book initiated an experimental tendency to document difference and put it at the center of durable, visual narratives. And in this sense, they anticipated the future. After the First World War, and particularly by the mid-1920s, photobooks became an ever-present mass medium. This moment of visual explosion was underpinned by a confidence in the communicative power of images.[19] The great illustrated newspapers and photobooks of this period started emancipating photographs from text as the images began to take on rhetorical and argumentative functions themselves.[20] At the same time, the 1920s and 1930s were, of course, times of crisis for European Jews, who were increasingly visible targets of a renewed antisemitism.[21] In fact, these two contrasting currents – visual promise and social crisis – came together in the effort to address contemporary Jewish issues in photobook form.

15 Monika Sommer, "Zur Kriegsausstellung 1916 im Wiener Prater als mächtige Antwort der Monarchie an das feindliche Ausland," in Alfred Pfoser and Andreas Weigl, eds., *Im Epizentrum des Zusammenbruchs: Wien im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 2013).

16 Eddy, *Man of Many Faces*.

17 I found the documentation detailing the suicide and the confiscation of Mayer's estate in the Austrian State Archives, AT-OeStA/AdRE-uReang VVst VA Vermögensanmeldung, 1938-1945, case file 44435.

18 For an example of this process of retroactively making the park Aryan in the press, see "Praterverbot der Wiener" *Deutscher Telegraf*, (August 18, 1938).

19 Lazlo Maholoy-Nagy was one of the great theorists behind this confidence, but the most succinct version of its expression is summarized in the essay by Johannes Molzahn, "Nicht mehr lessen! Sehen!" *Das Kunstblatt,* vol 12, no.3 (1928): 78-82.

20 This is the key argument in Daniel Magilow, *The Photography of Crisis: The Photo Essays of Weimar Germany* (University Park, PA, 2012).

21 The condition of Jewish statelessness and heightened visibility as stateless people after the destruction of empires in the wake of the First World War is what Hannah Arendt identified as one of the foundational conditions for the emergence of totalitarianism. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitariansim* (New York, 1951). I am referring to section I of the book, but particularly "Between Pariah and Parvenu," 56-67.

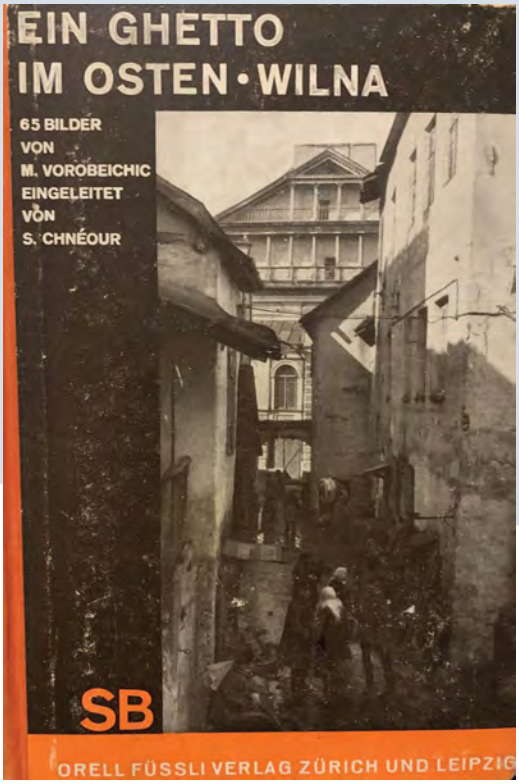


Figure 2. Original edition cover of *Ein Ghetto im Osten, Wilna*. Courtesy of the Raviv Family Archive

The medium became a key site for articulating contemporary Jewish concerns.[22]

Artists like Moi Ver, the photographer at the heart of my second chapter (and case study), used the photobook to document a way of life under threat while also celebrating difference. Ver, whose real name at the time was Moshe Vorobeichic (and later Moshe Raviv), came from Vilnius but honed his photographic eye as a Bauhaus student in the late 1920s. His 1931 book *Ein Ghetto im Osten, Wilna* (See Figure 2) is an avant-garde treatment of Jewish Vilnius, made primarily for a German public, although there were subsequent multilingual editions in several combinations of Hebrew, Yiddish, and English. *Ein Ghetto* was commissioned by a Swiss-German publisher as part of a series that tried to visualize all of contemporary civilization.[23] Ver's much more famous book, *Paris* (1931),

22 The photobook, in this sense, was a visual tool of an already extant tradition of recording aspects of Jewish life. S. An-Sky had taken a corpus of ethnographic photographs of Jewish life a generation earlier. See Eugen M. Avrutin, ed., *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-Sky's Ethnographic Expeditions* (Waltham, 2009). For more on the rediscovery of An-Sky's ethnography, see Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Worlds of S. An-Sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, (Stanford, 2006).

23 Other books in the series included Fred Hildenbrandt, *Tänzerinnen der Gegenwart* (Leipzig and Zürich, 1931); Carl L. Luther, *Olympischer Wintersport* (Leipzig and Zürich, 1929); A. W. Lunatscharsky, *Der Russische Revolutionsfilm*, (Leipzig and Zürich, 1929). To make Eastern European Jews part of contemporary "civilization" was political, and a source of contention even among Jews. See Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The Eastern European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison, 1982).

offers a similar treatment of the city of light and helped initiate the emergence of modernist Parisian photobooks in the 1930s.[24]

The purpose of *Ein Ghetto* was to serve as an emergency documentary of Jewish Vilnius and to push back against the era's prevailing degrading, racist discourse about Eastern European Jewry. The book argued that Eastern Jews and their built environments were objects of beauty, something to be proud of. Vorobeichic argued this visually by marshalling all the modernist techniques at his disposal. Through his ground-breaking book, Jewish Vilnius is reimagined through dizzying verticalities, relentless montages, and attention to contrasting geometric patterns.[25] Combatting the period's physiognomic and racist reading of Jewish faces, Vorobeichic offers subtle portraits that purposefully obscure key features, like the eyes of several men he captured.[26] His only individual, somewhat straight portrait reads simply "the Jew" in what was likely a sarcastic way of offering up what some readers might expect to find. In documenting this world, Vorobeichic was embedding a visual autobiography within his documentary. Vilnius was his hometown and he was capturing the streets, buildings, and people he knew well. His captions, whose meaning varies depending on the language in which you read them, are full of ironic jokes and a winking recognition about the failure of outsiders to comprehend the richness of this world (see figure 3).[27] In this sense, Moi Ver's book was an iteration of the same celebration of difference that was already evident in Mayer and Salten's work two decades earlier.

Vorobeichic and his documentary interests were by no means an aberration. Rather, they were part of a much broader project of photographically documenting interwar Jewish life through an array of grassroots initiatives that used photography and photobooks. The most famous and celebrated, but no means only, example is that of Roman Vishniac's enormous archive of Jewish Eastern Europe from the same period — though his work was only published in book form just after the war.[28] Publishing houses and aid societies encouraged Central European Jews to go East to capture and preserve Jewish life. In hindsight, these records appear to presage the Holocaust (or sometimes the images are even erroneously understood as illustrating the Holocaust), but, in fact, they were particular to discourses

24 Moi Ver, *Paris*, (Paris, 1931). In the wake of Vorobeichic's photobook, Paris became an object of modernist photographic documentary and history. See Catherine E. Clark, *Paris and the Cliché of History: The City and Photographs 1860-1970* (Oxford, 2018), 77-82.

25 M. Vorobeichic, *Ein Ghetto im Osten, Wilna: 65 Bilder von M. Vorobeichic eingeleitet von S. Chneour* (Leipzig and Zürich, 1931).

26 Ibid., 38, 39 and 64.

27 One of the captions to a montage of a woman hawking inexpensive wares reads: "the material wealth of Israel," a dark, tongue-in-cheek comment on antisemitic stereotypes with an image of a clearly impoverished woman. Ibid., 31.

28 This was first published as Roman Vishniac, *Polish Jews: A Pictorial Record* (New York, 1947). The basic structure of the book was amended over time both for exhibitions and for subsequent photobooks.

Figure 3. Montage of goods and peddler. From: *Ein Ghetto im Osten, Wilna: 65 Bilder von M. Vorobeichic eingeleitet von S. Chneour (Leipzig and Zürich: Orell Füssli Verlag, 1931),* 32. Courtesy of the Raviv Family Archive.

and imperatives of the time — many of which considered Eastern European Jews to be distinct from those living in Germany or further West. These documentary projects also functioned as a canvas for different forms of making distinctly Jewish artistic expressions.

During this same period there were other photobooks – often created by the same artists and publishers – that communicated more explicit political messages to other Jews. Thus, the 1920s and early 1930s saw an explosion of Zionist works – all of them published in German and by German publishing houses – that documented the transformation of Jewish Palestine.[29] By the early 1930s, these works progressively became tools to urge Jews to emigrate from Europe, and especially Germany, however they could. New visual strategies were invented to convey the urgency, such as features on "cute" Jewish children designed to convince German Jewish mothers that Palestine was safe and welcoming for their families.[30]

29 Nearly every Zionist illustrated work from the 1920s through the 1930s was published by a German publishing house, while the contributors and artists came from all over Europe.

30 See Daniel Maiglow, "Cute Jews: Modernist Photographic Forms and Minor Aesthetic Categories in 'Jüdische Kinder in *Erez Israel. Ein Fotobuch*," *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 64, no. 1 (2019): 47-71. These persuasion efforts were really a shared feature of the same project that was documenting life elsewhere. In fact, Tim Gidal, the author of the last German Zionist work had taken his own unpublished documentary photographs of Polish Jewish life. And the same Vorobeichic who published the Vilnius ghetto book traveled and photographed Palestine for Zionist publications. Both ultimately emigrated to Palestine in the mid-1930s and later became Israelis.

Whether they showed the transformation of Palestine or lent a new eye toward everyday European life, Jewish-themed photobooks in the interwar years asserted difference while functioning as documentaries for wider readerships. In that period of anxiety and uncertainty, new visual strategies were invented to communicate political messages, and the photobook both encapsulated and advanced those experimentations. All of this was forged in German-speaking Europe, which not only nurtured experimental talent but housed the major publishing and distribution networks. But, critically, that culture continued to evolve abroad in multiple contexts after the Second World War, particularly in light of the emigration and forced migration of the people who had originally made it possible.

II. Turning to the Past, Enduring Multi-Media Histories

My third chapter contends with the destruction of the world captured in the previous two parts: the horrific violence committed against Jews during the Holocaust. It also grapples with a temporal and medial shift in photobooks, from documenting to interpreting the past, as well as influencing a set of media well beyond the printed page. Scholarship on the Holocaust has focused on how the tragedy became partially known to the wider public through sparse images that were published in newspapers or in pop-up exhibitions in the immediate postwar.[31] Those pictures, taken by the allies and photojournalists, were almost entirely aftermath images, revealing a system of concentration camps, corpses, and emaciated survivors.[32] However, very early in the postwar, survivors themselves actually resorted to publishing photobooks in a frantic effort to provide a more comprehensive and detailed picture of what they had experienced between 1939 and 1945. These books were published by Jewish historical commissions and by people in displaced persons camps and were sent around the world already in late 1945 and early 1946. In resorting to this medium and in the editing strategies they deployed, survivors built upon the interwar culture of the documentary to offer an immediate historical record.

The work at the heart of my third chapter — and a progenitor of many other visual-historical Holocaust photobooks — is

31 There were several atrocity exhibitions in the United States, the UK, and France. Many of these exhibitions used a shared set of imagery that was also widely seen in the press. For an excellent analysis of this wave of imagery, see Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago, 1998). In particular, Zelizer's chapter on atrocity photography ("Covering Atrocity in Image") recovers both how pervasive the liberation images were in the spring of 1945 and how that moment changed how atrocity images could be presented to the public.

32 Margaret Bourke-White took a series of photographs of liberated camps in April 1945, some of which were published in "Atrocities: Capture of the German Concentration Camps Piles up Evidence of Barbarism that Reaches the Low Point of Human Degradation," *LIFE* (May 7, 1945).

Figure 4. Collage of Forced Labor, from: *Zagłada żydostwa polskiego: Album zdjęć; Extermination of Polish Jews: Album of Pictures* (Łódź: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, 1945), 33. Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Extermination of Polish Jews, an unflinching account of what Jews faced under Nazi-occupied Poland during the war.[33] It was published by the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland, a group of survivors who were gathering and publishing everything they could under the auspices and permission of Polish authorities.[34] Some of this same group were also trained historians (from Central Europe) and familiar with interwar photobook documentaries.[35] *Extermination* shows many of the most gruesome aspects of persecution and mass murder: including entire demarcated sections dedicated to ritual humiliations, forced labor, ghettoization, mass executions, deportations, and killing sites. The book is formed of two-hundred and fifty found photographs, primarily from the perpetrators and taken from albums as well as published propaganda in the illustrated press. Drawing directly from interwar documentary predecessors, *Extermination* reimagined the photographs into a profound and composite view of life and death under occupation. Borrowing from the strategies of earlier photobooks, all multi-lingual volumes, it used plenty of modernist techniques, like collage, in order to express perspectives of victims not evident in the many images themselves.[36]

The specific collages that separate each section were made by a survivor of the Lodz ghetto, who had made them in a private

33 Philip Friedman and Gershon Taffet, *Zagłada żydostwa polskiego: Album zdjęć; Extermination of Polish Jews: Album of Pictures* (Łódź, 1945).

34 For how this group organized and the activities they carried out, see Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record!: Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (Oxford, 2012) and Natalia Aleksiun, "The Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland 1944-1947," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 20 (2008): 76-98.

35 The head of the Commission, Philip Friedman, for example, had spent years in Vienna where he wrote his dissertation under Salo Baron.

36 Friedman, *Extermination of Polish Jews*, 11, 27, 33, 36, and 40.

Figure 5. Collage of Deportations, from: *Extermination of Polish Jews*, 40. Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

album in order to criticize the conditions of the ghetto and its Judenrat.[37] In the book, the collages are repurposed (without attribution) to distinguish phases of deprivation and persecution. They contribute, in other words, to an argument regarding the nature of anti-Jewish persecution as something with identifiable, overlapping stages that built upon one another. In this way, the book was more than a collection of images but an immediate (and nearly universally intelligible) historicization many years before the Holocaust was historicized by scholars. (see Figures 4 and 5).[38]

Throughout, the book also deploys creative editing at a time when there were few pictures actually available. To pick out one example among many, one page in the deportation section has four photographs demonstrating "Germans hunting Jews."[39] The four photos came from completely different ghettos but they were put together on the page to suggest an impression of a real scene survivors had witnessed (see Figure 6). The book, in these ways, took creative license in order to reconstruct the texture and action of persecution. In taking leaps like these, *Extermination of Polish Jews* departed from its use as document of evidentiary value and became an explicit means of persuasion.[40]

The book, and other survivor-visual histories that followed it, worked against a mainstream display of atrocity imagery that

37 The collages were made by Arie Prinz (later Arie Ben-Menachem), who did not know that his images were used in this book. There were 18 collages in the original album, probably made in 1942 or 1943.

38 There is a synergy between the book and the very first comprehensive history of the Holocaust by Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago, 1961). Hilberg's pioneering historiographical framework for the Holocaust (then called "destruction") was that it occurred in six stages: definition, isolation, emigration, ghettoization, deportation and mass murder. These stages are in line with how the photobook schematized the process but did so in pictures and immediately after events.

39 Friedman, *Extermination of Polish Jews*, 37.

40 Other sections of the book amplify rumor and myth, including the now falsified idea that the Nazis made soap from their victims.

Figure 6. Four images illustrating "Germans hunting Jews," from: *Extermination of Polish Jews*, 37. Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

downplayed or mystified Jewish victimhood.[41] What is more, it offered a rare, detailed glimpse – which had never truly reached the public during the actual conflict – of what had happened to Jews during the war years. Despite its low initial circulation, the images and visual logic of the book progressively influenced a whole range of media. The original 1945 edition of *Extermination of Polish Jews* consisted of approximately five thousand copies; a second print run was published in 1946 and a Spanish language version the same year, slightly re-edited in Argentina — mainly to include pictures from regions of the Polish diaspora there.[42] Another work, *Our Destruction in Pictures*, assembled by refugee survivors in a British DP camp, copied *Extermination's* basic formula and included many of the same pictures.[43] Many of the images from these books were also copied and reproduced over the following decades in dozens of Yiddish and Hebrew memorial

41 Across a range of journalistic and press photo-illustrated books that used liberation images, the impression was given that all civilians had suffered under Nazi occupation and that the Jews were one group among them. See, for example, Clark Kinnaird, *This Must Not Happen Again, The Black Book of Fascist Horror* (New York, 1945) and Adolf R. Lerner, *The March of Evil: A History of the Rise and Fall of the Fascist Evil: Photo-record of Axis Crime*, (New York, 1945).

42 The Spanish language version is titled, *Exterminacion de los Judios en Polonia* but does not contain any introductory information by Phillip Friedman or Gershon Taffet and instead has an introduction by I. L. Hamburg. This version does not use Ben-Manchem's montages and is smaller in its dimensions. It deploys a few more photographs that the original version does not, including shots of mass graves in "Białystok." That inclusion may have been added to resonate with Argentinian Jews, many of whom had familial ties to the city. See Rebecca Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and its Diaspora* (Bloomington, 2010).

43 Rafael Olevski, Dawid Rosental, and Paul Trepman, eds., *Our Destruction in Pictures*, (Bergen-Belsen, Central Committee of the Liberated Jews in the British Zone, 1946).

books, or Yizkor books, that commemorated the loss of specific towns and cities.[44]

While those works maintained a visual understanding for Jewish readerships, survivor-authored Holocaust photobooks and their many editions reached the mainstream, too. Images from *Extermination of Polish Jews*, for example, appeared directly as resources for documentary films such as Alain Resnais' 1956 landmark documentary, *Night and Fog*. The film not only reproduces a series of photographs from the book but, in a pivotal scene that details atrocities outside of camps, shows photographs in the exact order and sequence of the corresponding section of the photobook — although the individual images assembled there had come from entirely different sources.[45] Decades later, when the Holocaust began to penetrate popular consciousness and many more documentary images were found and displayed, the early survivor histories still retained an important role in authenticating the Holocaust. Most obviously, the books were used by filmmakers (and playwrights) for crafting set designs. To cite one example among many, Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002) includes several establishing shots of the Warsaw Ghetto that mirror images first published in survivor-authored photobooks.[46]

The migration of collections of images from the printed page to the screen illustrates one medial trajectory of photobooks and their often obscured role in structuring broader imaginaries, shaping encounters with the past beyond their material format. My fourth chapter, centering on the 1948 work *Destination Palestine*, exemplifies a case of enormous success in streamlining images in this way for a global public. The book, which was in conscious dialogue with interwar documentary works and Holocaust visual histories, presented the writings and photography of the photojournalist and foreign correspondent Ruth Gruber. An American from Brooklyn, Gruber had spent the late 1920s and early 1930s studying in Germany, where she became, according to German and American newspapers, the youngest Ph.D. ever, at the age of twenty.[47] Gruber later explained that those years awakened her love of photography and that she would scour

44 The multi-volume Yizkor series on Warsaw, as well as those on Lodz, Bialystok, and Krakow all use photographs first published in *Extermination of Polish Jews*. These volumes and hundreds more like them can be accessed digitally through the New York Public Library: https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/yizkor-book-collection#/?tab=navigation

45 The "explanatory notes" section at the end of the book (eight pages in total) details how each image came from a different ghetto. Friedman, *Extermination of Polish Jews*, 107.

46 Shots of Warsaw ghetto bridge, traffic between zones, and the construction of the ghetto's wall are all first covered in survivor photobooks and reconstructed in the film.

47 "Girl PhD at 20 Thinks She'll Try Hand at Reporting" *New York Daily News* September 1, 1932. "Ph.D. for Girl of 20" *New York Times*, August 19, 1932., "Ruth Gruber, 20, Back as Ph.D. to Try Journalism" *Brooklyn Eagle*, August 31, 1932.

bookshops for the latest publications. When she was awarded her doctorate, she met the then-mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer, who gave her several photobooks of the city as a gift that acknowledged her passion.[48]

In the U.S., Gruber embarked on a career in journalism, where, informed by education in late Weimar print culture, she often (and unusually for American publications of the period) combined her own textual and photographic reporting.[49] Taking a job as a foreign correspondent with the *New York Herald Tribune*, Gruber traveled to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Arctic, paying particular attention to how women fared under each regime.[50] During the war, Gruber traveled again to Europe under a pilot program designed to gather and resettle some displaced (mostly Jewish) refugees in the United States.[51] All of these experiences prepared Gruber for her reporting on the end of the British mandate in Palestine and turning that experience into a foundational nationalist mythology in a photobook.

Her photobook *Destination Palestine* details the events of the summer of 1947, when American Zionists tried and *failed* to take Jewish Holocaust survivors on a ship (the SS *Exodus*) from France to Palestine. This happened in the context of the British government restricting Jewish immigration to the Palestinian Mandate after the war, even as Zionists all over the world, including Ruth Gruber, were committed to breaking the Mandate and creating a Jewish state.[52] The *Exodus*, which carried over 4,500 refugees, was the largest ship that attempted to break the British blockade; but

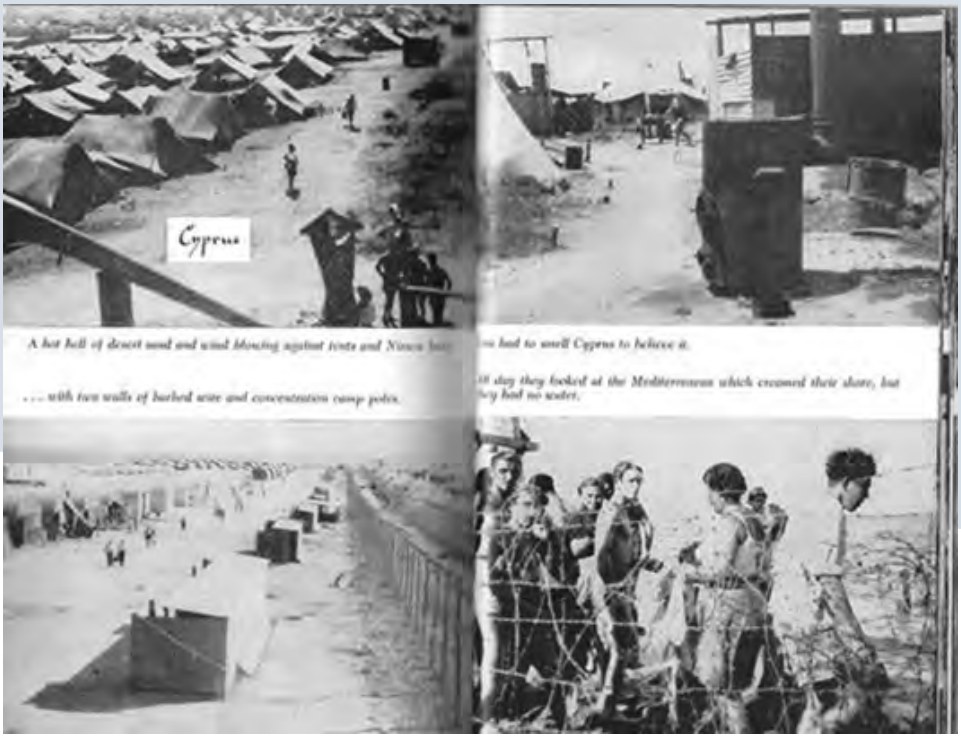
48 In his office, Adenauer gifted her *Köln: Werden-Wesen-Wollen einer deutschen Stadt* (Cologne, 1928) and *Der Goldene Schrein: Ein Buch über Köln* (Cologne, 1928) Both titles are recorded in Ruth Gruber, *Ahead of Time: My Early Years as a Foreign Correspondent* (New York, 1991), 132-133.

49 Photo reporting, text reporting, and photo editing were typically different jobs. The great photojournalists who contributed their work to *LIFE* magazine, for example, had their images captioned by a different set of staff. Mid-century American newspapers operated similarly. For an explanation of how the industry worked, see Nadya Bair, *The Decisive Network: Magnum and the Postwar Image Market*, (Berkeley, CA, 2020).

50 This is captured not just by her reporting but by her first book just before the war: Ruth Gruber, *I went to the Soviet Arctic* (New York, 1939).

51 After lobbying of the Roosevelt administration, in 1944 Gruber accompanied a thousand, mostly Jewish refugees leaving Italy and documented their resettlement in upstate New York. Ruth Gruber, *Haven: The Dramatic Story of 1,000 World War II Refugees and How They Came to America* (New York, 1983).

52 For the interconnected issues of refugee and geopolitical politics at work, see Jeffrey Herf, *Israel's Moment: International Support for Opposition to Establishing the Jewish State, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, 2022); David Nasaw, *The Last Million: Europe's Displaced Persons from World War to Cold War* (New York, 2020); Jeffrey Veidlinger. "One doesn't make out much with furs in Palestine: the migration of Jewish displaced persons, 1945-7" *East European Jewish Affairs*, 44. (2014): 241-53; Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford, 2001), and Idith Zertal. *From Catastrophe to Power: The Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel* (Berkeley, CA, 1998).



the attempt failed. As the ship approached the shores of Haifa on the morning of July 18, 1947, it was intercepted by the British navy. The *Exodus* was struck and then boarded by the British. Its passengers were transferred to *three* different prison ships, which took them first to a French port and then to Hamburg, where they refused to disembark for weeks but were eventually violently forced off the ships and put on trains to British-controlled German detention camps. All of this was blockbuster international news at the time, which was very much shaped by Gruber. As the refugees were taken onto British ships, Gruber traveled on to Cyprus where she mistakenly believed the passengers were being held. Photographing the detention camps in Cyprus, with vivid captions like "you had to smell Cyprus to believe it," these pictures of the camp became part of the later photobook and connected to the Exodus ship's own story, even though its passengers had never stopped there (see Figure 7).[53]

Finally locating the refugees, Gruber was granted exclusive access to the British prison ships, on which she took several defining images of the news event. Her photograph of the refugees on the deck of a British ship, having turned a union-jack into a swastika circulated in international newspapers, and then as a much larger image in a

Figure 7. Photo of *Exodus* refugees aboard the British ship *Runnymede*, captured by Ruth Gruber and published in *LIFE* Magazine, September 8, 1947, as the photo of the week. Courtesy of the New York Public Library and Google Books.

53 Ruth Gruber, *Destination Palestine* (New York, 1948), 142.

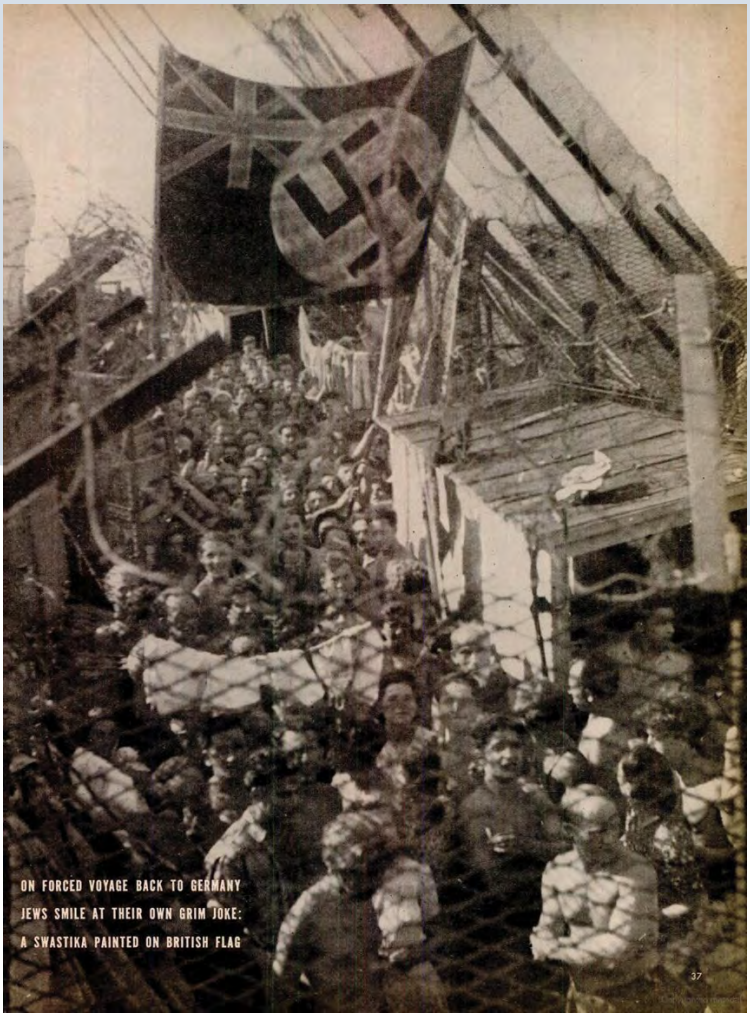


Figure 8. Cyprus Detention Camps, photos by Ruth Gruber, from *Destination Palestine* (New York: Wyn Books, 1948). Courtesy of the Ruth Gruber Estate.

September copy of *Life* Magazine — as the image of the month (see Figure 8).[54] In the photobook, Gruber recontextualized these photos and added many more that had not been included in the earlier reporting. Below deck, Gruber took a number of exclusive pictures that humanized the plight of the refugees. The final photo in the book shows a mother and her baby, quoting the former saying "I am going to live for this baby so my child won't be burned in a gas chamber." (See Figure 9.)[55] Many of *Destination Palestine*'s pictures emphasize precisely these overlapping themes of familial bonds, collective suffering, and of a renewal through a return to an ancient homeland. In all of these ways, they recall a version or synthesis of strategies employed by the German Zionist books in the 1920s and 30s.

What is more, Gruber consciously emulated survivor-authored Holocaust photobooks from the immediate postwar. So, for

54 Gruber herself was astonished by the speed with which her images traveled. In her second memoir, Gruber said "I gave these pictures to the AP and they traveled around the world in eight minutes." Ruth Gruber, *Witness* (New York, 2007), 124.

55 Gruber, *Destination Palestine*, 163.

Figure 9. Woman holding baby on board the Runnymede, photo by Ruth Gruber, published in *Destination Palestine* (New York: Wyn Books, 1948). Courtesy of the Ruth Gruber Estate.

example, she shot and captioned the Cyprus detention camps in emulation of the Warsaw and Lodz ghetto bridges. Her text and captions make these linkages even more explicit. But rather than appealing to German readers back home, as the Zionist photobooks had done before the war, Gruber's book reached out to Americans. The text and the captions are full of flattering parallels to America. Tel Aviv is described by Gruber as a "Beverly Hills on the Mediterranean." And the introduction explains to readers that "when these years are written down, people will read and think of the Exodus 1947 in the same terms as the Tea Party in Boston Harbor."[56]

The *Exodus* story was a constant in the global press from July to September of 1947, but it was quickly superseded by an all-out war for the territory. There was nothing to suggest that the ship's journey would be remembered as a significant event, if it would be remembered at all. But when *Destination Palestine* appeared on the market in the fall of 1948, it took on a timely importance as a noble and heroic story about the birth of Israel just at the moment when the new state seemed likely to survive its war for independence. Supplying a vivid narrative in pictures, the book argued that, although the ship may have failed in its mission, the spirit of the refugees demonstrated an impending victory. And with meta-textual flourishes, *Destination Palestine* implies that the very events it shows succeeded in convincing the world that there had to be a Jewish state in Palestine.

The photobook was quickly seized upon to support a fictional adaptations and transpositions that reached mainstream readers and

56 Ibid., 13.

viewers. The writer Leon Uris, who called *Destination Palestine* "one the most outstanding books to emerge after the war," turned the photobook into an international best-selling novel — published in 1958 and selling millions of copies — that was simply called *Exodus*."[57] Though it had no pictures, the Uris book based its narrative on Gruber's text and photographs. In fact, he wrote a composite witness character into the novel based largely on Gruber —though as a gentile nurse instead of a journalist. Uris also cleaned up the messy reality of Jewish refugees being sent back to Germany. In his novel, there is no France or Germany, as the *Exodus* Jews are simply taken from a detention camp in Cyprus to Palestine by the Americans. History is rewritten in the visual logic of Gruber's photobook, with the *Exodus* actually achieving its original mission.

The *Exodus* novel was just the beginning of an ever-greater multimedia trajectory initiated by Gruber's photobook. Just two years after the novel's publication, in 1960, Otto Preminger directed a film version of the Uris book. Starring Paul Newman as the captain of the *Exodus*, Preminger's movie was shot in color and entirely on location in Cyprus and Israel. Once again, viewers experienced another iteration of Gruber's photobook as the film's first half faithfully reconstructed many of Gruber's exclusive photos and story. The film's production company also capitalized on the *Exodus* events in a new age of jet travel by turning the places Gruber had first captured into part of a tourist package.[58] In newspaper and magazine ads, viewers were encouraged to see the movie and then purchase flights on *El Al* from New York to Tel Aviv to experience in person all the locations they had just seen (or were about to see) in theaters.[59] The *Exodus* ship itself was supposed to be part of this 1960 tourist package as a floating museum in Haifa harbor. However, it caught fire and eventually sank. The ship's story and Gruber's pictures, however, form permanent sections in several Israeli museums.

Most people who read the *Exodus* novel or saw the film probably never heard of Gruber's photobook, which sold mainly to American Jewish readers. Nevertheless the book actively shaped mainstream imaginations and structured their experiences. It is no understate-

57 Ira Nadel, *Leon Uris: Life of a Best-seller* (Austin, 2010), 94-96. The original book transposes all of Gruber's reporting into its first half: Leon Uris, *Exodus* (New York, 1958).

58 In an episode of the television show *Mad Men*, the main character, Don Draper, reads the Uris novel in an effort to aid his campaign for Israeli tourism. The TV show recalls the cultural phenomenon in the late 1950s and early 60s and draws out some of the connections between page, screen and reality that were really put in motion by Gruber's work.

59 El Al's direct service to Israel began in the winter of 1960-61, precisely when the *Exodus* film was released. In one, showing a folded map in which New York and Tel Aviv are pulled closer together, El Al ran the ad "El Al Pulls out all the Stops!" *New York Herald Tribune* (April 10, 1961).

ment, then, to say that this seemingly modest photobook rescued a momentous but ephemeral news event from oblivion to generate a constellation of media. And it made a critical historical intervention, too, arguing that Israel's founding could be located and understood in a moment of justice that could be seen: an episode in which the dispossessed revealed the righteousness of their cause. *Destination Palestine* achieved this mythmaking by expanding on a Jewish tradition of asserting difference and intentionally combining multiple strategies that had been forged in earlier crises.[60]

III. A Final Turn: The Photobooks and Revisionist Memorialization

The subject of my final chapter, *Berggasse 19* (1976), is a true coffee table book that one might find in a home, decorating a table. The book's title refers to the address of Sigmund Freud's Vienna home and office, which the book shows as they appeared on the eve of his forced emigration. The book exemplifies the transformation of documentary to historicization as well as the globalization of a culture that had emerged from the very city it depicts. The oversized book contains fifty-four photos of the Freud home, an essay by historian Peter Gay, and a memoir at the end by the photographer, Edmund Engelman. The story of the photographs and the ordinary person who captured them demonstrates how history is made from below.

In 1938, Engelman was the owner of a camera store in Vienna called "Photo-City," well-known in its time, attracting celebrities and amateurs buying their first camera as well as hosting film screenings.[61] Through Photo-City, Engelman met and befriended August Aichhorn, a psychoanalyst and friend of Freud's. After the Nazi annexation of Austria, Aichhorn asked Engelman to undertake a secret mission: to document Freud's residence before his forced emigration. Engelman, then thirty years old, was asked to photograph the apartment for posterity, so that "a museum can be created when the storm of these years is over."[62] This was dangerous assignment because Freud was under constant Gestapo surveillance and Engelman was also Jewish, so that, in agreeing to

60 Through a circular logic, these adaptations revived the original photobook. *Destination Palestine* was republished and re-named *Exodus 1947: the Ship that Launched a Nation*. The new edition contains more photographs as well as new commentary by Gruber. Ruth Gruber, *Exodus 1947: the Ship that Launched a Nation*, (New York, 1999).

61 Edmund Engelman, Interview with Niko Wahl, *Austrian Heritage Council Interview*. Tape Recording. May 5, 1999. Center for Jewish History Archives. I also spoke with Ralph Engelman, confirming these details on September 11, 2020.

62 This is recalled by Engelman in the book. That Aichhorn felt Nazism to be a temporary interruption struck Engelman, who could not see an end to the "thousand-year Reich" in that moment. Edmund Engelman, *Berggasse 19: Sigmund Freud's Home and Offices* (New York, 1976), 134.

Aichhorn's task, Engelman was placing himself at risk just as he himself was looking for ways to flee Austria himself.

The sense of danger that Engelman describes in words permeates his photographs, too. The images are darker than they should be, taken without the use of flash in order not to raise suspicions. Engelman's images convey a certain darkness in other ways, too, for example, by capturing a swastika above the Berggasse address.[63] Over the course of three days, Engelman returned to Freud's apartment meticulously capturing each room's interior, including, of course, the famous couch, whose widespread reproduction owed much to Engelman's photograph. The photos in the book are assembled in a such a way that the reader initially experiences the apartment the way any of Freud's patients would have seen it. The first impression, of visitors and then much later readers, was the overwhelming presence of ancient images and objects, which decorate and cover most of the rooms.

This photobook, with its extensive pictures and captions, is an important source of the general knowledge that Freud was a serious collector. Ancient Roman busts, Egyptian papyrus illustrations, and Buddhist statuettes cover the first rooms of the apartment as well as Freud's desk.[64] More than oddities peculiar to their owner, these objects and rooms offer a glimpse into the emergence of psychoanalysis.[65] For Freud's obsession with collecting ancient art was connected to his theories of neuroses and development. In fact, Freud likened his own work to that of an archaeologist because both the psychoanalyist and the archaeologist are engaged in peeling back layers to unearth the original source. These items, in other words, were supposed to facilitate access to the primitive stages of mental life.

Pictures of the living quarters, however, offer a more ordinary portrait of the Freuds, which had been inaccessible to patients and most guests. Here there is no more ancient art. Instead, we see a *bürgerlich* Viennese home, replete with the typical furnishings, private family photographs, and heirlooms, all of which amount to a scene of normality.[66] But, of course, there are no people present,

63 Ibid., 27.

64 Ibid., 53-60.

65 For those who have studied Freud's writings, several of the individual pieces in the photographs were inspired by his travels and made their way into his psychoanalytical work. See Sigmund Freud, *Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens "Gradiva"*. (Leipzig & Wien, 1907.)

66 Anna Freud's living room features a portrait of her own father above the sofa, indicating the future preservation of the Freud legacy on just one page: Engelman, *Berggasse 19*, 85.

Figure 10. Freud behind his desk, photo by Edmund Engelman from *Berggasse 19: Sigmund Freud's Home and Offices* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 87. Internet Archive.

and the sense of normality is an illusion. The uncanny human absence at the core of these pictures is, in fact, a critical theme, not just for Engelman's mission of capturing the details of the apartment, but for visually articulating the tragedy of this home about to be uninhabited. On the third day of his assignment, despite his best efforts to take his photograph without interfering with the rhythms of the family, Engelman encountered Freud, which allowed him to take several portraits of Freud (see Figure 10), the Freud family, and to take the passport photographs for their one-way visas out of the country. Engelman received a brief note of thanks from Freud, and the two went their separate paths forever.[67] The apartment was occupied by other families shortly thereafter, leaving no trace of what was once there.

After a several failed efforts to flee Austria, followed by a harrowing internment in the south of France, Edmund Engelman was able to emigrate to the United States in 1939. His training as an engineer helped him finally to obtain a visa to a country he had never visited and where he had no relatives or friends. Despite these obstacles, he settled down with a family and found work in New York as a consulting engineer for photographic technology.[68]

67 Ibid., 88.

68 See Ralph Engelman, "In Search of Hitler's Mentor" *Yale Review* 65 (Summer, 1976): 632. The U.S. patent office records three of Engelman's patents online: a voltage regulator in 1948 (patent # 2, 450, 012), another voltage regulator in 1951 (patent # 2,549),782, and a silver recovery system in 1969 (patent # 3,524, 805). https://www.uspto.gov

The photographs of Freud's apartment, however, did not immediately follow their author. Before leaving Vienna, Engelman had given the negatives to August Aichhorn, who died in 1949. Aichhorn's secretary gave them to Anna Freud, who kept them with her in London. After exchanging letters with Engelman, she returned the negatives to him in the early 1950s. Engelman allowed a selection of those images to be republished. In the late sixties, he traveled back to Vienna, where he saw the Freud apartment occupied by another family. When the apartment was vacated, the opportunity presented itself to finally realize the prewar plan of establishing a museum on the site. For almost two decades, Engelman's pictures of the apartment had circulated as private portfolios among a small group of friends and disciples.[69] Thanks to the efforts of Engelman, August Aichhorn's son, and a devoted Freudian circle, the city of Vienna agreed to open a museum in the Berggasse apartment in 1971.

Freud's residence opened as a conceptual museum, with Engelman's photographs, printed in large format, hanging on the walls, and a few returned objects and some of Freud's own photos on display. The effect of experiencing the home this way ran counter to the intended purpose, which was an homage to psychoanalysis, set out by Freud's former disciples and agreed upon with Viennese and Austrian authorities. Instead, the space immediately took on an entirely different meaning. As foreign critics were quick to note, the empty home in combination with Engelman's photographs made one confront questions of Jewish absence and a moment of painful rupture.[70] It was in this context that Erwin Glikes, the president of New-York publishing house Basic Books and himself a Jewish émigré, approached Engelman to finally publish his photographs as a memoir, which appeared on the market in 1976. The book forever tied the photographs to the story of ordinary emigration that had produced them.

After the publication of the book Engelman's photographs became even more influential in shaping the public image of Freud. Multiple films presented Freud and his apartment in the manner captured by Engelman's photographs.[71] And the images contin-

69 Arnold Werner, "Edmund Engelman: Photographer of Sigmund Freud's Home and Offices," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis,* vol. 83, (2002): 445-451.

70 See, for example, Edith Kurzweil, "The (Freudian) Congress of Vienna," *Commentary* (November 1971). Kurzweil took the city of Vienna to task for belatedly recognizing its Jewish genius.

71 One of the first notable examples was the 1984 BBC television miniseries, *Freud: The Life of a Dream*, with David Suchet playing an aged Freud behind his desk just before his flight from the Nazis.

ued to order other spaces. In 1986, a second museum devoted to Freud opened in Freud's final home in London. This museum staged the furniture the Freuds had brought with them in a way that imitated Engelman's photos from Vienna. In fact, when the London museum opened, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* took it to task for decluttering Freud's workspace, which was a charge based on a comparison with Engelman's pictures.[72] The Engelman photos were critical to establishing the authority of both Freud museums, but their influence extended still further, for they can be said to have shaped scholarship by recontextualizing Freud as a Jewish exile.

Peter Gay, the émigré historian who wrote the 41-page introduction to *Berggasse 19*, began his decades-long interpretation of Freud with the Engelman book. The introduction that he wrote for *Berggasse 19* later became the first chapter of *Freud, Jews, and Other Germans*, which re-introduced the foundational question of Jewishness in psychoanalysis.[73] Actually seeing Freud's home was critical to Gay's arguments in other ways. The visual contrast between Freud's office and his private home led Gay to call Freud a "bourgeois as revolutionary," a solitary genius who was also deeply rooted in an ordinary domesticity.[74] And ever since Gay's work, a description of the Berggasse residence, and Engelman's pictures, have formed a pivotal step in the imaginary journey back in time to the birth of psychoanalysis, or what it is sometimes called "Freud's Vienna."[75]

Conclusion

In all of these ways, *Berggasse 19* represents the culmination of several trends from earlier photobooks. The photos were taken as a form of emergency documentary but found their greatest expression decades later as an inadvertent and multi-media memorialization. They froze Freud as a Jewish exile in time but served as a vehicle for the story of a more ordinary émigré, the photographer Edmund Engelman. This book also recalls the beginning of the history of photobooks, not just in Vienna, by making permanent particular experiences that would otherwise have been forgotten.

72 "Schamlos verunstaltet," *Der Spiegel* (July 21, 1986), 138-149. The article also quotes an anonymous friend of Anna Freud, saying that the museum was "unrecognizable and shamelessly disfigured" ("unerkenntlich . . . schamlos verunstaltet") from the true state of Freud's working space. The quote inspired the title of the piece.

73 It was looking at the photographs and writing the introduction that made Gay, in his own words, turn to a re-evaluation of Freud, in Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture*, (New York, 1979).

74 Engelman, *Berggasse 19*, 12.

75 See Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud's Vienna and Other Essays* (New York, 1990). The cover of the book is one of the exterior Berggasse shots taken by Engelman, who reproduces the exterior shot of the Berggasse address in his book. But the main argument too is that Vienna's cultural "greatness" was forged by outsiders.

Taken together, the series of photobooks that I have discussed show how, due to their intimacy, portability, and durability, photobooks are devices of persuasion. Over time, they became multi-media progenitors of a "History from Below." The first step in that journey was creating photobooks that celebrated difference and outsiderness, which helped make the format a more dynamic narrative object. But what began as a tool for preserving difference soon evolved into a more explicit medium for contesting exclusion and antisemitism. Through innovative visual documentaries, photobooks captured ways of life that were under threat as well as whole communities in the process of destruction. After the Second World War, photobooks authored new myths and reinterpreted well-known figures and ideas. These volumes centered particular Jewish experiences and made them foundational to how many kinds of people around the world remembered and interpreted the twentieth century. They made things like the texture of ghettos, the *Exodus* journey, or Freud's home familiar and tangible landmarks for millions of people. They transformed particular Jewish experiences and made them part of everyone's history.

Well beyond the particular Jewish and German Jewish trajectories that I have outlined here, I believe that photobooks indicate how imaginaries of the past are intentionally crafted by collections of images. We should pay more attention to the historiographical significance of less appreciated, vernacular forms such as photobooks. Too often, as historians, we tend to focus on more official publications or sparse and ephemeral images. Yet it is precisely through less-studied, curated collections of photographic materials that minorities and oppressed people manage to contest their exclusion, shaping imaginaries that long outlive them.

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The Challenge of German Histories: An American Retrospective

Gerald D. Feldman Memorial Lecture, delivered at the German Historical Institute Washington, May 6, 2024

Konrad H. Jarausch
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

For many decades American historians have wrestled with the "German problem," trying to reconcile the discrepancy between cultural creativity and political ineptitude. One prominent scholar was Gordon Craig, who went to Central Europe in 1935 as a student, intent on writing a senior thesis on "The Rise and Fall of the Weimar Republic." Enrolling in the University of Munich, he visited museums like the Old Pinakothek, operas like *The Ring of the Nibelungen,* und plays like *Faust*. These "masterpieces of high German culture made a deep and lasting impression" on him, but he also encountered many examples "of abuse of culture and, indeed, of inhumanity and barbarism." The young Scottish-American was appalled by the ugly xenophobia and rampant anti-Semitism of the Nazis, which foreshadowed another World War and racist genocide. Realizing that "no people is harder to generalize about," he dedicated his life's work to deciphering these contradictions. This made him the leading US authority of his generation

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on the Germans, striving for a balanced interpretation of their achievements and crimes.[1]

In the emergence of national histories of major European countries, the German past has played a special role in the US, since it represented the chief enemy during both World Wars. While the German conception of *Wissenschaft* was tarnished by its collaboration with the Third Reich, much sympathy developed for the terrible fate of the Jewish refugees which helped carry some of the better aspects of continental scholarship across the Atlantic.[2] At the same time, four dozen talented academics including Harold C. Deutsch and Leonard Krieger worked for the Office of Strategic Services in order to provide intelligence assessments that would help defeat the ruthless enemy.[3] Hollywood also sought to contribute to the war effort by making anti-fascist movies like *Casablanca* with the help of refugee producers and actors. An entire cohort of the best and brightest students chose German history in order to figure out what had gone wrong again. Hence, in English-speaking countries a broad public interest developed in the Central European past, which inspired research and created an audience for the books and lectures that helped constitute a new academic field.

This critical American perspective also served as a kind of external conscience for the reemergence of historical scholarship in West Germany that broke with its nationalist tradition. While German scholars could shrug off the exaggerations of war-time propaganda such as A.J.P. Taylor's *Course of German History*, more moderate democratic voices such as Hajo Holborn, who produced an influential synthesis of German history, had to be taken seriously.[4] The allied governments also insisted that the files of the Berlin Document Center and the massive microfilm project of "captured German documents" would serve as an incontrovertible record of German crimes.[5] Competent American reviews of postwar German scholarship also sought to discredit neo-nationalist interpretations. At the same time, exchange programs brought young Germans like Hans-Ulrich Wehler or Jürgen Kocka to the US in order to give a younger generation of postwar academics a chance to experience a democratic system. Finally, in academic disputes such as the

1 Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (New York, 1982), 7-11.

2 Andreas Daum, Hartmut Lehman and James Sheehan, eds., *The Second Generation: Émigrés from Nazi Germany as Historians* (New York, 2016).

3 Christoph Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America's Wartime Secret Intelligence Service* (New York, 2003); Robin W. Winks, *From Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-1961* (New York, 1987), 495-97.

4 A. J. P. Taylor, *The Course of German History: A Survey of the Development of Germany since 1815* (New York, 1946); Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany* (New York, 1959-1969), 3 vols.

5 Astrid Eckert, *The Struggle for the Files: The Western Allies and the Return of German Archives after the Second World War* (New York, 2012).

Fischer controversy about German responsibility for the outbreak of World War One, American scholars supported critical views.[6]

Half a century later, German history has lost much of its unusual appeal because it has become normalized like the past of other countries. The growing temporal distance has robbed it of its contemporary attraction since most of the eyewitnesses have passed away. There are ever fewer veterans of the Allied forces left who can participate in victory parades on May 8 or November 11. Moreover, Holocaust observances have increasing difficulty in finding survivors who can speak with authority about their horrendous suffering. Other issues like the pernicious effects of US racism dramatized in the *New York Times'* 1619 project have taken the place of Nazi racism, while the focus of interest has shifted to the Global South.[7] The stability of the Federal Republic and the reunification with its East German rival have largely resolved the political dimension of the "German problem" by inverting the fear of Berlin's dominance into frustration with its lack of leadership. These drastic contextual changes raise the question: does German historiography have a future?

Based on my personal experience of about six decades of teaching, writing, and service in the US and Germany, the following remarks will address this issue in several steps. A first point to be clarified is whether the decline is real or imagined and if it involves only Germany or Europe as a whole.[8] A second topic to be discussed is the continuing strength of the financial and organizational infrastructure of the field, which is likely to support its survival. A third source of strength concerns the emergence of a critical master narrative of modern Germany that underpins an exemplary politics of contrition. A fourth encouraging argument will suggest that new topical and methodological departures in gender construction, everyday lives, memory politics, and transnational research are promising to revitalize the discipline. The conclusion will argue that, beyond these innovations, the field will require a greater recognition of the plurality of German political systems and the diversity of German speaking people in order to persist.

6 Philipp Stelzel, *History after Hitler: A Transatlantic Enterprise* (Philadelphia, 2019).

7 Nikole Hannah-Jones et al., eds., *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (New York, 2021); Konrad H. Jarausch, "Balancing History Books: Some Comments on Current Memory Wars," *The Czech Historical Review* 121 (2023): 339-353.

8 Catherine Epstein, "German Historians at the Back of the Pack: Hiring Patterns in Modern European History, 1945-2010," *Central European History* 46 (2013): 599 – 639.

I. Indications of Decline

Propelled by the turn away from Europe in general and Germany in particular, signs of a decline of German history have recently multiplied. Surveys by the Modern Language Association have shown that the teaching of the German language has dramatically decreased by one-third from its peak to 54,000 students per year. On the high-school level, many school systems have abandoned German altogether, making Spanish the undisputed leader, followed by French, and demoting German from its once leading position to fourth place even behind Japanese.[9] The rapid assimilation of German immigrants into English speakers has also reduced the number of heritage speakers. At the same time chemists and engineers no longer learn German for technical reasons. Classes in the Goethe Institute and web-based programs like Babble are too limited to pick up the slack. In contrast to the bilingual ascent of Spanish and the cultural attraction of French, "the awful German language" (Mark Twain) has a reputation of being harder to learn. This implosion of the linguistic base has made access to German history more difficult.

Over the past decades, the impact of German ethnicity on American intellectual life has also weakened considerably. Tarnished as the primary enemy during the World Wars, the once vibrant German-American subculture has all but disappeared, leaving only a few pathetic traces such as an annual *Oktoberfest* with beer and an oompah band – but without German speakers![10] No longer do thousands of American students go to Germany in order to learn about the modern research university and earn advanced degrees. Neither German philosophy and music, nor German science and technology are any longer considered to be among the global leaders.[11] The world wide web has allowed transatlantic access to German television, but that requires language competence. All too few TV series – *Babylon Berlin* being the exception – are available on streaming channels, while German films are only occasionally distributed when they have Third Reich or GDR content such as *Lives of Others*. Rarely are books translated and even fewer titles make

9 Ryan Quinn, "Foreign Language Enrollment Sees Steepest Decline on Record," https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/curriculum/2023/11/16/foreign-language-enrollment-sees-steepest-decline-record.

10 For example, https://visithermann.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-hermanns-2023-oktoberfest/.

11 Jack Dukes and Joachim Remak, eds., *Another Germany: A Reconsideration of the Imperial Era* (Boulder, CO, 1988). Currently Germany is only in fifth place in study abroad at 4%. https://opendoorsdata.org/data/us-study-abroad/leading-destinations/.

it onto American best-seller lists. Individual exceptions notwithstanding, there is little sustained transatlantic cultural dialogue that would inspire concern with German history.

Social ties have also eroded noticeably in recent decades. Unlike in the postwar period, when there still was sizable transatlantic migration, German emigration to the US has slowed to a trickle. The number of US soldiers stationed "back home in Germany," as the Vietnam phrase had it, has also diminished to about 50,000, although there are still American bases which serve as logistical and medical staging areas for the US armed forces.[12] Transatlantic tourism to the romantic Rhine has remained steady at about three million per year, but it has always been smaller than travel to Britain, France or Italy. As a result of political differences about military interventions there has also been a growing anti-Americanism in Germany, which has reduced the number of German visitors to the United States. In the United States, especially in the Jewish community, some Germanophobe sentiments linger due to the appalling atrocities of the Holocaust. No doubt, various political initiatives have sought to strengthen transatlantic ties such as the American Council on Germany, the Atlantik-Brücke or the American Academy in Berlin.[13] But they are ultimately only a drop in the bucket, which does not suffice to reinvigorate public interest in the problems of the German past.

As a result of these contextual changes, undergraduate enrollment in European history, graduate fellowship applications, and hiring for teaching positions have all noticeably declined during the last several decades. The once mandatory requirement of enrolling in a "Western Civilization" course has changed to "World Civilization" or "Global History" in order to respond to the increasing diversity of the student body.[14] Where national German history is still being taught, it has shrunk from a two-semester sequence to a single semester. At the same time the number of graduate fellowship applications to the DAAD, Fulbright, or Berlin Program has also decreased. The social sciences have abandoned national specializations, while cultural studies have decontextualized and moved into theoretical flights of fancy. According to job surveys of the Amer-

12 Adam Seipp, *Strangers in the Wild Place: Refugees, Americans, and a German Town, 1945-1952* (Bloomington, 2013).

13 American Council on Germany, https://acgusa.org/; Atlantik Bruecke, https://www.atlantik-bruecke.org/; American Academy in Berlin, https://www.americanacademy.de/.

14 Thomas W. Davis, "Starting from Scratch: Shifting from Western Civ to World History," *Perspectives on History*, December 1, 1996.

ican Historical Association, academic positions have also shifted from Europe to the Global South, aggravating the job crisis.[15] These statistical indicators substantiate the widespread impression that German history is increasingly under siege.[16]

II. Infrastructure Support

In spite of such signs of decline, the academic infrastructure of German studies in the United States remains remarkably strong and varied. In contrast to the limited funding for British, French or Russian history, the German government has been investing considerable sums of money in its "foreign cultural policy" in order to establish a nuanced and sympathetic image abroad.[17] When the American Fulbright exchange program faced severe legislative cuts, the German government stepped in and picked up the majority of the costs. Even more extensive is the fellowship program of the German Academic Exchange Service, which ranges from support for study in Germany through funding for graduate PhD projects all the way to financing for faculty research. Moreover, the Berlin Program in German and European Studies supports both graduate and postdoctoral research, while the Bundestag fellowships offer aid as well. Supplemented by the Humboldt Foundation, these funding sources support research on German and European history, improve language competence, and provide lived experiences of present-day Germany.

Another unparalleled initiative has been the establishment of institutions in North America that foster both research and teaching. To strengthen German-American relations the German government and transatlantic donors, with the help of intermediaries such as Guido Goldman, funded the creation of half a dozen "centers of excellence" for German and European Studies at leading US and Canadian institutions. Ranging from Harvard to Berkeley, from Georgetown to Toronto, these interdisciplinary centers have provided academic expertise and institutional continuity for German studies.[18] Similarly, the German Academic Exchange Service has sponsored about eighteen visiting lecturer position at North Amer-

15 Robert Townsend, "Decline of the West or the Rise of the Rest? Data from 2010 Shows Rebalancing of Field Coverage in Departments," *Perspectives on History*, September 1, 2011.

16 Even in Germany the professional associations are sounding the same alarm about the decline of historical studies. Niko Lamprecht and Lutz Raphael, "Geschichte für die Gegenwart," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 27, 2024.

17 Frank Trommler, *Kulturmacht ohne Kompass: Deutsche auswärtige Kulturbeziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2014).

18 Martin Klingst, *Guido Goldman: Transatlantic Bridge Builder* (New York, 2021), 85-160; Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University, https://ces.fas.harvard.edu/.

ican institutions including the University of North Carolina that have stimulated undergraduate teaching and graduate research as well as outreach activities to the wider public. For the visitors this program has offered experience in American academe and for the host institutions it has provided fresh information on current German affairs as well as recent European developments. While it is difficult to measure the impact of such programs, participants praise their effect on transatlantic communication.[19]

Part of this institutional approach has also been the foundation of the German Historical Institute in Washington and on the West Coast. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who was himself a historian and political scientist, was concerned about possible negative effects of the creation of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on the National Mall in Washington on Germany's image in the United States. Therefore, he supported the establishment of a historical institute that would present a more positive version of the German past like similar institutions in London, Paris or Rome. However, the scholarly community created an academic center of German-American research that also confronted the negative aspects of the German past.[20] Since the GHI insisted on intellectual independence and on historical research, the German government helped in establishing another American-German Institute in Washington, directed first by Gerald Livingston and later by Jackson Janes, which was attached to the Johns Hopkins University. Yet another German effort was also the donation of an endowment for the German Marshall fund that supports social science research on Europe.[21]

At the same time, vigorous professional associations are also promoting German history in English-speaking countries. The oldest group is the Conference Group for Central European History, founded after the war as a forum within the American Historical Association. It is a professional society, overseeing the German document microfilm project and organizing scholarly panels at the annual AHA conference.[22] An interdisciplinary alternative is the German Studies Association, founded half a century ago in the West as a discussion forum and transatlantic conference venue that has become popular with several thousand members.

19 Andrea Sinn, "Transatlantic Mediators or Scholars Abroad? The German Studies Professorship Program of the DAAD in North America" in Karen Hagemann and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds., *German Migrant Historians in North America* (New York, 2024), 43–62.

20 Scott Krause, "German Politics on the Potomac: The Contested Foundation of the German Historical Institute and Transatlantic Exchange" in: *German Migrant Historians in North America*, 63–83.

21 American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, AICGS, https://www.aicgs.org; German Marshall Fund, GMF, https://www.gmfus.org/.

22 Central European History Society, https://www.centraleuropeanhistory.org/ and https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/central-european-history.

Its annual conferences sponsor a plethora of panels, from history to cultural studies to the social sciences.[23] The Friends of the GHI provide a link between American networks and the German Historical Institute. In Britain there is also the somewhat smaller German History Society. All these groups support journals, award prizes, offer stipends, and promote German history, while H-German offers a web-based discussion space. As long as they continue to exist, these fellowships, institutions and associations provide a firm base for English-speaking German scholarship.

III. Rise of Self-Criticism

In many ways the central achievement of the field of German history has been the contested emergence of a critical version of the Central European past. After the First World War, the majority of German historians supported an apologetic version of a national master narrative, culminating in the Foreign Office sponsored journal *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*. After the second defeat, in 1945, the effort of patriotic scholars such as Gerhard Ritter or Hans Rothfels to salvage positive elements of German traditions failed because of the overwhelming evidence of Nazi responsibility for the outbreak and conduct of the Second World War.[24] The Nuremberg Trials, the founding of the Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg, and the moving testimony of survivors made it impossible to shift blame to Polish stubbornness, Soviet expansionism or British appeasement. Moreover, research by international scholars including Walter Hofer, William Langer, and Hugh Trevor-Roper discredited revisionist attempts by David Hoggan and other neo-nationalists to exonerate German elites.[25]

It took several decades of intense controversy to establish a critical master narrative of the German past, a process in which Anglo-American scholars cooperated with progressive German historians. One such memory conflict was the Fischer controversy of the early 1960s, in which the Protestant Hamburg historian Fritz Fischer took on the academic establishment of his own country

23 German Studies Association, https://www.thegsa.org and https://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/german-studies-review

24 Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton, 2003).

25 David L. Hoggan, *The Forced Far: When Peaceful Revision Failed* (Costa Mesa, CA, 1989). Cf. Till Knobloch, "August Crisis: How Hitler Went to War in 1939" (PhD Diss., Chapel Hill, 2024).

by asserting that the Imperial Germany's government bore overwhelming responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War.[26] Another similar encounter was the *Sonderweg* debate of the 1970s and 1980s about Germany's deviation from Western values, which pitted a younger group of leftwing historians, led by Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Jürgen Kocka, against more moderate scholars like Thomas Nipperdey or Lothar Gall.[27] Similarly, in the 1986 *Historikerstreit* the leftist philosopher Jürgen Habermas clashed with the traditionalist Ernst Nolte over the origins and magnitude of Nazi crimes.[28] In each of these controversies the public support of leading American historians such as Fritz Stern or Gerald Feldman helped to reinforce the emergence of a critical perspective on German history.[29]

The struggle between the apologists and critics of the German past culminated in the American metanarrative of the racial genocide of the Holocaust. Since only a few thousand Jewish survivors were left in the Federal Republic, the impetus to confront the mass murder of the Jews came largely from the outside. Since the Allied forces focused on the liberation of their comrades from Nazi imprisonment, the general public and the academic community only gradually became aware of the unimaginable extent of the systematic killing of an entire ethnic group. Through judicial cases like the Eichmann trial or the Frankfurt trials, literary representations such as the *Diary of Anne Frank,* and research by historians such as Christopher Browning, the Holocaust became synonymous with ultimate evil. Through the establishment of memorials on the sites of concentration camps, the testimonies of eyewitnesses such as Tom Angress, and the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, a younger generation was able to confront the horrors of Nazi crimes.[30] Neo-Nazi efforts at denial by the Institute of Historical Review were unable to stop the rise of a critical view of the German past.

While in the US the emergence of a critical perspective on German history was largely self-evident, in the Federal Republic of Germany such memory politics remained quite controversial. To be sure, Chancellor Adenauer realized that the price of Germany's

26 John Moses, *The Politics of Illusion: The Fischer Controversy in German Historiography* (London, 1975); and Annika Mombauer, "The Fischer Controversy 50 years on," *Journal of Contemporary History* 48 (2013): 231-240.

27 Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871-1918* (Leamington Spa, 1985) vs. Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1866-1918* (Munich, 1990). Cf. Jürgen Kocka, "Looking Back on the *Sonderweg*," *Central European History* 51 (2018): 137-142.

28 Klaus Große Kracht, *Die zankende Zunft: Historische Kontroversen in Deutschland nach 1945* (Göttingen, 2005).

29 Fritz Stern, *Five Germanys I have Known* (New York, 2006).

30 Doris L. Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD, 2016), 3rd ed. Cf. Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA, 1988).

acceptance in the Western community of nations was public contrition and reparation payments. At the same time, rearmament and conservative electoral success required the exoneration of Nazi fellow travelers. In East Germany the Socialist Unity Party (SED) had fewer scruples in condemning fascist perpetrators, even if the Marxist approach tended to overlook the racist dimension of Nazi crimes.[31] In the West, political leaders, intellectuals, and academics gradually came to embrace a politics of ritual apology. But large segments of the general population remained reluctant to confront their personal and political guilt. The result of this tension between official contrition and private obduracy was a series of scandals, ranging from President Ronald Reagan's ill-advised 1985 visit of the Bitburg cemetery, where Waffen-SS-men were buried, to Philipp Jenninger's misleading 1988 Bundestag speech. Only gradually did much of the German public begin to accept its historic responsibility.[32]

Due to its focus on the World Wars and the Holocaust, German history has remained more tied to traditional historical methods than other fields of European history. For instance, the new social history of the 1970s and 1980s came from the history workshop movement in Great Britain, in which E. P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm combined Marxist perspectives with bottom-up sympathy for the oppressed.[33] At the same time, French historians such as Joan Scott or Natalie Davis were more involved in the linguistic turn, experimenting with deconstruction in a new kind of cultural history.[34] Only Russian historians remained similarly conventional, since they were focused on Cold War disputes between Communist critics like Richard Pipes and liberal scholars such as Sheila Fitzpatrick. As a result, fewer innovative impulses emanated from German historians, but there were some, such as the structuralism of the Bielefeld School or the *Alltagsgeschichte* of the younger left.[35] While German historians succeeded in forging a critical narrative of the past, their traditionalist approach created a reputation of methodological conventionality.

Gender history, for example, also came late to German history, mostly from the United States. The master narrative of the Ger-

31 Andreas Dorpalen, *German History in Marxist Perspective: The East German Approach* (Detroit, 1985).

32 Edgar Wolfrum, *Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Der Weg zur bundesrepublikanischen Erinnerung 1948-1990* (Darmstadt, 1999).

33 Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor, 2005).

34 Georg Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown, CT, 2005), rev. ed.

35 Georg Iggers, ed., *The Social History of Politics: Critical Perspectives in West German Historical Writing since 1945* (Dover, N.H., 1985).

man past was focused on male issues such as war, genocide, and dictatorship – even though women were severely affected by these developments as well. In contrast to the Anglo-American focus on the struggle of suffragettes for the vote, historians of German women tended to focus more on social motherhood in the family, education and society. While Western feminists were focused on theoretical gender debates, their Eastern sisters were more involved in pursuing practical gains such as universal childcare. As Karen Hagemann and Jean Quateart have pointed out, it took patient lobbying and networking to establish the legitimacy of a gender perspective and the expansion of positions for female scholars.[36] Eventually, however, these efforts did succeed in adding opposition to patriarchy and homophobia to the critical understanding of German history.

IV. Avenues of Exploration

Beyond establishing a critical perspective, German historians have started to explore a number of other issues that have attracted public interest to their field. One approach is the Weimar analogy, which focuses on the suffocation of democracy under the onslaught of extremist populism. The rise of right-wing movements in Europe and the US has raised the fear that self-government will crumble from within, if its enemies manage to use democratic methods to seize power and establish dictatorships like the Italian Fascists or the German Nazis.[37] While the concern about the vulnerability of democracy seems well justified, Christopher Browning has pointed out that the current populist wave need not succeed as long as democracies understand the danger and defend their institutions. Similarly, Martin Sabrow has argued that democratic government in present-day Germany rests on much stronger political and economic foundations than during the 1920s.[38] Historical comparisons with the fall of the Weimar Republic are therefore most stimulating when they not only point out similarities but also emphasize potential differences in outcomes.

Another interpretative puzzle concerns modern dictatorship because today there are more authoritarian regimes than democracies

36 Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert, eds., *Gendering Modern German History: Themes, Debates, Revisions* (New York, 2007).

37 Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (New York, 2018).

38 Christopher R. Browning, "A New Kind of Fascism," *The Atlantic*, July 25, 2023; Martin Sabrow, "Wiederholt sich Weimar? Die Krise der Berliner Republik im historischen Vergleich," *Tagesspiegel*, March 12, 2024.

worldwide. Already contemporaries like George Orwell were shocked by the similarities between communism and fascism, although both ideologies were involved in a bloody struggle for dominance on the continent. Postwar scholarship clustered around the concept of totalitarianism, which stressed the similarities of both regimes in terms of their political control. Recent research, however, has emphasized their ideological differences so as to explain their mutual hostility. Scholars of fascism have stressed its biopolitical racism, which precipitated both a negative cleansing of the body politic through exclusion and murder and a positive pressure on increasing Aryan reproduction.[39] In contrast, I have called the East German communist regime a "welfare dictatorship" that combined a one-party state with an effort to implement social services. These classic cases of modern dictatorship also contain a number of military regimes and authoritarian forms of government, like Franco's Spain, that raise conceptual problems of definition.

For the postwar period the interpretative challenge revolves around the development of the Federal Republic as a "success story" of democratic recovery. One debate addresses the question whether the Allied occupation or the antifascist minority or both deserve the credit for West Germany's rehabilitation. While conservative scholars have tended to praise Konrad Adenauer and the CDU, leftist historians prefer to point to Willy Brandt and the SPD. Though intellectuals often criticized the appalling persistence of Nazi remnants in Bonn, with the so-called "peaceful revolution of 1989" the "old Federal Republic" suddenly looked more positive because it was validated by the East German desire for reunification. During the concurrent movement towards European integration there has been much talk about a "German model" of the social market economy as a key to political freedom and economic prosperity. With the rise of the populist Alternative for Germany, the crucial question has become how much the Germans have mentally distanced themselves from National Socialism and how stable the transformation of political culture will be in the future.[40]

39 Paul Corner and Jie-Huyn Lim, eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Mass Dictatorship* (London, 2016); Shelley Baranowski et al. eds, *A Companion to Nazi Germany* (Hoboken, 2018).

40 Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (New York, 2006); Frank Trentmann, *Out of the Darkness: The Germans 1942-2022* (Allen Lane, 2023).

The counterpoint to the western success story is the eastern failure narrative regarding the disintegration of the Communist dictatorship of the GDR. A whole cohort of doctoral students has wrestled with the question of whether East Germany was just "a footnote of world history," in Stefan Heym's sarcastic phrase, or something more that deserved to be taken seriously. On the one hand, the availability of the Stasi and party files made the SED system look like a gigantic prison, validating the totalitarian perspective. On the other hand, recollections of its social services, especially for women, made the east German state appear like a failed experiment in progressive aspirations cut short by incompetent practice, a veritable alternative to the capitalist west. The GDR suffered from the double marginality of being the most western part of the Soviet empire and the most eastern dimension of western Germany. As a result, historians have disagreed about how the East German development should be integrated into the postwar narrative: as just a temporary deviation from the main course or as a story in its own right.[41]

Another strategy for breaking out of the national master narrative is the comparative and relational expansion into the European context. German historians have made surprisingly little use of the wider perspective of comparison and cultural transfer, centering their research on the Western perspective, in which German development often seems lagging. There has been a lively exchange with France on the level of school textbooks, but less interest in Britain and even fewer efforts to compare with Eastern and Southern developments, where Germany might seem to be ahead.[42] The research on European integration only rarely appears in narrative syntheses, which are still largely framed in national terms. This is all the more regrettable since the Eastward expansions of the EU and NATO have recentered the continent on Germany, reviving its core position in Europe, which was already discussed by Thomas Mann.[43] Some of the reluctance to engage the European dimension comes from an understandable fear of appearing like a hegemon, but the complexity of relationships with continental neighbors has to be addressed nonetheless.

41 Christoph Klessmann, ed., *The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History* (Oxford, 2001); Konrad H. Jarausch, "Die Teile als Ganzes erkennen. Zur Integration der beiden deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichten," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 1 (2004): 10-30.

42 Peter Geiss, Daniel Henri, Guillaume Le Quinterec, eds., *Histoire / Geschichte. Schülerband Sekundarstufe II: Europa und die Welt vom Wiener Kongress bis 1945*. vol. 2. *Deutsch-französisches Geschichtsbuch* (Stuttgart, 2007).

43 Hartmut Kaelble, *A Social History of Europe, 1945-2000: Recovery and Transformation After Two World Wars* (New York, 2013); Konrad H. Jarausch, *Embattled Europe: A Progressive Alternative* (Princeton, 2021).

Yet another way of broadening perspectives on the German past might be a further opening towards global history to engage developments beyond the nation state and the continent. Such an approach could begin with transnational questions, such as the governance of the Rhine River, that cut across several frontiers or the development of international associations like the Red Cross.[44] Although Germany was a latecomer and lost its colonial possessions after the First World War, the colonial past has recently attracted much attention by the campaign to repatriate cultural artifacts and to change street names. Moreover, there is the controversy about the connection between the genocidal warfare against the Herero and Nama in the first decade of the twentieth century and the Nazi Holocaust as well as the murderous impact of imperialism in general.[45] Another neglected perspective concerns the diaspora of German settlements around the globe, which created German language islands in places where Germany had no formal colonies such as in Latin America. Though it is difficult to integrate this aspect into a national narrative, in Glenn Penny's telling phrase, this would be a "German History unbound."[46]

The biggest of the diasporas, which is often overlooked by German historians and ignored by Americanists, is German settlement in the United States. According to the 2020 census 15.5 million Americans identify themselves as having German origins and another about 30 million list themselves as of partial German descent. In the nineteenth century this mass immigration created a flourishing subculture of schools, associations, newspapers, and restaurants in which migrants could maintain their heritage, while learning to cope with their newly adopted country. Because of its mixed loyalties, this German-American community was decimated by the First World War and further shattered by the Second World War. Though German immigration revived a bit after 1945, there were too few newcomers to replenish the ethnic numbers, especially since German speakers quickly assimilated themselves into the dominant Anglo-American culture.[47] Therefore one might call them an "invisible minority" with some vague traditions in the Upper Midwest, but without an identifiable presence. These

44 David Blackbourn, *Germany in the World: A Global History, 1500-2000* (New York, 2023).

45 A. Dirk Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge, 2021).

46 H. Glenn Penny, *German History Unbound: From 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2022).

47 Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, eds., *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History* (Philadelphia, 1985), 2 vols.

tantalizing examples show various ways in which the German past might have a future.

V. Implications of Diversity

In conclusion, I would contend that if German history is to persist, it must engage the extraordinary diversity of its people, which differs from the uniformity of many of its neighbors. As Helmut Walser Smith has recently shown, the life courses of German speakers during the past several centuries have been quite unstable, torn by war and civil conflict. Due to the strength of local dialects, a standard German language emerged quite late and remained contested, with variants like Swiss German splitting off. Ever since the Reformation there has been strife between different confessions and within them, leading to much bloodshed. As a result of in- and out-migration, there were no firmly agreed borders, with foreigners like Poles living within German states and diasporas of German settlers spanning the globe. Moreover, German-speaking Europe experienced more than half a dozen regime changes from the Holy Roman Empire to the Federal Republic. Since the national state existed only for three quarters of a century, scholars addressing the German problem ought to begin by exploring this plurality of different Germanies.[48]

The nation-state focus of German history has created a rather misleading narrative that emphasizes a continuity which hardly existed in the past. In contrast to the centralized countries of Western Europe, the Holy Roman Empire, the German Confederation, and even the Bismarckian federal state created an amazing variety of governments which transcended a single trajectory.[49] The national liberal historians of the nineteenth century presented a unified national story that was meant to legitimate the establishment of the nation that they were writing about. It would be more constructive to accept the religious, regional, social, and sexual diversity of German experiences instead of trying to force them into a unidirectional course. The richness of the German past consists precisely in its variety rather than in its postulated

48 Helmut Walser-Smith, *Germany: A Nation in its Time* (New York, 2020); Richard J. Evans, *Rereading German History: From Unification to Reunification 1800-1996* (London, 1997).

49 William W. Hagen, *German History in Modern Times: Four Lives of the Nation* (New York, 2012).

uniformity. Any interpretation must therefore acknowledge the tension between a mainstream construction of Germanness and the more peripheral aspects representing the margins, struggling to assert themselves.[50]

This German plurality has also created a fragmented memory culture that resists being pressed into a homogeneous mold. To be sure, school textbooks, political speeches, and anniversary celebrations like the Day of German Unity tend to present a single official version of the past that claims to speak for all Germans. But various religions, regions, genders, and social classes view the shared past through different lenses, and new immigrant groups are fashioning their own memory communities under the larger umbrella of Germany. Political parties also emphasize different aspects of the past, with the Right generally being more apologetic and the Left tending to be more critical. Similarly, the general public tends to downplay Nazi crimes, while intellectuals, journalists, and scholars offer a more self-critical stance. Neighboring countries that have suffered from German occupation during the world wars usually have a more negative view of German development than citizens within. Instead of struggling for "a correct German history," would it not be better to think of a multivocal conversation about the German past among different interlocutors?[51]

As a result, several conflicting narratives have evolved which claim to represent the central thrust of German development. Social historians tend to present a modernization story of industrialization and social advance similar to other nations, while political scholars prefer a nation-building tale that puts Germany, together with Italy, into the center of Europe.[52] The two world wars are often seen as a product of unbridled militarism, while the genocidal Holocaust is usually presented as an epitome of evil due to the mass murder of the European Jews.[53] In the post-war period the division of the country with a more successful democratization in the West and a Communist dictatorship in the East presents a different challenge of explaining the reunification of a chastened national state within an integrating Europe. These contradictory developments hardly fit into a single narrative line, requiring in-

50 Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, eds., *German History from the Margins* (Bloomington, 2006)

51 James J. Sheehan, "What is German History? Reflections on the Role of the Nation in German History and Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981): 223.

52 Paul Nolte, *Hans-Ulrich Wehler: Historiker und Zeitgenosse* (Munich, 2015).

53 Alan E. Steinweis, *The People's Dictatorship: A History of Nazi Germany* (Cambridge, 2023).

stead competing explanations.[54] Since neither the cautionary tale of catastrophe nor the success story of recovery encompasses the entire German trajectory, the challenge consists of explaining their mutual relationship.

The lasting import of the German past therefore derives from the contrast between the legacies of genocidal war and democratic recovery.[55] In retrospect it is astounding that the twice defeated country would, with the help of the occupying powers and a critical minority within, succeed in owning up to its historical responsibility for mass murder. The process of wrestling with such a toxic past through *Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit* (working through the past) was long and laborious, full of scandals and backsliding. It took a combination of external pressure and internal self-criticism to overcome the temptation of apologetics that has fueled the rise of rightwing movements like the Alliance for Germany. But in spite of all the appalling shortcomings, the country has managed to face its own guilt and to compensate its victims at least in part. This was a singular achievement which has created a global standard for historical self-criticism in postdictatorial transitions. The central lesson of the German past is therefore the acceptance of responsibility for prior crimes as a precondition for democratic renewal.[56] It is this dual message that makes it important to keep telling the story of German history.

54 Frank Bösch, ed., *A History Shared and Divided: East and West Germany since the 1970s* (New York, 2018).

55 Paul Betts and Greg Eghigian, eds., *Pain and Prosperity: Reconsidering Twentieth-Century German History* (Stanford, 2003).

56 Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Burden of German History: A Transatlantic Life* (New York, 2023).

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2021); *Broken Lives: How Ordinary Germans Experienced the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 2018); *Out of Ashes: A New History of Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 2015); *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

Acknowledgments: A History of Academic Gratitude*

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Extravagant acknowledgments in literary and academic books are frequently circulated and discussed in the mass media and on social media due to their entertainment value. The examples of collaborators and ghostwriters who fail to make it into the acknowledgments are also employed to discuss different interpretations of good scholarly practice and honest writing.[1] But it is not only the mass media that are interested in acknowledgments — scholars themselves seem particularly invested in them. Nevertheless, academic acknowledgments have yet to be systematically studied within the humanities and the historical disciplines, even though they constitute a paratext that is often carefully read by peers not only as a source of entertainment but in order to form an impression of the author.[2] Through acknowledgments, readers assess which academic schools authors align

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1 See Julika Griem, "Wissenschaftskommunikation. Zum Beispiel Maja Göpel," in: *Merkur* 76 (2022), no. 12, 17–31.

2 For initial considerations on this topic, see Emily Callaci, "On Acknowledgments," in *American Historical Review* 125 (2020): 126–131. Julia Wesian, *Danksagungen in Dissertationen. Zur Genese einer Textsorte*, (Frankfurt a. M., 2015). Eyal Ben-Ari, "On Acknowledgments in Ethnographies," in: *Journal of Anthropological Research* 43 (1987): 63–84.

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themselves with, what kind of support they acknowledge and who they thank for it, which personal views and matters they reveal, and to what extent they comply with disciplinary conventions. Conversely, those composing acknowledgments are well aware of their peers' scrutinizing gaze. Beyond a mere gesture, then, acknowledgments provide their authors with an opportunity to present themselves to their colleagues as both scholars and as (private) individuals.

This is what makes academic acknowledgments apt historical sources for the history of science, social history, and cultural history. Their analysis can provide glimpses into networks, hierarchies, forms of (in)visibility, and strategic interests within a given field. Acknowledgments tell us something about the working atmosphere and culture of debate in a university department, as well as shedding light on the self-staging and self-image of those giving thanks. As an aspect of the academic culture of gratitude – which includes award ceremonies, commemorative publications, the distribution of complimentary copies or offprints to colleagues, and obituaries for deceased academic mentors – written and published acknowledgments constitute a learned practice that varies by time and culture.[3] Hence, a diachronic, longitudinal analysis of academic acknowledgments can provide insights into both the way scholars see themselves and the self-conception of a particular academic system.

This is the starting point for the questions posed in this essay. How and to whom have scholars in German-speaking academia given thanks in their studies since the early modern period? When and why did this change? How might we typologize and periodize acknowledgments? To answer these questions, I have analyzed around three hundred academic expressions of thanks that have appeared in books in the humanities, predominantly the discipline of history, from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. I make no claim that these are statistically representative. Rather, this corpus of sources serves as an aid to exploration. I will argue that we can identify three ideal types of scholarly acknowledgments since the early modern period: the servile, rhetorically elaborate

3 Steffen Martus and Carlos Spoerhase, *Geistesarbeit. Eine Praxeologie der Geisteswissenschaften*, (Berlin, 2022); on offprints in particular, see 425–481; Paul Nolte, *Lebens Werk. Thomas Nipperdeys Deutsche Geschichte—Biographie eines Buches*, (Munich, 2018), 134f.; Anna Echterhölter, *Schattengefechte. Genealogische Praktiken in Nachrufen auf Naturwissenschaftler (1710–1860)*, (Göttingen, 2012). Thomas Etzemüller, ed., *Der Auftritt. Performanz in der Wissenschaft*, (Bielefeld, 2019).

statement of thanks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the concise, self-effacing acknowledgments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the detailed, subjectivizing variant of the twentieth-first century. I pay particular attention to the emergence of this third genre since the 1990s, which, I argue, is closely connected to changes in the contemporary academic system.

4 Herrn Henrich Anshelm von Zigler und Kliphausen, *Asiatische Banise oder blutiges doch muthiges Pegu/In Historischer und mit dem Mantel einer Helden- und Liebes-Geschicht bedeckten Warheit beruhende. Diesem füget sich bey eine aus dem Italiänischen übersetzte Theatralische Handlung/benennet: Der tapffere Heraclius*, Leipzig/bey Thomas Fritsch, 1700.

I. "To My Most Gracious Lord": Panegyrics and Statements of Thanks in the Early Modern Period

A characteristic case of expressing gratitude in the early modern period is the four-page dedication, statement of thanks, and extolment composed in 1688 and first published in 1689 by writer and historian Henrich Anshelm von Zigler und Kliphausen. This statement was addressed to the "Most Serene Prince and Lord, Lord Johann Georg, Hereditary Prince of the Electorate, . . . My Most Gracious Lord. Most Serene and Great Prince!" After referring to himself several times as the prince's "slave" and "servant," the author concludes his thanks as follows:

> And thus, YOU will not disdain this small offering, which Your servant humbly presents to You:
>
> For great princes have often been satisfied with nothing more than water,
> Drawn by a faithful hand. Indeed, even my heart,
> Which lies at Your feet even more than this writing,
> Ignites this offering like a faithful candle,
> That, to the best of its ability, wishes, like others, to die and burn for Your welfare in humble submission.
> If but a spark of Your favor falls to me,
> I shall humbly call myself your loyal servant until the grave
>
> Your Electoral Highness
>
> Leipzig, August 16, 1688.
> Your most faithfully obedient and humbly devoted servant,
> H.A.v.Z.u.K.[4]

This poetic expression of thanks was a reflection of the early modern scholarly system. It also formed part of a tradition of panegy-

ric in highly unequal societies dating back to antiquity and early Christianity. During the early modern period, scholars were dependent on sovereigns' favor. Rulers such as Albrecht VI founded their own universities and, as patrons, financed the work of scholars and the publication of their writings. The latter could neither reciprocate in material terms nor match their benefactors' status by thanking them. What they could do was provide them with an elaborate paean of praise, in which they humbled themselves and expressed the degree of their gratitude through ornate detail and rhetoric. These panegyrics in the dedications and prefaces of novels and scholarly studies prompted contemporary reflections on whether this was pure convention and fulfilment of duty or an expression of sincere gratitude.[5]

In 1752, in the exhaustive foreword to his *Allgemeine Geschichtswissenschaft* ("General Historiography") Johann Martin Chladenius (Chladni), who rose to prominence due to his concept of the "viewpoint" (*Sehepunkt*), wrote:

> In accordance with an ancient custom, scholars are wont to dedicate their works to men of a higher sphere. Some have sought to show their reverence and devotion through this means; others have believed that, out of gratitude, they could not omit such an act; others again have endeavored to pave the way to the favor of powerful patrons; while yet others have wished to dedicate their work to those who assured them that they might count upon securing a gracious reception from their illustrious patron as the first fruit of their diligent toil and labor.[6]

I will have more to say later about the various functions of thanksgiving alluded to in this quote and the idea of "sincere" and "honest" gratitude — as opposed to functional and calculating articulations of thanks. The assumption that genuine gratitude is expressed through the originality and rhetoric of acknowledgments is still found today. It should be noted, however, that the detailed praise typical of the early modern period largely vanished from scholarly works when the estates-based order was transformed into liberal, bourgeois society, which produced its own formulas of gratitude.

5 See Remigius Bunia and Till Dembeck, "Dank sagen, rhetorisch und idiomatisch. Zur Entstehung der Floskel 'Danke!,'" in Natalie Binczek et al., eds., *Dank sagen. Politik, Semantik und Poetik der Verbindlichkeit*, (Munich, 2013), 39–65; Alf Lüdtke and Reiner Prass, eds., *Gelehrtenleben. Wissenschaftspraxis in der Neuzeit*, (Cologne, 2008).

6 Johann Martin Chladni, *Allgemeine Geschichtswissenschaft*, (Leipzig, 1752), 3b–4a.

II. "Of ourselves we are silent": Acknowledgments from the Enlightenment to the Twentieth Century

As early as the sixteenth century, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam called for scholars to withdraw from their social entanglements into the solitary writing room. This, he believed, would enable them to pursue their scholarly activities unimpeded by secular or religious authorities and undisturbed by their social environment.[7] This idealized desocialization of the (male) scholar who devotes himself solely to scholarship was consonant with the demands subsequently made by Francis Bacon and Immanuel Kant, which profoundly shaped scholars' self-image in the following centuries. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1781, opens by quoting Bacon's statement "de nobis ipsis silemus" (of ourselves we are silent).[8] "Of ourselves we are silent" subsequently became the credo of Enlightenment scholarship, which rejected the idea of deriving the authority and persuasiveness of a text from God or a particular ruler and, instead, exalted reason and argument. The idealized spatial isolation of individual scholars went hand in hand with their withdrawal as a subject from their work. Only the author's name now pointed to the mind from which the text had sprung. Exemplifying this tradition, in the preface to his *History of England* of 1870, Leopold von Ranke, one of the founding fathers of modern German historiography, expressed his wish to "erase my self, as it were, and let only the things speak, the mighty forces appear."[9]

In the early twentieth century, it was Max Weber who brought this dictum up to date in his famous text "Science as a Vocation":

> In the field of science [*Wissenschaft*] only he who is devoted solely to the work at hand has 'personality.' . . . In the field of science . . . the man who makes himself the impresario of the subject to which he should be devoted, and steps upon the stage and seeks to legitimate himself through 'experience,' . . . such a man is no 'personality.'"[10]

In one of his early lectures, Martin Heidegger claimed that statements such as "Aristotle was born, worked, and died" conveyed all

7 See Gadi Algazi, "'Geistesabwesenheit'. Gelehrte zuhause um 1500," in: Lüdtke and Prass, *Gelehrtenleben*, 215–234.

8 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Text der Ausgabe 1781 mit Beifügung sämtlicher Abweichungen der Ausgabe 1787*, ed. Karl Kehrbach, 2nd improved edn., (Leipzig, c. 1878), citation preceding p. 1.

9 Leopold von Ranke, *Englische Geschichte vornehmlich im siebzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 2 (*Sämtliche Werke*, vol. XV), (Leipzig. 1870), 103.

10 See Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, (New York, 1946), 129–156, here 137.

one really needed to know about an author's biography.[11] Gerhard Ritter, one of the most influential West German historians of the post-1945 period, responded to a request for an interview in 1965 as follows: "The personal is unimportant, the academic work alone is important. So I would ask you to disregard my person."[12]

There were only three accepted exceptions to the author's self-imposed withdrawal. The first was occasional thanks to an archivist, often mentioned by name, as representative of all the archivists who had supported the writer in their research. Drawing on Eyal Ben-Ari's interpretation of anthropological acknowledgments, it can be assumed that these explicit thanks to archivists serve a dual function for historians.[13] By thanking them, they settle a debt, as they have, in fact, received material support in the archive. In addition, thanking archivists and mentioning them by name signals to colleagues in the discipline of history, which attaches great importance to empirical archival research, that the author shares this consensus, has carried out laborious archival research, and, with the help of "indigenous" locals, has unearthed the treasures (sources) they were looking for. The brief expression of gratitude to one's academic teachers, meanwhile, dovetailed with well-established conventions. In a broader sense, the same went for expressions of gratitude to scholars and pioneers on whose findings one's own work built. Far from jeopardizing the authority of the arguments presented, such expressions of gratitude conveyed the scholar's modesty and humility vis-à-vis the achievements of others. This is articulated pithily in an aphorism that, though coined by Isaac Newton, was expressed in a similar way in much earlier writings: "If I have seen further [than others], it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."[14]

The requisite dedication to one's research and the privileging of modesty had a direct effect on articulations of thanks. In marked contrast to the pages-long panegyrics of the early modern period, scholarly works from the nineteenth century onwards either featured no acknowledgments at all or only very brief ones. Often, they contained just a short dedication. Although this dedication could also function as an expression of gratitude, it was not a direct counter-gift to a specifically named person for a particular

11 Quoted in Jürgen Kaube, "Die Alliierten—schlimmer als Hitler?" in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 3, 2015 (on Heidegger's *Black Notebooks*).

12 Quoted in Christoph Cornelißen, *Gerhard Ritter. Geschichtswissenschaft und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Düsseldorf, 2001), 21.

13 Ben-Ari, "On Acknowledgments in Ethnographies" (note 2).

14 On the history of this metaphor, see Robert King Merton, *On the Shoulders of Giants. A Shandean postscript*, (Chicago, 1993) (first published 1965).

act relating to the text's creation. Instead, it was an unexpected, vague, sometimes enigmatic acknowledgment of proximity to an individual or political conviction.[15]

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the only nineteenth-century acknowledgment by a German-speaking female historian is as brief as that of her male colleagues and is addressed to her academic teachers. In her 1892 dissertation, Ricarda Huch stated: "I will always recall with keen gratitude the rich inspiration I received from my highly esteemed teachers, Professors v. Wyss and Meyer v. Knonau."[16]

This convention of self-effacement prevailed in historiographical works until the final third of the twentieth century and is still occasionally found today. There were as yet few differences in the thanks expressed by male and female historians. Both genders receded into the background when expressing their scholarly gratitude, presenting themselves as largely detached from social relationships, as dedicated to the matter at hand, and as students of their academic teachers.

We can discern a slight easing of this convention of self-restraint over the course of the twentieth century. In addition to parents, archivists, and academic teachers, thanks were increasingly expressed to publishers of academic book series, academic students, and, later, collaborators and colleagues, for substantive suggestions and proofreading, for technical support in the compiling of indexes, or for producing tables and graphics. In addition, some authors thanked their former (history) teachers for getting them interested in the subject and their secretaries for typing the manuscript.[17] Expressions of thanks to wives and husbands also became more frequent, both as life companions and as collaborators on book projects.[18] In line with this, Hans Rothfels dedicated the 1949 German edition of *The German Opposition to Hitler* to his wife, "who not only shared the burden of the 'translation' to a great extent, but also very substantially that of the external and internal experiences of a decade that had to be undergone, as well as the conflicts that had to be endured, before this book could be written. It belongs to her in more than one sense."[19] Conversely, women historians

15 On the relationship between dedication and expressing thanks, see Yvonne Schütze and Betina Hollstein, "'Für C'—Widmungen in der Soziologie," in Günter Burkart and Jürgen Wolf, eds., *Lebenszeit. Erkundungen zur Soziologie der Generationen*, (Opladen, 2002), 437–455, here 439f.

16 Ricarda Huch, *Die Neutralität der Eidgenossenschaft. Besonders der Orte Zürich und Bern während des spanischen Erbfolgekrieges*, (Zurich, 1892), 287.

17 Martus and Spoerhase, *Geistesarbeit* (note 3), 90. Cf. David Kuchenbuch, "Zum Diktieren in den Geisteswissenschaften 1800–1989," in: *Merkur* 75, no. 10 (2021): 27–40.

18 Maximilian Herberger, "Die Frau im Vorwort," in: *Rechtshistorisches Journal* no. 6 (1987): 233–239.

19 Hans Rothfels, *Die deutsche Opposition gegen Hitler. Eine Würdigung*, (Krefeld, 1949), 12.

thanked their husbands for their dedicated interest in their work, for reading it critically, or for their cooking skills.[20] This expansion of gratitude, however, did nothing to diminish hierarchies. On the contrary, an individual's status continued to be clearly marked by academic titles, additional designations such as "student" and, generally, through the fact that a person was named, in contrast to those who were not.[21]

Here and there, we find expressions of thanks that refer, usually implicitly, to contemporary events. One example is Max Ebert's foreword to his *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte* ("Encyclopedia of Prehistory"), composed at the University of Königsberg in 1924. After World War I, research in the humanities came under pressure to prove its practical relevance. Humanities scholars now styled themselves as fighters, and Ebert, too, informed his readers of the self-sacrificing toil of those involved in the encyclopedia he was editing:

> During the preparatory work, we mourned the death of five collaborators . . . Before his death, Prof. Montelius submitted one of the two articles entrusted to him. . . . Prof Rzehak worked on the first part of his manuscript between two serious operations, the second of which cost him his life, with the utmost sense of duty, sending it in from his deathbed. We will honor the memory of this brave man![22]

It is hard to imagine a more dramatic description of the ideal of the scholar devoted to the matter at hand. Even on his deathbed, there is no room for privacy, only the desire to complete the promised article.

At times, the century's political caesuras found reflection in passages of thanks and dedications. In 1936, the aforementioned Gerhard Ritter (born in 1888), dedicated his biography of Frederick the Great "to the invisible community of those who sustain the true frontline spirit in the realm of German scholarship."[23] According to Ritter's biographer, Christoph Cornelißen, he thus inscribed himself into the fraternity of frontline World War I veterans, a group to which he felt he belonged, while subtly expressing criticism of the National Socialists.[24]

20 Ute Frevert, *Krankheit als politisches Problem 1770–1880. Soziale Unterschichten in Preußen zwischen medizinischer Polizei und staatlicher Sozialversicherung*, (Göttingen, 1984), 9; Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Der Staat als Maschine. Zur politischen Metaphorik des absoluten Fürstenstaats*, (Berlin, 1986), 3.

21 Gerhard Ritter, "Vorwort," in Walther Holtzmann and Gerhard Ritter. eds., *Die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Bibliographie des historischen Schrifttums deutscher Autoren 1939–1945*, (Marburg/Lahn, 1951), 3–7, here 7.

22 Max Ebert, ed., *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte. Unter Mitwirkung zahlreicher Fachgelehrter, vol. 1: Aal—Beschneidung*, (Berlin, 1924), IV.

23 Gerhard Ritter, *Friedrich der Große. Ein historisches Profil*, (Leipzig, 1936), n.p.

24 Cornelißen, *Gerhard Ritter* (note 12), 274.

For a brief period in the early 1950s, prefaces also included references to the Second World War and to the postwar period, as well as thanks to those who had helped prepare the manuscript under difficult circumstances or had saved it from destruction. Such thanks were expressed, for example, by Walter Markov,[25] one of the GDR's most influential historians, and by the contemporary historian Hans Rothfels, who had emigrated to the United States via the United Kingdom during the Nazi era and later returned to West Germany. In 1953, the latter prefaced the second edition of his document collection *Bismarck und der Staat* (*Bismarck and the State*), first published in 1925, with a dedication to the president and fellows of St John's College, Oxford, out of gratitude for the support he had received there as a guest during the first year of the war, in 1939–1940.[26] Historian Hans Rosenberg, who fled to the United States in 1935 and also later returned to West Germany, added an expression of thanks to the new, 1974 edition of his account of the Great Depression of 1857–1859, which he had omitted when it was first published in 1934 in order to avoid placing those mentioned at risk during the Nazi era.[27] In 1954, rather than the "invisible community" of frontline veterans, Gerhard Ritter dedicated the first volume of *Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk* (published in English as *The Sword and the Scepter*) to his "valiant wife," "whose courageous support was the greatest of all human assistance during the most terrible months of my life."[28] Overall, however, such references to the contemporary context remained the exception.

The Enlightenment, then, gave rise to an ideal of scholarship that demanded that scholars show extraordinary dedication to their research and tremendous personal restraint within their written work, resulting in the disappearance of acknowledgments from their publications or at least their reduction to just a few lines. The power of this convention is apparent in its transcendence of political and gender boundaries: few differences are evident between the words of thanks composed by female and male historians or between academics in East and West Germany. Thus Gisela Bock's brief thanks to her academic teachers and referees in her 1974 dissertation[29] differ little from Ricarda Huch's words of gratitude

25 Walter Markov, *Grundzüge der Balkandiplomatie. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse*, (Leipzig, 1999) (the original manuscript was completed in 1946–1947), 1.

26 Hans Rothfels, *Bismarck und der Staat. Ausgewählte Dokumente*, 2nd ed., (Stuttgart, 1953), n.p. [XIII, page not numbered].

27 Hans Rosenberg, *Die Weltwirtschaftskrise 1857–1859. Mit einem Vorbericht*, 2nd ed., (Göttingen, 1974), V.

28 Gerhard Ritter, *Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk. Das Problem des "Militarismus" in Deutschland*, vol. 1, (Munich, 1954), 12.

29 Gisela Bock, *Thomas Campanella. Politisches Interesse und philosophische Spekulation*, (Tübingen, 1974), V.

some 80 years earlier. Nor were they much different from the acknowledgments penned by her counterparts in the GDR or the FRG between the 1960s and 1980s, though in the 1980s such texts tended to be longer than in the 1960s. Historians in both East and West Germany thanked academic institutions and funding bodies at home and abroad, while also mentioning research trips conducted in various countries. Beyond this, however, the readers of forewords and acknowledgments learned virtually nothing about the authors' private lives. Without knowledge of the individuals and institutions identified, it is difficult to tell from acknowledgments in which German state they were published; the configuration and length, as well as the limited circle of persons mentioned, were more or less the same.[30]

This long-dominant ideal of sober academic self-presentation still has echoes in the present day. Nowadays, however, it mainly comes in the guise of criticism directed at colleagues who violate the precepts of restraint and modesty. In 2008Jürgen Kaube, the editor of the humanities section of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* one of the leading German newspapers, put it like this: "In the forewords of books, one often finds detailed accounts of how they came into being and a list of every single person to whom thanks are due, from superiors to wives and sometimes even cats, not for intellectual contributions, but for general forms of interpersonal support."[31] Kaube suggested that the next likely step would be for historians to start addressing their readers using the informal pronoun "Du," rather than formal "Sie." In view of such potential scenarios, in 2017 the literary critic Rainer Moritz called for an end to acknowledgments in the conservative German newspaper *Die Welt*.[32] This critique, however, was not sparked by the kind of acknowledgments discussed above, but by a new form of acknowledgments, which is probably the most common variant found today.

III. Subjectivization, Deconventionalization, and Individualization: Acknowledgments since the 1990s

During the 1980s, acknowledgments in historical studies gradually started to become more elaborate. In formal terms, this trend

30 For acknowledgments that appeared in the GDR, see, for example, Irmgard Höß, *Georg Spalatin. Ein Leben in den Entscheidungen der Reformation*, (Jena, 1951), VIf.; Horst Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*, (Berlin, 1966), 22; Karl Czok, *August der Starke und Kursachsen*, (Leipzig, 1987), 7. For acknowledgments in West Germany, see, for example, Reinhart Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution. Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848*, (Stuttgart, 1967), 7; Lutz Niethammer, *Entnazifizierung in Bayern. Säuberung und Rehabilitierung unter amerikanischer Besatzung*, (Frankfurt a.M., 1972), 9f.; Ute Daniel, *Arbeiterfrauen in der Kriegsgesellschaft. Beruf, Familie und Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg*, (Göttingen, 1989), 9.

31 Jürgen Kaube, "Ich sag mal, also ist's wichtig," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 9, 2008.

32 Rainer Moritz, "Schafft die Danksagung ab! Über eine neuerdings seltsam florierende Textsorte," *Die Welt*, April 10, 2021.

and the rise of a new culture of thanks are most apparent in the fact that, starting in the 1990s, many books started to include a special section explicitly designated as "acknowledgments" in the table of contents. Until the turn of the millennium, such paratexts had usually appeared in a book's preface or, more rarely, in an afterword. Initially, these acknowledgments resembled older thanking practices in prefaces, both in terms of length and the selection of persons mentioned. The triad of funding institutions, academic teachers, and close friends or family was retained. Gradually, however, two shifts became apparent: a growing number of people and institutions were thanked, and acknowledgments became the setting for subjective statements of all kinds.

In more recent acknowledgments, the number of institutions thanked for financial and organizational support has grown significantly. The number of colleagues receiving thanks for suggestions, substantive exchange, proofreading, and technical support has increased even more. At the same time, the boundaries between profession and personal life have become more permeable as historians and social scientists have shared more details about the latter.[33] In this new context, acknowledgments have been used to thank one's soccer team, coffee-drinking partners, a kidney donor, and ever more friends and family members. The illumination of the personal sphere even extends to pets. A dog named Obelix mentioned in the acknowledgments of a particular book became a minor internet celebrity.[34] Another scholar dedicated an entire paragraph to her cat — possibly in deliberate reference to literary role models:

> My final word of thanks goes to my cat, or to be more precise, my ex-cat. She left me at just the right moment to allow me to complete this study. During my first serious attempt to bring the dissertation to a positive conclusion . . . , the cat never failed to lie down on my desk just where I wanted to write or read, and always convinced me, with her purring and need for petting, that there are far more important things in life than writing a dissertation. Now she's welcome to come back.[35]

Thanking one's cat may seem odd at first glance. But on closer inspection it is consonant with the findings of recent studies in

33 Betina Hollstein and Yvonne Schütze, "Selbstdarstellungen in der Wissenschaft am Beispiel von Danksagungen in der Soziologie," in Sonja Häder and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, eds., *Der Bildungsgang des Subjekts. Bildungstheoretische Analysen*, (Weinheim, 2004), 153–181.

34 Marietta von Süsskind-Schwendi, *Die prae- und perinatale Entwicklung der Hundekralle*, (Berlin, 2005), 293; Thomas Hoeren, "Mein Dank gilt meinem Hund," *duz Magazin*, no. 4/2011, 60–61.

35 Christa Hauenschild, *Zur Interpretation russischer Nominalgruppen. Anaphorische Bezüge und thematische Strukturen im Satz und im Text*, (Munich, 1985), IX. There is a long tradition in literature of addressing the relationships between writers and (domestic) animals. See E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr. Nebst fragmentarischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern*, (Berlin, 1820).

family history. Family concepts and human-animal relationships have changed, and in some fields, they have expanded to such an extent that pets are now integrated into the family as companions, with whom many feel a strong emotional bond. As a result, some people leave money for the upkeep of their pets in their will, in so far as this is legally possible. Furthermore, they are thanked much like humans in academic studies, even though, unlike their human counterparts, they cannot read them. Overall, then, this specific form of expressing gratitude is not a public counter-gift perceptible to the addressee but amounts to the construction of a scholarly and simultaneously private *persona*.

The example of the "ex-cat" highlights the gradual shift, beginning in the 1990s, in conventions governing who should or should not be mentioned in acknowledgments. While certain precepts determining who must be acknowledged (academic teachers, funding institutions, and close family) have persisted, the circle of those who could be mentioned, and the spectrum of the sayable, has expanded across the board. This process, which I will refer to as deconventionalization, has meant that, in principle, any individual or pet could be mentioned. This has not only resulted in ever longer acknowledgments, but has also engendered new problems and uncertainties, such as the most frequently expressed concern in acknowledgments: the fear of leaving someone out. One common response to this newfound uncertainty has been to thank helpful colleagues vaguely and without mentioning their names, or to offer blanket, prophylactic thanks to those who might have been overlooked.

One acknowledgment typical of this development, though unusually elaborate, can be found in a dissertation on medialized war experiences published in 2021. The author states at the outset: "This book could not have been written without the support of a whole legion of people and institutions. . . . Should the sometimes . . . somewhat absent-minded author have forgotten one of the many individuals who have contributed to this book project . . . , he sincerely apologizes, and reassures them that they can be certain of his gratitude." In a characteristic turn of phrase

featuring the metaphor of travel, he then erases the distinction between colleagues and friends, stating: "Some companions along the way . . . have become close friends," before proceeding to thank well over two hundred individuals by name across several pages.[36]

Since the 1990s, not only have a greater number of people been thanked but acknowledgments have also become a setting in which scholars comment on the politics of the academy and make socio-political statements, as well as all kinds of personal remarks. One prominent author, for example, admitted to harboring a little vanity, describing his character and life as an "audacious mélange of personality and experience."[37] On rare occasions, authors reveal conflicts within academia, as in the following example: "At this point, I would like to thank [name mentioned] for his open and honest hostility. However, I am still disgruntled that he railed against my project and its funding in the Bundestag without my knowledge."[38] Another researcher noted: "In addition to all these supporters, I would also like to thank two highly critical colleagues who, following my presentations, described my approach as 'too complicated' and the project as 'overambitious.' This was a tremendous source of motivation."[39]

Overall, however, such biting remarks are rare in acknowledgments; courtesy towards colleagues and family typically prevails. At the same time, thankers sometimes address precarious working conditions, legal disputes resulting from their research, their sexual orientation or their wife's beauty. In one case, an author concluded his acknowledgments with a marriage proposal to his partner, while other scholars reported on the birth and growing up of their offspring or, in the case of older writers, their grandchildren. This is merely to give a rough idea of the spectrum of personal remarks. In the cases mentioned so far, I have not even considered hidden and subtle messages that may be decipherable only to a select group of readers.[40] Finally, editors and, in certain countries, universities may influence acknowledgments. In conversation, editors assured me that the range of people mentioned, subjective statements, and curiosities would sometimes be greater still if not for their moderating influence on the authors. On the

36 Jan Schmidt, *Nach dem Krieg ist vor dem Krieg. Medialisierte Erfahrungen des Ersten Weltkriegs und Nachkriegsdiskurse in Japan 1914–1919*, (Frankfurt a.M., 2021), 461–467.

37 Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, *Verfassung und Verfassungsvertrag. Konstitutionelle Entwicklungsstufen in den USA und der EU*, (Berlin, 2009), 6.

38 Monika Sigmund, *Genuss als Politikum. Kaffeekonsum in beiden deutschen Staaten*, (Berlin, 2015), X.

39 Daniela Hettstedt, *Die internationale Stadt Tanger. Infrastrukturen des geteilten Kolonialismus, 1840–1956*, (Berlin, 2022), VI.

40 Merton, *On the Shoulders of Giants* (note 14), VI.

other hand, editors can ensure that funding institutions and scholarship providers are acknowledged and the names of those thanked are spelled correctly. The desire to talk about professional and personal predicaments is strong. In the Netherlands, universities have gone so far as to issue guidelines setting out who may and may not be thanked for contributing to a study; God, for instance, is not among them.[41]

Contrasting with the Enlightenment scholarly ideal in the starkest possible way, writers sometimes confide in the reader that, due to a new love, the birth of a child, or the death of a family member, they had come to realize that completing a manuscript is not always the greatest source of fulfilment. Rather than finishing articles on their deathbed, some of those expressing gratitude today reveal that they have grasped, in the delivery room, that there are more important things than an academic publication. To be sure, scholars still portray themselves as dedicated to their work; but they also want to come across as family-oriented individuals embedded in society and as people with opinions, worldly wisdom, and personal circumstances. Anyone interested in the difficulties of reconciling work and family life in the twenty-first century will find many examples here. Scholars, it seems, are people who torment their families with their scholarly preoccupations on holiday, at dinner, and on weekends, but are otherwise absent; they are then plagued by feelings of guilt.

Equally revealing are the narratives and metaphors that authors use to describe and explain the genesis of a study. At times, key concepts in the academic text or — in the case of older authors — personal life experiences are included in the acknowledgments and used to structure them.[42] The acknowledgments prefacing dissertations make widespread use of the narrative, borrowed from the bourgeois *Bildungsroman*, of overcoming a long and arduous journey replete with detours, highs and lows, light and shadow. Authors began their journey as young adults and met many a helpful companion as they pursued their research; these they come to value and sometimes even love, ultimately completing

41 Lena Greiner, "Streit um Dissertation. Niederländischer Doktorand darf Gott nicht danken," *Spiegel Online*, March 3, 2014.

42 See for example Georg Franck, *Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit. Ein Entwurf*, (Munich, 1998), 7f.; Benjamin Brendel, *Konvergente Konstruktionen. Eine Globalgeschichte des Staudammbaus*, (Frankfurt a.M., 2019), 455.

their odyssey as holders of a doctoral degree with a finished book and sometimes a family as well.[43]

At this point, it would be easy to continue with anecdotes about the author's favorite drink or their partner's pet name, and even the equation of scholarly and sexual potency. It would also be easy to dismiss such extravagant acknowledgments and first-person narratives as unnecessary self-dramatization and self-promotion. But I prefer not to join this chorus of critics and instead to ask: Why has this new, third type of acknowledgments emerged since the 1990s, and what does this tell us about recent changes in the humanities and the discipline of history? Four aspects seem crucial to me.

IV. The factors driving the new acknowledgment culture: Democratization, Competitive Principle, Popularization of Knowledge, and Internationalization

Thesis 1: The democratization of academic disciplines has sparked changes in the articulation of thanks. The most common explanation for the shift in thanking practices is that processes of societal liberalization beginning in the 1960s have triggered the democratization and deconventionalization of academia. Most importantly, research results ceased to be viewed as products of an individual author working in their study or an expression of originality. Instead, in line with Thomas Kuhn-style theories of science that also emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, they came to be understood as the outcome of collaborative project work. As a result, in their acknowledgments numerous researchers recognized that for them scholarly work is a collaborative process and a shared experience.[44] To the extent that they underscored the cooperative nature of research, they began to name people who helped them complete their work and, more generally, to reveal the contexts in which their studies emerged.

According to a more critical reading, however, this enumeration of supporters in acknowledgments was not voluntary but due to pressure from collaborators, who had previously remained invisible

43 A characteristic example of the use of the journey metaphor and the interweaving of acknowledgments with academic text is provided by Florian Greiner, *Wege nach Europa. Deutungen eines imaginierten Kontinents in deutschen, britischen und amerikanischen Printmedien, 1914–1945*, (Göttingen, 2014), 515.

44 See for example Daniel Maul, *Menschenrechte, Sozialpolitik und Dekolonisation. Die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation (IAO) 1940–1970*, (Essen, 2007), 11.

and who, according to today's standards of good scientific practice, should perhaps even have been listed as co-authors. It is also worth considering whether the early phase of using a personal computer, when thanks were extended to those who had introduced (mostly older) beginners to word processing or footnote management, gave younger and more tech-savvy staff leverage in advocating for their demands. The student-teacher relationship could easily be reversed, especially when it came to computer use. In this struggle for recognition and visibility, the explicit expression of thanks may have represented a compromise. Further evidence pointing to a trade-off of this kind comes from the fact that gratitude continues to be expressed predominantly to those higher or at the same level in the professional hierarchy — but only rarely to those new to the field, though they often provide their senior colleagues with fresh impetus.[45] To be included in acknowledgments, one must not only earn the thanks but also be deemed worthy of it. Older conventions often shine through in the order in which thanks are expressed. Acknowledgments prefacing dissertations typically begin by naming the professors who reviewed them, followed, with some variability, by colleagues, archivists, and funders, and concluding with individuals from the author's personal sphere, usually close family members.[46] The new academic convention of mentioning those who provided help in the acknowledgments is encapsulated in the term "debt of gratitude."[47] This is dutifully and/or joyfully settled by naming the relevant individuals and institutions.[48]

Thesis 2: The expansion of the university and the increase in competition created new uncertainties and changed the way thanks are given. In recent, persuasive studies, Margit Szöllösi-Janze and Ariane Leendertz have analyzed the expansion, since the 1970s, of the German university landscape and the Max Planck Institutes in order to highlight how increasingly scarce resources have been distributed according to the competitive principle.[49] Both developments — expansion and heightened competition — have had an impact on the articulation of thanks in acknowledgments. Expansion meant that it could no longer be assumed that everyone

45 For such an exception, see Michael Wildt, *Zerborstene Zeit. Deutsche Geschichte 1918–1945*, (Munich, 2022), 23.

46 Kim Christian Priemel, *Flick. Eine Konzerngeschichte vom Kaiserreich bis zur Bundesrepublik*, (Göttingen, 2007), 13.

47 Stephan Malinowski, *Vom König zum Führer. Deutscher Adel und Nationalsozialismus*, (Frankfurt a.M., 2004), n.p. [10, page not numbered].

48 Jan Eckel, *Hans Rothfels. Eine intellektuelle Biographie im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Göttingen, 2005), 478; Karl Schlögel, *Das sowjetische Jahrhundert. Archäologie einer untergegangenen Welt*, (Munich, 2017), 848.

49 Margit Szöllösi-Janze, "Archäologie des Wettbewerbs. Konkurrenz in und zwischen Universitäten in (West-)Deutschland seit den 1980er Jahren," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 69 (2021): 241–276; Ariane Leendertz, "Die Macht des Wettbewerbs. Die Max-Planck-Gesellschaft und die Ökonomisierung der Wissenschaft seit den 1990er Jahren," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 70 (2022): 235–271.

knew everyone else within the historical disciplines. Acknowledgments thus offered newly minted PhDs, in particular, the opportunity to position themselves for their readers institutionally and within disciplinary schools. At the same time, such texts became a tool for building one's professional network, as manifested in the acknowledgments. The increased competition, meanwhile, seemed to make it necessary for the author to impress not only through their scholarly work, but also by highlighting the networks in which they were involved, by referring to colleagues who had taken the time to discuss a project, and to institutions that had funded their research. The people and institutions mentioned thus functioned as guarantors of the quality of a study even as they were formulaically absolved of any remaining errors. This logic made it prudent to rather list one person too many in the acknowledgments rather than one too few — though this could easily lead to a degree of overreach: those named were rarely asked if they wished to be mentioned.

50 René Breiwe, *Diversitätsreflexive Bildung und die deutschen Schulgesetze. Eine kritische Analyse*, (Wiesbaden, 2020), VII.

On occasion, the strategic use of acknowledgments is addressed explicitly. Authors often reassure their readers and, above all, those they are thanking, that their words are sincerely meant rather than strategically motivated. The following provides an uncompromising example: "Hence, the question arises as to how I would like to present myself through my acknowledgments and dedication. The answer I came up with was that one attribute was especially fitting: grateful. In this sense, the following words may be read as a genuine expression of my gratitude — no more, but also no less."[50]

The uncertainty accompanying acknowledgments' expanded functions and deconventionalization, may also be connected to changing working conditions at universities. It may be that the increase in fixed-term (rather than tenured) positions and the resulting uncertainty of career prospects are bringing back the early modern practice of extoling one's ruler, albeit in twenty-first-century guise. Instead of the rhetorically elaborate statement of thanks to a single ruler and benefactor, this takes the form of offerings, that is, polite thanks to as many people as possible who may have an

influence on one's academic career or research at some point in the future. The increasing scope of acknowledgments might, therefore, be interpreted as a strategy for coping with contingency in an unpredictable, complex working environment in which academics have to prove themselves as entrepreneurial experts.[51]

51 Ulrich Bröckling, *Das unternehmerische Selbst. Soziologie einer Subjektivierungsform*, (Frankfurt a.M., 2007).

At the same time, those who served as reviewers of the PhD or other types of theses and colleagues who provided assistance expect to be thanked, though they rarely express this explicitly. Foundations and funding institutions are also increasingly keen to be mentioned in the publications of the researchers they support. Ever more often, naming the funding institution, including printing their logo, is an explicit precondition for a printing subsidy. Such mentions usually appear not only in the acknowledgments, but on the imprint page as well. A mere mention in lengthy stretches of text between numerous other acknowledgments no longer seems to be a sufficient counter-gift for funding institutions; they seek a more prominent, distinct place in the publication. Thus it matters *where* a person or institution is mentioned, whether they are front and center or sandwiched between many others somewhere in the middle of a paragraph.

However this may be, a debate is already being conducted in the Anglo-American academic world as to whether, in assessing a scholar's significance and influence within their field, attention should be paid not only to how often their peers cite their work and how much external funding they have secured but also to how often they are mentioned in acknowledgments. Some argue that such analysis of acknowledgments offers little insight, contending that these mentions merely reflect professional hierarchies, with the directors of large research institutions logically mentioned more often than other academics. Others disagree, suggesting that the systematic analysis of acknowledgments may shine a spotlight on individuals who have less of an impact on the discipline through their own publications, but who contribute more collegially by providing intellectual stimulation or who help improve publications by proving meticulous feedback. Regardless of which position one favors, this debate demonstrates

how easy it is to perceive mentions in acknowledgments as strategic in nature.[52]

In light of this, it is worth examining instances of the *absence* of acknowledgments over the last three decades. Unlike in the past, the decision not to include a special acknowledgments section in one's book, or to keep it brief, must now be interpreted as a conscious decision — either as a rejection of the new culture of acknowledgment or as a staging of one's sovereignty and independence within the field. Thus in 2000, when acknowledgments were becoming increasingly elaborate, the legal scholar Friedrich-Christian Schroeder argued that he had no wish to receive thanks for fulfilling his professional duties, such as supervising and correcting qualifying theses. From an external perspective, he maintained, such thanks create the impression that carrying out these tasks is no longer a self-evident part of the profession but is instead an extra service worthy of special recognition. The contrary view, which associates gratitude with polite manners and defends it as a counter-gift for the particularly competent execution of duties, underscores the growing acceptance of the new culture of acknowledgments.[53] By the same token, those who omit acknowledgments in order to assert their independence are suggesting that those who express no thanks to anyone are dependent on no one's favor or beneficence.[54]

In recent years, the changes in the academic system outlined above and the associated valorization of acknowledgments have even led to the emergence of specialized guides offering doctoral candidates, and increasingly undergraduate and graduate students as well, help in writing their acknowledgments. In addition, many universities now provide their own guidelines and templates. A typical example of such offerings is the "Mentorium" website, which advertises its services as follows: "Compared to writing the rest of your thesis, the acknowledgments are a true luxury problem. Finally, you can bid farewell to jargon and academic phrasing and reflect on this milestone in your scholarly career in your own words."[55] This is followed by a few general thoughts on acknowledgments and a grid of people one might thank, together with the reasons for doing so.

52 For an introduction to this discussion, see Katherine W. McCain, "Beyond Garfield's Citation Index. An Assessment of Some Issues in Building a Personal Name Acknowledgments Index," *Scientometrics* 114 (2018): 605–631; Nadine Desrochers, Adèle Paul-Hus, and Jen Pecoskie, "Five Decades of Gratitude. A Meta-Synthesis of Acknowledgments Research," *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 68 (2017): 2821–2833.

53 Friedrich-Christian Schroeder, "Herzlichen Dank, Herr Professor!," *JuristenZeitung* 55 (2000): 353; Horst Sendler, "Undank als Lohn der Welt?" *JuristenZeitung* 55 (2000): 614; Wilfried Küper, "Dank-Kaskaden," *JuristenZeitung* 55 (2000): 614.

54 For a case of self-staging in this sense, see David van Reybrouck, *Revolusi. Indonesien und die Entstehung der modernen Welt. Aus dem Niederländischen von Andreas Ecke*, (Berlin, 2022), 643.

55 "Danksagung Dissertation. Vorlagen zum Download," URL: <https://www.mentorium.de/danksagung-dissertation/>.

Finally, the website offers sample templates, thus underlining the standardization of the genre.[56] These guides are only new in the sense that they specialize in academic acknowledgments. In his popular and widely read book *On Human Relations* (1788), Freiherr Adolph von Knigge already declared gratitude one of the most sacred of virtues and offered his audience advice on how to conduct themselves towards those who had done them a kindness.[57] The demand for such assistance suggests that the act of expressing thanks was, and is still, not necessarily perceived as a "luxury problem" but involves a delicate balancing act within interpersonal relations — one for which, as the sociologist Georg Simmel put it, no clear, written norms exist.[58] This, in turn, increased the desire for guidance. In the act of articulating thanks, the last thing one wants to do is make a misstep or embarrass oneself.

Thesis 3: Self-presentation and the popularization of knowledge have become more important in academia.[59] In autobiographies and interviews, in shorter articles on their career paths and on social media, scholars are revealing ever more personal details about themselves and commenting on a wide range of topics. At the same time, publishers and television networks are presenting "their" authors to the public as scholarly personalities through photographic and filmic portraits. Through this increased (self-)staging, both academics and publishers are catering to the mass media's desire for individual experts who serve as recognizable and credible communicators of knowledge.

In academics' new self-portrayals, the boundaries between the professional and the personal are dissolving, though there was no strict separation even in the past. From this perspective, when it comes to acknowledgments, it is understandable when book authors thank their kindergarten teachers, their regular drinking buddies or cycling friends, for example, and that in other countries, far more often than in Germany, they openly express their religious faith. And since, nowadays, information about an author's personal life can often be gleaned elsewhere, it is not necessary to conceal such aspects in books; nor is it surprising that researchers mention this information in acknowledgments, that, in the 2010s

56 "Danksagung Dissertation" (note 55).

57 Adolph von Knigge, *Ueber den Umgang mit Menschen*, vol. 1, (Hannover, 1788), 263.

58 Georg Simmel, "Dankbarkeit. Ein soziologischer Versuch," *Der Morgen. Wochenschrift für deutsche Kultur* 1 (1907), 593–598.

59 See Ralph Jessen, "'Wir alle spielen Theater'. Selbstinszenierungen und feine Unterschiede im universitären Milieu seit den 1990er Jahren," lecture, January 25, 2022, URL: <https://lisa.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/koelner_vortraege_jessen>; Peter Schöttler, "Die autobiographische Versuchung," in Lüdtke and Prass, *Gelehrtenleben* (note 5), 131–140.

and early 2020s, publishers promote their authors by reaching out to their followers on social media platforms such as Twitter (now X) or that authors thank these social media followers in their printed works. An ever-greater number of academics regard references to their own personality as giving them a competitive advantage within the economy of attention, prompting them to provide insights into their personal lives, which in turn finds reflection in their acknowledgments. At the same time, a new academic convention is emerging, namely the self-presentation of the individual whose creativity spans both the private and professional spheres.

Thesis 4: The changing practice of acknowledgments in Germany reflects the increasing interdisciplinarity and internationalization of academia. The first, forced, wave of the internationalization of German academia occurred as early as the 1930s and 1940s, when scholars fled Nazi persecution. After World War II, institutions such as the German Historical Institutes and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) actively promoted international networking, while collaborative research projects and graduate centers propelled interdisciplinary exchange. Researchers' growing involvement in interdisciplinary project groups and research centers, as well as more frequent stays abroad, initially led simply to an increase in mentions of supporting and funding institutions and scholarship providers in acknowledgments.[60] Furthermore, as my own bookshelf, which is dominated by works on international history as well as family and property history published in the UK and US, reveals, even in the Anglo-American world, until the 1960s, acknowledgments were far shorter than they are today and were usually expressed in the foreword.[61] Much earlier than in the two German states, however, a separate acknowledgments section, as we know it today, emerged in the 1970s, and this soon became both detailed and personal. In the acknowledgments appearing in his standard work *Crabgrass Frontier*, published in 1985, Kenneth T. Jackson, for example, addressed the accidental death of his son a few weeks before the completion of the manuscript and thanked everyone who had helped him and his wife to resume their daily routines.[62] Such a private statement was unusual even

60 For (early) examples in which the DFG, the German Historical Institutes, the DAAD or foreign institutions are thanked for supporting research abroad, see for the Federal Republic of Germany Imanuel Geiss, *Panafrikanismus. Zur Geschichte der Dekolonisation*, (Frankfurt a.M., 1968), 7; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, *Nationalismus und Demokratie. Zur Geschichte der Bourgeoisie im Frankreich der Restauration*, (Frankfurt a.M., 1974), 8. For the GDR, see Helmuth Stoecker, *Deutschland und China im 19. Jahrhundert. Das Eindringen des deutschen Kapitalismus*, (Berlin, 1958), 7.

61 A transitional case is G.H. Jansen's 1966 book, which begins with the "Introduction and Acknowledgment" as a separate chapter: Gerrit H. Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment*, (London, 1966), 11f.

62 Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier. The Suburbanization of the United States*, (New York, 1985), ixf.

for US-American acknowledgments; in the two German states it was simply inexpressible.

Against the background of this development in the Anglo-American academic world, it can be assumed that two closely interlinked processes have contributed to changing acknowledgment practices in German-speaking academia. First, the spread of English as the global academic language, the increasing mobility of academics, and the translation of English-language works into German led authors in Germany to move away from the model of sober, self-effacing acknowledgments and to adopt elements of the detailed, personal variant. This appropriation of what was initially a culturally different form of published acknowledgment must in turn be seen as part of a broader process of transfer in which German research policy and academia turned away, at least in part, from the ideal of the *Reformuniversität* or "reform university" (which emerged in the 1960s and promoted interdisciplinarity and the democratization of academia), aligning themselves far more closely with elite universities in the United States and the United Kingdom. This new alignment was reflected in new competitive funding mechanisms (such as *Exzellenzinitiativen* or excellence initiatives) and in the introduction of academic "rituals" modelled on the Ivy League universities or the investment of existing rituals (such as graduation ceremonies or alumni meetings) with new significance. This orientation towards elite Anglo-American universities ultimately facilitated the transfer of Anglo-American academic acknowledgment practices to the German scholarly landscape, as a small but personal element of academic communication and self-presentation. In their acknowledgments, then, authors no longer mentioned just their scholarship providers, but highlighted the (elite) institutions where they had conducted research or presented their work.

V. Conclusion and Outlook

From a historical perspective, we can discern three ideal types of academic acknowledgments: the deferential paean of praise and

rhetorically sophisticated statement of thanks of the early modern period; the self-effacing acknowledgments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and the in-depth, subjectivizing variant of the twenty-first century. These types each had their own apogees, yet chronologically they not only followed one another, but existed side by side as well. Generally speaking, it seems reasonable to describe developments over the past thirty years as a process of pluralization and deconventionalization. This finding is consistent with observations on the self-presentation of academics in sociology and in other settings, as well as with the shift in gender relations and the internationalization of the humanities.[63] In a number of ways, sociology and history have become more diverse, and this is mirrored in acknowledgments. At the same time, the sites of narrative self-presentation have shifted. While the academic résumé has been reduced from an autobiographical story previously formulated in the main text to a bullet-pointed and standardized CV,[64] the narrative elements in acknowledgments have increased.

However – and here I conclude by highlighting potential future research foci – a different picture will likely emerge if one examines who is mentioned in academic acknowledgments not through the lens of cultural history, but instead — incorporating additional sources — takes a more socio-historical approach to who in fact speaks in such texts. Who has the opportunity to express their thanks publicly in such texts in the first place? An article in the journal of the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (Deutscher Hochschulverband or DHV) entitled "Classism in Academia" suggests that the section of society that appears in academic acknowledgments is increasingly narrow and homogeneous.[65] According to the German National Association for Student Affairs (Deutsches Studentenwerk), students whose parents have no academic qualifications, often referred to as "working-class children" (*Arbeiterkinder*), continue to be underrepresented within the student body. In Germany's *Leistungsgesellschaft* ("merit-based society" or "meritocracy"), family background still plays a major role in individuals' educational success. This, too, is reflected in

63 Hollstein and Schütze, "Selbstdarstellungen in der Wissenschaft" (note 33); Etzemüller, *Auftritt* (note 3).

64 Julian Hamann and Wolfgang Kaltenbrunner, "Biographical Representation, from Narrative to List. The Evolution of Curricula Vitae in the Humanities, 1950 to 2010," *Research Evaluation* 31 (2022): 438–451.

65 Tanja Gabriele Baudson and Riccardo Altieri, "Klassismus in Academia. Wer kommt an die Spitze?," *Forschung & Lehre*, January 13, 2022.

acknowledgments. Again and again, doctoral students thank their parents not only for general human support, but also for specific contributions to the completion of a manuscript — for example as proofreaders or as (co-)organizers and funders of research trips. Among doctoral and postdoctoral students, as well as professors, the proportion of "working-class children" decreases even further as one moves up the hierarchy of academic qualifications.[66]

It is only a slight overstatement to say that in present-day academic acknowledgments the daughters and sons of academics thank their academic teachers and their university-educated parents. This social narrowing coincides with a period in which friends and family have become much more visible in acknowledgments and may offer further insight into why this genre has diversified so substantially since the 1980s and 1990s. To paraphrase Pierre Bourdieu and Andreas Reckwitz, subtle markers — within acknowledgments formulated with as much originality as possible — may play a significant role in generating distinction within a peer group that is once again becoming more homogeneous.[67]

66 See Julia Reuter et al., eds., *Vom Arbeiterkind zur Professur. Sozialer Aufstieg in der Wissenschaft. Autobiographische Notizen und soziobiographische Analysen*, (Bielefeld, 2020); Christina Möller, *Herkunft zählt (fast) immer. Soziale Ungleichheit unter Universitätsprofessorinnen und -professoren*, (Weinheim, 2015).

67 See Pierre Bourdieu, *Die feinen Unterschiede. Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft*, 27th edn., (Frankfurt a.M., 2020); Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Gesellschaft der Singularitäten. Zum Strukturwandel der Moderne*, (Berlin, 2017).

Jürgen Dinkel is a fellow at the DFG Heisenberg Program at the University of Leipzig. A historian of modern Europe and global history, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the German Historical Institute Washington in 2016-2017 and has been a co-coordinator of the German Studies Association's Family & Kinship Network since 2024. His most recent publications include *Alles bleibt in der Familie: Erbe und Eigentum in Deutschland, Russland und den USA seit dem 19. Jahrhundert* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023); "'The Rich Uncle from America': Transnational Inheritance Transfers between the United States, Germany, and Russia, 1840s–1980s," *Law and History Review* (2025); and "The Non-Aligned Movement: The Role of Diplomacy in Third-worldism and the Global South," in *Oxford Handbook on the History of the Global South* (Oxford UP, 2025). He is currently writing a short history of gratitude.

Conference Reports

Fourth Annual International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies

Seminar held at the University of Tübingen (Tübingen, Germany), July 3-6, 2024. Co-organized by the University of Tübingen, the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI), and the American Historical Association (AHA), in cooperation with the Interdisciplinary Center for Integration and Migration Research (InZentIM), the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI), and the Center for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21). Conveners: Jan C. Jansen (University of Tübingen), Dane Kennedy (George Washington University), Simone Lässig (GHI). Participants: Mathias Beer (Institute for Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies, Tübingen), Cristian Cercel (Institute for Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies, Tübingen), Muhamed Riyaz Chenganakkatil (Indian Institute of Technology), Kathleen Commons (University of Sheffield), Sara Cosemans (KU Leuven), Delphine Diaz (University of Reims), Victoria Do (University of Georgia), Paulina Dominik (European University Institute), Ilana Feldman (George Washington University), Peter Gatrell (University of Manchester), Xian Yu Jee (Royal Holloway/University of London), Panagiotis Karagkounis (University of Manchester), Pragya Kaul (University of Michigan), Jannik Keindorf (University of Tübingen), Susanne Lachenicht (University of Bayreuth), Thomas Mareite (University of Tübingen), Glenn Penny (University of California, Los Angeles), Ulrike Schulze (University of Tübingen), Ryan Cheuk Him Sun (University of British Columbia), Jessica Wehner (University of Osnabrück), Ramon Wiederkehr (University of Neuchâtel), Natalia Woszczyk (European University Institute).

The International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies brings together early-career scholars from different countries working in the field of refugee history from diverse perspectives. The fourth edition of this seminar, held in the summer of 2024, showed that discussing refugee experiences through an historical perspective, from the seventeenth century to the present, brings to light patterns and continuities in how these experiences have been lived, conceptualized, managed, and negotiated by a variety of actors. Following words of welcome from conveners Jan C. Jansen and Dane Kennedy, the first session addressed early modern refugee regimes, from both a legal and emotional perspective. Discussing the case study of the settlement of Huguenots in England, often described as the country's "first refugees," Kathleen Commons raised the question of what constitutes a refugee regime in the first place. She asked whether the discretionary, contingent, and revocable protections and liberties granted to them by a particular monarch – and compared to what they extended to other foreign migrants – were tantamount to full statutory refugee protection. Commons analyzed the laws and policies applied in pre-modern in England to migrants fleeing violence, questioning whether the term "refugees" is appropriate in this specific historical context. Natalia Woszczyk delved into the Bohemian Brethren's emigration for reasons of faith in 1548, focusing on the seventeenth-century narratives that recounted this historical event and its aftermath in this community. Woszczyk argued for implementing the approaches deriving from the history of emotions into the scholarship on early modern migration, underlining how refugees employed religious metaphors and symbols of martyrdom to narrate and make sense of their experience.

The first day of the conference ended with a keynote lecture by Susanne Lachenicht, titled "Historicizing the Refugee Experience: Some Reflections on Current Research Interests, Paradigms, and Problems in Refugee Studies."

Lachenicht presented a broad panorama of the methodological, epistemological, and thematic underpinnings of historical refugee studies since the 1980s. She contended that this field of studies, rooted in migration history, gradually moved beyond the macro-historical perspective of migration history by adopting a multi-scalar approach and a post-structuralist emphasis on networks informed by microhistory. Lachenicht also highlighted key insights that historical refugee studies have drawn from literary criticism and new historicism, such as a focus on the situational aspects of identity and belonging, along with a renewed attention to the horizons of expectations and spatial-temporal conceptions held by historical actors.

The second session explored the intersection of political exile and imperial politics. Paulina Dominik examined the involvement of Polish political émigrés in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Tanzimat reforms, illustrating how, for many, the Ottoman Empire evolved from a place of exile into a realm of opportunity where they influenced Ottoman imperial governance. Dominik portrayed them as practitioners of informal imperialism, arguing that during their exile in the Ottoman Empire, Polish political émigrés, originally identified as independence fighters, also engaged in various imperial enterprises, serving as intermediaries and skillful builders of the empire. Muhamed Riyaz Chenganakkatil explored exile migrations to the Hijaz region in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Arabia. While traditionally seen as a pilgrimage destination, Hijaz also became a refuge for South Asian Muslims exiled by the British Empire during and after the Great Rebellion of 1857. These political exiles included anti-colonial leaders and religious scholars who were deemed threats by British colonial authorities and formed new diasporic communities in Hijaz. Chenganakkatil examined the influence of these exilic networks on the Khilafat Movement and broader global Muslim politics, discussing the connection between punitive mobilities and exile politics in this geographical setting.

The third session zeroed in on refugee resettlement in twentieth-century Europe. Panagiotis Karagkounis discussed the temporal dynamics of humanitarian solutions and refugeedom in post-1922 Greece. Karagkounis argued that discrepancies in the temporal regimes of humanitarian organizations and refugees themselves highlighted underlying power imbalances and tensions between both sets of actors. By drawing upon the concept of "refugee time," Karagkounis demonstrated how refugees continued to identify as such and sought assistance even after the official emergency was considered over, thereby challenging the established "end" point of humanitarian efforts. Ramon Wiederkehr focused on the resettlement of Baltic displaced women under the mandate of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) to Switzerland in the wake of the Second World War. He argued that their admission was shaped by the conflicting interests of international, national, and nongovernmental actors, set against the backdrop of immigration politics and Cold War tensions. Wiederkehr's contribution underscored how refugee resettlement depended on considerations of cultural desirability and economic usefulness, positioning refugees as a captive workforce at the intersection between modern humanitarianism and global capitalism.

The focus of the fourth session lay on diasporas in South and Southeast Asia during the 1930s and 1940s. Pragya Kaul analyzed discourses on the "refugee colonist," the central figure of contemporary British imperial schemes around resettling European Jewish refugees to India. Kaul underscored how Whitehall officials, League of Nations representatives, and Jewish organizations alike advocated for the potential of refugees to foster white settlement in Britain's colonies, thereby aiding in the development of empire. Xian Yu Jee's paper traced the development of the relationship between Malayan *huaqiao* (overseas Chinese) and mainland China in the face of the Japanese occupation. Jee

demonstrated how refugees pragmatically navigated transnational networks: *huaqiao* tapped into preexisting ties with their Chinese "motherland" as they sought refuge, while many of them would return to British Malaya after the war. Both papers emphasized the intersection between refugee relief and political interests. British authorities saw Jewish refugees as prospective white settlers in colonial projects, and the Kuomintang government sought close relationships to *huaqiao* community leaders in order to forge a transnational Chinese identity. The session thus raised broader questions about how political actors both within and outside of communities influence diasporic identity formation.

The fifth session emphasized the role of cultural representations in the postwar refugee migration regime, specifically examining how the desirability of refugee populations was judged based on conceptions of Europeanness and whiteness. Ryan Cheuk Him Sun investigated the interactions between Central European Jewish refugees, Jewish refugee organizations in Hong Kong and Singapore, and British colonial authorities. Exploring the intersection between humanitarianism and gatekeeping, Sun argued that colonial border regimes influenced the type of assistance Jewish refugees received, as they navigated and sometimes resisted these colonial "paper walls" in their efforts to secure shelter. Jessica Wehner investigated the resettlement challenges encountered by Kalmyk Displaced Persons (DP), focusing on how ethnic categorizations and associated racist and culturalist essentializations impacted their postwar experience. The failed resettlement of Kalmyk DPs to Paraguay, Wehner argued, exemplifies how identity constructions can push certain refugee populations into liminal legal spaces and peripheral sites of refuge, while also highlighting their agency in negotiating resettlement options.

Ulrike Schulze gave a special presentation to start the fourth and final day of the conference on the activities of

the University of Tübingen's Refugee Law Clinic (RLC), a university-certified training program founded in 2016 based on the model of law clinics in the United States. The work of the RLC combines theory and practice by helping refugees navigate the German asylum system through counseling, teaching immigration and asylum law to future lawyers and social workers, and by creating awareness of refugee issues among future decision makers.

The sixth and last session of the conference focused on refugee mobility in postcolonial contexts during the second half of the twentieth century. Victoria Do investigated the connections between South Vietnamese pilots, the U.S. military, and the Savannah community during the Vietnam War. The training experience of South Vietnamese pilots in Georgia, many of whom subsequently became refugees, can be viewed as both a chapter in the narrative of American militarism and part of the global history of decolonization and the involvement of foreign allies in imperial counterinsurgency. Do argued that the training programs of the U.S. Vietnamization policy were driven by a distinct type of Cold War imperialism that created a specific space for subsequent Vietnamese refugee community formation that stood in marked contrast to the way so-called "boat people" were regarded after the war. Sara Cosemans looked at the relationship between "freedom of movement" clauses in human rights law and refugee resettlement in the 1970s, when these clauses became legally binding. Cosemans found that Western resettlement states increasingly attempted to circumvent "freedom of movement" obligations to contain unwanted migration from the non-Western world in the course of decolonization. She showed how in this context, refugee resettlement became a tool for managing and limiting mobility.

Covering different geographies and time periods, the papers presented at the seminar spoke to each other on

broader questions concerning the field of refugee history. Among the many points raised during this seminar, the conversation kept returning to three main themes and issues: Firstly, several papers engaged with questions of spaces and scales of analysis. By drawing attention to South-to-South circuits and networks of exiles (in the Ottoman Empire and in South and South-East Asia, most noticeably), they stressed the importance of de-centering Western geographies of refugee migration and paying attention to alternative sites of refuge and hubs of political modernity. In a similar vein, these papers revealed the frequent overlaps between empire and nation-state as mutually constitutive and not necessarily exclusive units of analysis. One common theme that emerged was the importance of refugee migration for fostering or sustaining the emergence of imperial sub-metropoles, thereby respatializing empire. Secondly, many contributions addressed connections between refugee protection and relief, capitalism, and settler colonialism. The discussion brought to light that a common thread shaping the refugee experience across time periods was a utilitarian, transactional, and competitive approach to refugee management that linked "productive" and "moral" dimensions. Refugee relief can therefore be both a humanitarian enterprise and a practical means to an end: by improving a "benevolent" nation's public image, establishing a work force, or (re-)settling refugees within projects of nation or empire building. At the same time, refugees can and have made use of these avenues of "usefulness" to negotiate access to relief and resources by self-fashioning and constructing narratives that correspond to utilitarian expectations of host states and societies. Finally, the discussion pointed to the baggage and limits of the "refugee" category as a lens of analysis. On the one hand, the prevalent essentialization of refugees as victims tends to obscure their agency and the multiple and complex roles they can have beyond being refugees: as settlers, political experts, aid-givers to other refugees, or, in colonial settings, oppres-

sors of others. On the other hand, several papers brought other concepts and terms to the conversation (exile, emigrant, displaced person, or non-English terms like *huaqiao* and *muhācir*). A core question was whether the primacy of the "refugee" category limits the scope of analysis in the field, and what such other categories can describe that the term "refugee" may not. The fifth iteration of the International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies, scheduled for July 2025 at the University of California, Berkeley, will continue the conversation around these questions and themes in the field of refugee history.

Thomas Mareite and Jannik Keindorf
(University of Tübingen)

Refugees in Global Transit: Encounters, Knowledge, and Coping Strategies in a Disrupted World, 1930s – 1950s

Workshop held at President Hotel, Mumbai, February 13-14, 2025. Co-organized by the Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies in New-Delhi, the German Historical Institute Washington, the Orient Institute Istanbul, and the Orient Institute Beirut. Conveners: Simone Lässig (German Historical Institute Washington), Sebastian Schwecke (Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies, Delhi), Swen Steinberg (Queen's University, Kingston), Christoph K. Neumann (Orient Institute Istanbul), Maria Framke (University of Erfurt), and Jens Hanssen (Orient Institute Beirut). Participants: Subarno Chattarji (Delhi University), Suchintan Das (University of Oxford), Antara Datta (Royal Holloway, London), Arnab Dutta (University of Groningen), Rosa de Jong (University of Amsterdam), Mohamad El Chaama, Harald Fischer-Tine (ETH-Zürich), Ute Frevert (Max Weber Foundation), Jörg Gengnagel (University of Würzburg), Atina Grossmann (Cooper Union, New York), Julia Hauser (University of Kassel), Pragya Kaul (University of Michigan), Razak Khan (University of Goettingen), Karina Khasnulina (Leipzig University), Friederike Kind-Kovács (Hannah Arendt Institute Dresden), Naina Manjrekar (IIT Bombay), Ninad Pandit (Cooper Union, New York), Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka (Bielefeld University), Jörg Zedler (University of Regensburg).

This workshop explored refugee transit experiences and host country responses in colonized societies from the rise of fascism in the 1930s to decolonization after the Second World War. In her introduction, Ute Frevert alluded to the workshop's significance in light of contemporary trends in

forced migration and called for uncovering similarities, continuities, and differences between the interwar and postwar periods. Simone Lässig stressed how this period is the subject of extensive scholarship on global transit, focusing on refugee experiences during flight—a time of uncertainty and dependency that nevertheless fosters ambiguous relationships, knowledge transfers, and complex interactions of otherness, alienation, and belonging. While anchored in the study of Jewish refugee experiences, the field has expanded in multiple conceptual and regional directions, laying the foundation for this workshop. Sebastian Schwecke concluded the introduction with an example of these ambiguous relationships: refugees from Europe, upon entering through the Gate of India, became a *sahib* by virtue of their cultural capital and white privilege. He emphasized the importance of examining the experiences of those who did not become a *sahib*, shedding light on overlooked histories in the context of South Asian humanitarian self-fashioning. This aspect became a recurring reference point when exploring the commonalities and differences in the experiences of, and responses to, refugees discussed in the workshop.

The first panel on "Interactions and Illusions" began with Arnab Dutta reflecting on political thought surrounding immigration, settlement and indigeneity, Hindutva discourse, and imaginaries of postcolonial possibilities in prepartition Bengal, based on the self-description of Hindu Bengali elites as *natun ihudi* [New Jews]. Dutta argued that this comparison with Jewish refugees served an "Asian story" while the authors of this discourse remained ambiguous towards the actual immigration of Jewish refugees to the region. Next, Julia Hauser presented photographs by Georg Goldstein, a Jewish surgeon and semi-professional photographer, illustrating his growing critique of the violent aspects of Zionism in late Mandate Palestine and early Israel. Between his immigration in 1937 and his return to

Düsseldorf in 1953, Goldstein's photography and writings, despite Orientalist tendencies, reveal his disillusionment with corruption, Hebraization, and continuous Jewish immigration. Hauser's work also hinted at the methodological and theoretical implications of "undocumented" photographs. Karina Khasulina presented her paper on the dual role of Russian clergymen who assisted Russian émigrés from China during the Cold War. Influenced by the emerging political divisions of the war, some supported Soviet repatriation, while others facilitated immigration to non-communist countries. The latter case also emphasizes the interaction between religious institutions, international humanitarianism, and Western narratives against communism in a Cold War context.

During the second panel on "Reimagination and Remembrance" Rosa de Jong traced the histories of interned Jewish refugees in the Caribbean, illustrating the imagery of seemingly leisurely experiences despite an underlying state of uncertainty and dependence. Her work also highlighted the divergence between her collection of oral histories and sources from local archives and the official archives, which often bypassed transit periods in the Caribbean and lacked emotional depth. Friederike Kind-Kovács shared the stories of international and personal efforts for family reunifications involving Hungarian Jewish child survivors that were taken to Sweden for physical rehabilitation. Based on surviving letters, she emphasized the resilience and activism of the children on their own behalf while acknowledging that their futures depended on the survival of their relatives. Both de Jong's case study touching on the integration into white elites and Kind-Kovács' study on the intentions and strategies behind the repatriation of Eastern European child survivors explored themes of belonging and race.

Panel three on "Negotiating Precarity" examined the colonial state's responses to various refugee groups in the British Empire, stressing the entanglement of administrative agendas with issues of race and otherness. Suchintan Das described the internment of German civilians, including both "enemy aliens" following the declaration of war and Jewish refugees as humanitarian subjects, during the Second World War in India. He contextualized the strict internment policies not only in relation to the threat of a Japanese invasion but also colonial anxieties about German cooperation in anti-colonial movements and the presence of "impoverished" whites, potentially challenging notions of colonial supremacy. Pragya Kaul focused on the experiences of Polish refugees housed in the Valivade camp in the Princely State of Kolhapur during the Second World War, which were shaped by complex layers of administrative procedures reflecting competition among authorities of power. These administrative practices also stemmed from differing perceptions and expectations of Poles compared to Western European refugees, leading to their deliberate isolation from the local Indian population. Antara Datta discussed the 1941 exodus of Kazakhs from Xinjiang to Bhopal, highlighting the British Empire's complex responses, which ranged from refusal to humanitarian and developmental ideals. These responses were starkly challenged by the way the Kazakhs resisted rehabilitation efforts. She argued that the postcolonial state inherited the conflation of humanitarianism with developmentalism, subjecting refugees to criticism when they diverged from developmental ideals.

In Panel four, titled "Refugees, Hosts and Settlers," Mohamad El Chaama recounted the story of the 1939 Beirut Quarantine. He traced the fate of Jewish refugees on board a ship that was denied entry at several Mediterranean ports after an onboard plague outbreak. With the support of Quaker missionaries and local Jewish communities, the

refugees were eventually quarantined in Beirut's port for several weeks. Due to Lebanese reluctance to permanently resettle Jewish refugees, most eventually dispersed, with many of them making their way to Palestine. Jens Hannsen addressed the case that Atina Grossman later referred to as the "looming elephant in the room" – the question of Jewish settlement in Palestine and the implications of the Zionist project. His paper examined different encounters and sites of contestation concerning the future of Palestine during and after the Second World War. Focusing on debates between Khalil Sakini and Judah Magnes in 1942, between Martin Buber, Judah Magnes, and Albert Hourani in 1946, and the post-Nakba discussions on the repatriation of Palestinian refugees, he argued that mainstream Zionism was essentially settler colonialism. The discussion that followed centered on the legitimacy of this label. Some argued that the absence of a homeland calls the designation of colonialism into question while others emphasized the notion of land upgradation as key to defining "settler colonialism" as a sui generis category applicable in the case of Zionism.

The first day concluded with a keynote lecture by Atina Grossmann. Highlighting the wealth of sources from official national, local, and private archives, as well as an extensive list of publications, she portrayed the multi-directional expansion of the field in recent decades. She traced the movement of Holocaust and refugee studies from Germany to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and finally, colonial contexts, where Jewish refugees often held positions aligned with power without directly participating in the regimes of subordination. Despite this significant expansion, she argued that the discussion has evaded the case of Palestine, leading to a dangerous polarization and stalling progress in the field. She then turned to highlighting sources from her own family archive, shedding light on the afterlives of memories and objects from transit periods, and other aspects of the refugee experience in "the Orient." She underscored how

refugees, while benefiting from imperial cosmopolitanism in unfamiliar cultural environments, still retained the connection to and memory of their lost homes in Europe.

The workshop's second day began with the fifth panel titled "Shalom and Hello Bombay," which focused on the different experiences of German migrants in colonial and postcolonial Bombay (Mumbai). Maria Framke shed light on the migration experience of Ernst Schäffer, a Jewish journalist from Berlin who lived in Bombay from 1933 until the 1960s. She analyzed Schäffer's sympathetic engagement with the city, tracing his observations of the anti-colonial movement in India, his social networks—as well as those he avoided due to antisemitic Nazism within the German diaspora—and the professional benefits he gained from the expertise he accumulated in India. Jörg Zedler presented on Schäffer's acquaintance, Karl Graf Spreti, a trained architect who spent less than four years in India, working in the burgeoning Bombay film industry. Tracing Spreti's personal connections, mostly with Europeans and particularly Germans, Zedler examined his ambivalent stance towards antisemitism. While he distanced himself from racist antisemites and socialized with Jewish Germans in Bombay, he also openly expressed antisemitic notions. Razak Khan took a different angle by examining the history of Bombay cinema and its German contributors, focusing on German cameraman Josef Wirsching, as a history of knowledge paradigm. Scrutinizing the technological innovations introduced by Wirsching's modern use of light, Khan argued that the Islamicate form in Hindi cinema is more of a modern project than a return to the past, positioning Bombay modernism within a broader global history of transnational mobility and expertise.

The sixth and final panel on "Internationalism and Anticolonialism between the Local and the Global" focused on the global transfer of communist and anti-colonial ideas and practices through different actors. Ninad Pandit examined

the workshop's theme by using the cases of refugees both *of* and *from* empire. He studied political émigrés from the Left – those who escaped British India to the West, and Europeans who came to British India – initiating and facilitating the circulation of communist ideas and union mobilization in cities like Bombay during the interwar period, in a political climate hostile to communism. Naina Manjrekar's paper analyzed how subaltern experiences of mass transit generated intertwined visions of anti-colonial futures and active resistance beyond mass media and political discourses. Recounting incidents of boycotts, strikes, desertions, defections, and mutinies in three different ports – Surabaya, Sydney, and Bombay – by Indian and Indonesian seamen and soldiers, she argued that colonial subalterns practically supported the anti-colonial solidarities that politicians expressed merely rhetorically.

The final discussion aimed to evaluate the conceptual grasp of transit, identify remaining gaps in the field, and explore possibilities for further expansion. In this context, Sebastian Schwecke raised the question of whether greater emphasis should be placed on colonialism. He and others also raised the question how the granularity of individual case studies could be integrated into a broader conceptual framework. Among the diverse concerns raised by the discussants were political lessons for today, the role of age, and the history of emotions. Atina Grossmann concluded that the workshop's uniqueness in bringing together diverse scholars of Holocaust studies and South Asian history in a city like Mumbai promises further explorations rather than preliminary answers. Simone Lässig reflected on the genealogy of the Global Transit Project, framing this workshop as an overall "productive irritation."

The workshop concluded with a visit to the Magen David Synagogue, built in 1864 by David Sassoon, a leader of the Baghdadi Jewish community, followed by a visit to the

Chinchpokli Cemetery, established in 1878 by the Sassoon family. With over 1,000 graves, the cemetery visit commemorated Jewish lives in Bombay, some of which began in Germany, Czechia, Poland, or Austria.

Lilli Trebs
(Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies, Delhi)

Seventh West Coast Germanists' Workshop: Migration, Mobility, and Exchange

Workshop at the University of Nevada, Reno, March 7-8, 2025. Co-sponsored by the Pacific Office of the German Historical Institute Washington and the Department of History, University of Nevada, Reno. Conveners: Viola Alianov-Rautenberg (GHI Washington Pacific Office) and James McSpadden (University of Nevada, Reno). With support from the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, the Gerda Henkel Foundation, and the University of Nevada, Reno. Participants: Elena Amaya (University of California, Berkeley), Lane Baker (Stanford University), Volker Benkert (Arizona State University), Frank Biess (University of Southern California), David Ciarlo (University of Colorado, Boulder), Sara Friedman (University of California, Berkeley), Heike Friedman (GHI Washington), Mathew Greenlee (University of Colorado, Boulder), Jan Hansen (University of California, San Diego), Mo Healy (Lewis & Clark College), Rhiannon Hein (GHI Washington), Zach Henson (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs), Deborah Hertz (University of California, San Diego), Anna Holian (Arizona State University), Paul Lerner (University of Southern California), Alexander Luckmann (University of California, Santa Barbara), Jennifer Lynn (Montana State University Billings), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Caitlin Murdock (California State University, Long Beach), Alexia Orengo-Green (University of Southern California), Thomas Pegelow Kaplan (University of Colorado, Boulder), H. Glenn Penny (University of California, Los Angeles), Sara Pugach (California State University, Los Angeles), Isabel Richter (GHI Washington), Alexandria Ruble (University of Idaho), Erika Schumacher (University of California, Davis), Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin), Brett

M. Van Hoesen (University of Nevada, Reno), Kurt Woolford (University of Southern California).

The GHI's Seventh West Coast Germanists' Workshop was hosted by the University of Nevada, Reno, and was dedicated to the topic of migration, mobility, and exchange in central European history. As Viola Alianov-Rautenberg noted, the issues of migration, mobility, and exchange are not only of special urgency today but have also characterized much of central Europe's past. Panelists and participants introduced a variety of methodological styles and source materials to explore these themes, often to examine the migration of individuals, families, and communities from central Europe and the global networks that they established. Investigating the past through networks proved to be particularly relevant to the workshop itself; the program included a noteworthy forty-six scholars from across the North American west.

Simone Lässig chaired the first panel, "The Global German World." H. Glenn Penny presented first, on the German-speaking community of Valdivia, Chile. By examining "quotidian" life in Valdivia through letters, business and school records, Penny identified "thick social networks" among German-speakers. Social networks extended from familial businesses to transatlantic communication with family members in Europe, to associations that helped establish the foundations of Chilean civil society. Therefore, Penny argued, "shared mental spaces" that emerged at quotidian levels demonstrate how globalization followed in large part from communal networks outside the auspices of the state. Next, Zach Henson presented on the Volga German community in Northern Colorado. The Volga Germans migrated to the United States from Russia, where their autonomous status was threatened by reforms after Russian defeat in the 1904-5 Russo-Japanese war. In Colorado, Henson argued, they struggled between maintaining their traditions and pressure

to assimilate, particularly during periods of anti-German animus. Third, Jennifer Lynn presented on the life of Agnes Smedley, a radical writer, feminist, socialist, and anti-colonial activist. Smedley's time in Weimar Germany, Lynn argued, reflected Weimar's status as a place of "mobility" and "transition" where Smedley could further develop her ideas about sexuality, women's rights, and revolution while forging connections with other writers and thinkers across the globe.

The second panel was titled "Mobility, Migration, and Internment During the Nazi Past" and chaired by Viola Alianov-Rautenberg. Alexandria Ruble presented her research in a paper titled "Imprisoned but not Immobile." Ruble investigated the movement of political prisoners under the Nazi regime using questionnaires [*Fragebögen*] filed after the war's end. Imprisonment was anything but static; incarceration involved extensive movement, which prisoners themselves struggled to keep track of. Prisoners were at times disoriented and isolated, kept away from their local connections. Movement could also be an opportunity, though, as prisoners could forge new networks of political resistance. Next, Thomas Pegelow Kaplan presented his paper on German Jewish migration to the Philippines and Dutch East Indies in the 1930s and 1940s. Pegelow Kaplan deployed the concept of imperial performativity to interrogate Jewish experiences in Southeast Asia. Jewish refugees, he argued, operated in an in-between space. On one hand, they faced discrimination as Jews, but nonetheless the "performance of imperial norms" could stabilize a time of acute crisis. Volker Benkert went third, presenting "Jews who saved Jews: The Loewy Family in Frankfurt, Montpellier, and Phoenix." Amidst the historiographical focus on righteous gentiles who saved Jews, Benkert hoped to acknowledge Jews saving Jews as well. The Loewy family, he showed, used networks of contacts to "spring free" around 1500 mostly Jewish prisoners from Vichy prison camps. At times, he observed, "survival depends on who you know."

Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger delivered the keynote Gerda Henkel Lecture, titled "On the Logic of Autocracy and the Plasticity of History: The Case of Frederick William I, King of Prussia." The talk brilliantly outlined Frederick William I's life (1688-1740) and his deviant style of rulership. The king autocratically grasped for greater authority throughout Prussia, reducing bureaucracy, curtailing the autonomy of localities, rearranging the judiciary, breaking cultural norms, and relying ever more on a coterie of advisors. Frederick William's autocracy bred corruption, disaffection, and noncompliance. Therefore, Stollberg-Rilinger observed, the more he concentrated power, the more isolated and powerless he became. The outcome was what Stollberg-Rilinger identified as the "dialectic of omnipotence and impotence." However, fascinatingly, later historians recast Frederick William's reign to retrospectively anchor the successes of his son, Frederick "the Great," in the policies of the deviant king. Frederick William's unconventional reign, self-described as a tyrannical cultural revolution, became for Prussian historians a "great political necessity" for later glory.

Panel three, "Networks and Economics," chaired by Deborah Hertz, capped off the first day, and concerned the significance of familial and professional networks for migrants. Frank Biess began with "The Woytinskys: Transnational Socialism in the Age of Catastrophe." Biess recounted the lives of Emma and Wladimir Woytinsky using thousands of letters between the couple. Wladimir's statistical expertise gave his family financial stability, even as they moved through starkly diverging political circumstances including the Russian Revolution, the waning years of the Weimar Republic, and the New Deal-era United States. Biess argued that following the Woytinksys' lives can unveil crucial details about historical processes and events. The enduring influence of the Russian Revolution on the Woytinksys' lives, for example, helped inform their conceptions of freedom in a way that would be difficult to understand only by reading

Wladimir's economic treatises. Next, Anna Holian presented her paper, "Generational Transmission and the Reconstruction of Jewish Livelihoods in Postwar Germany." Holian argued that, in Germany after 1945, "occupational inheritances constituted a thin but vital line of continuity" between older generations and surviving younger generations. After the war, many Jewish families attempted to reclaim stolen firms, founded new firms using inherited expertise, or began again with skills learned from their parents. Gender and region of origin were also important, as women in German-Jewish families tended not to inherit family trades or skills, while Jewish women from Eastern Europe were more likely to. During the Q&A, Caitlin Murdock, summing up much of the day's content, observed how networks and individuals are symbiotic but distinguishable; "individuals do matter but not in a vacuum." Therefore, studying networks and the ways people move within and between them enhances scholarship on familiar themes.

The workshop's second day began with the fourth panel, "Time and Mobility," chaired by Sara Pugach. This panel considered the role of representation and imaginaries in the conceptual movement through ideas and identities. Rhiannon Hein began the panel with "Timing Space in the *Göttinger Taschen* Calendar, 1775-1815," which examined eighteenth-century time regimes and temporal imaginaries. Hein discussed the *Göttinger Taschen* Calendar's representation of stadial theory, which asserted asynchronous stages of human progress. Pictographically, the Calendar posed orangutans, albinos, and tribal Africans as stages close to the origins of humankind, with domesticated and refined European women marking the harmonious stage of achievement. Representations of stadial theory, Hein argued, subverted the older conception of sacred time, thereby disorienting central European political identities. Brett M. Van Hoesen presented next. Hoesen explored the ways that the artist duo Mwangi Hutter–a conceptual merger of

Ingrid Mwangi and Robert Hutter–criticized Germany's failure to grapple with postcolonial racial issues in the 1990s and early 2000s. To Hoesen, works like "Static Drift" offered valuable critiques of Germany's forgotten colonial legacy. Furthermore, Mwangi Hutter's status as two people acting as one artist allowed them to grapple directly with questions of binaries, nature, individuality, self-knowledge, and interrelationship. Mo Healy presented third on the persistence of "The Turk" in the post-1945 Austrian imaginary. Using contemporary newspaper accounts, Healy showed how Austrians deployed "The Turk" rhetorically and symbolically to separate themselves from the Nazi past, celebrate past Austrian glories, and even migrate prejudiced ideas away from "the Jew" onto more politically acceptable targets.

The fifth panel featured brief presentations by recent Fritz Thyssen fellows on their archival work and nascent research projects. Elena Amaya, Lane Baker, Alexander Luckmann, and Kurt Woolford presented, deploying a variety of methodological styles and source materials, and demonstrating the promising range of new research in the field. Amaya employed sociological big-data methods to document the rates of denunciation in Jewish and non-Jewish neighborhoods under the Nazi regime. Baker explored sites across central Europe where contact was first made and negotiated between Roma travelers and fifteenth-century central European systems of hospitality. Luckmann considered the efforts of Catholic architects and urban designers to shape a Catholic modernity. Woolford interrogated the imprecise concept of "informal imperialism" in German-controlled treaty ports in China. Chaired by Isabel Richter, the panel demonstrated the exciting opportunities made possible by academic networks and institutions, a major theme of the workshop.

The sixth panel, "Discourse and Design," chaired by Paul Lerner, challenged participants to consider the importance

of place and image in the formation of, and challenge to, central European identities. Erika Schumacher presented on the incorporation of English garden architecture into Anhalt-Dessau in the eighteenth century. Palladian garden style, Schumacher observed, was the outgrowth of intellectual exchange between England and smaller German states. In adopting English forms, a ruler like Leopold Friedrich Franz hoped to display his connection to his people through monumentality, while engaging more universal Enlightenment ideals of improvement, order, and reform. Next, David Ciarlo presented on the First World War and what he called the "Propaganda of 'Propaganda.'" Ciarlo challenged the common contemporary claim that Germany lost the First World War because it failed to muster a robust propaganda campaign. Instead, he showed, decentralized German culture makers displayed the propaganda of Allied nations to convey to the German people a vision of their nation's restraint and sobriety, as well as the depths that Allied propagandists seemed willing to stoop to. Third, Alexia Orengo-Green presented "Pineapples for Passover," a multi-layered look at Jewish migrants in Puerto Rico during and after the Holocaust. Jewish migrants, she argued, became "active participants" in Puerto Rico's colonial hierarchy, even as they struggled to adapt their religious and personal identities in an unfamiliar environment they often viewed as transitory.

The workshop's final event was a roundtable titled "Teaching German History Today," chaired by Jan Hansen. Caitlin Murdock, one of the panelists, posed compelling questions about how professors can adapt their courses to changing global circumstances. For instance: how are the events of the 2020s rooted in the circumstances of the Cold War, and how might that encourage teachers to rethink their presentation of late twentieth-century history? More disturbingly: how do the recent triumphs of illiberalism in Europe and the United States challenge how professors might teach fascism?

Deborah Hertz, an audience participant, reflected the tenor of the roundtable conversation: "What does it mean to give a fair education in times of tyranny?" Sara Friedman, a panelist, encouraged participants to consider Black and Queer perspectives in German history as a way to engage students. These perspectives, Friedman indicated, allow professors to discuss topics students in the United States find relevant. Friedman also raised critical questions about the material conditions of teaching – that the increasing reliance on contingent faculty shapes how German history is taught.

Mathew Greenlee
(University of Colorado, Boulder)

Real-Time History: Engaging with Living Archives and Temporal Multiplicities

International conference at the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, March 19-21, 2025, co-sponsored by the GHI, the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C^2DH), the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM), Chair for Digital History at Humboldt University zu Berlin (HUB), NFDI 4Memory, and the Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe. Sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

Conveners: Daniel Burckhardt (GHI Washington), Simon Donig (Herder Institute), Jana Dunz-Keck (GHI Washington), Andreas Fickers (C^2DH), Peter Haslinger (Herder Institute), Katharina Hering (GHI Washington), Torsten Hiltmann (Humboldt University), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Lincoln Mullen (RRCHNM), Atiba Pertilla (GHI Washington), Tabitha Redepenning (Herder Institute), Lauren Rever (GHI Washington/RRCHNM). Participants: Ian Milligan (University of Waterloo), Sheila Brennan (NEH), Douglas Peach (Library of Congress), Jason Steinhauer (History Communication Institute), Thorsten Wübbena (Leibniz Institute of European History), Karl Blumenthal (Internet Archive), Amanda Burgess (Macquarie University/ Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture), Merle Ingenfeld (University of Bonn), Niro Kandasamy (University of Sydney), Ursula Lehmkuhl (University of Trier), Ian Marino (Leibniz Institute of European History), Michael McDonnell (University of Sydney), Isaac Meth (Syracuse University), Sebastian Modrow (Syracuse University), Enrico Natale (Swiss Academy for Humanities and Social Sciences), Taras Nazaruk (Center for Urban History, Lviv),

Yael Netzer (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), Thiago Nicodemo (University of Campinas/São Paulo State Archives), Natalia Otrishchenko (Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Lviv), Joana Vieira Paulino (Institute of Contemporary History, Lisbon), LaShawnDa Pittman (University of Washington), Bella Ruhl (New York University), Sapir Sluzker Amran (Ezrahion) Adetola Elizabeth Umoh (University of Kwazulu-Natal), Machteld Venken (C^{2}DH), Christian Wachter (Bielefeld University), Bradley Wiles (Northern Illinois University), and guest Jery Huntley (OurStoryBridge Inc.).

The Seventh Conference on Digital Humanities and Digital History at the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC revolved around concepts of "living archives" and questions related to making history in real time. One focus was on current and past initiatives documenting the "now" by creating rapid response collections and archives, facilitated by digital technology, which frequently blur lines between grassroots documentation and archiving, academic historical and sociological research, and civic engagement and activism. The varied conference program included a keynote, workshops, panel discussions, and a creative group activity, as well as many inspiring, collegial conversations. Over three days, participants from four continents discussed ethical, legal, technical, historical, and philosophical questions while sharing experiences with developing collections and archives documenting recent events.

After welcomes from conveners Simone Lässig and Andreas Fickers, the conference opened with the panel "Trauma in Time: Documenting Terror in Living Archives." In her presentation Amanda Burgess presented her dissertation research on the *9/11 Memorial & Museum Instagram* geo-tag as a living, user-generated archive, based on a hand-curated corpus of 500+ posts. She emphasized both the par-

ticipatory power of these posts and silences they produce, prompting discussion of methods and ethics, including use without explicit consent. Bradley Wiles reflected on curating the 2008 Northern Illinois University mass-shooting collection (websites, media, ephemera) in his presentation. While deeply meaningful to donors and families, he noted limited scholarly and public use and raised practical questions about audiences, ethical access, and strategies for activation—e.g., fellowships, artist residencies, and other plans for events planned for the 20th anniversary of the crime in 2028. The discussion addressed methodological and ethical questions about using Instagram posts without the explicit consent of users, and the importance of following ethics guidelines, such as those developed by the Association of Internet Researchers and the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

The evening keynote by Ian Milligan examined the *September 11 Digital Archive,* created in 2001 by RRCHNM (George Mason University), and the *American Social History Project* (CUNY), framing them as both inspiration and cautionary tales for event-based archives. He detailed research hurdles, such as non-standard metadata, mixed file formats, time-zone inconsistencies, and a weak interface, and described data cleaning and reorganizing message-board content. Milligan underscored privacy and consent issues, including hateful content posted on message boards, and argued that beyond documenting collective experiences of 9/11, the archive is a vital source for studying early-internet misinformation, racism, and xenophobia. His takeaway: rapid-response collections must prioritize sustainable, standardized metadata and clear ethics/privacy protocols from the start.

The second day opened with a hands-on workshop facilitated by Karl Blumenthal on the *Archives Research Compute*

Hub (ARCH), an IMLS-supported, open-source platform for building research collections and generating analyzable datasets. Blumenthal introduced web-archiving fundamentals and demonstrated how ARCH supports open publication/preservation of user-generated datasets and classroom use, using COVID-19 rapid-response collecting to show data harvesting and cleanup workflows. Discussion centered on research/teaching applications and collaboration opportunities with the Internet Archive.

The first panel of this day, began with a presentation on Russia's war in Ukraine by *LivArch*, a consortium project supporting ethical, sustainable, decentralized community archives documenting the war. Taras Nazaruk outlined their participatory model encompassing 200+ community collections—from Telegram chats and social media to geo-referenced satellite images and oral histories—showcased at MostDocumentedWar.org. Simon Donig, Tabitha Redepenning, Taras Nazaruk, and Peter Haslinger emphasized ethical care-based metadata, distributed infrastructure, training, and artist/scholar engagement, alongside challenges of sensitive data across jurisdictions, collection incompleteness, power asymmetries, misinformation, and retraumatization. In the Q&A, panelists framed collecting as part of community resistance; the project deliberately centers Ukrainian perspectives and depends on democratic conditions to sustain it. A key takeaway was the need to document project decisions, resource asymmetries, and ethical/legal reasoning as integral to rapid-response work.

The afternoon panel began with Joana Vieira Paulino's presentation on the Lisbon DH Lab's participatory Omeka-based workflow featuring two examples: *Memória Covid* (multi-format citizen testimonies) and *Memórias de Servidão* (memories of domestic servants and hotel workers), both designed to be inclusive and accessible for

contributors and users alike. Next, Machteld Venken and Natalia Otrishchenko in their presentation described follow-up interviews with displaced Ukrainians that led to participant-defined sensitivity metadata enabling layered access, aligning with—yet extending beyond—GDPR constraints. Sebastian Modrow and Isaac Meth then outlined plans for a 10th Mountain Division community archive (post-1985 reactivation) in their presentation, posing design questions about multi-format ingestion, community representation, epistemic justice, and platform choices for co-curation. While entering uncharted territory for collaborative military archiving is a challenge, it also offers an opportunity to develop a model that similar projects can build on.

The final panel, titled "Dynamic Memory: Theoretical Frontiers of Living Archives," opened with Ian Marino's presentation, in which he surveyed the landscape of digital archives and collections documenting COVID-19 experiences in Latin America. Marino highlighted that little knowledge and systematic analyses exist about the nature and dynamics of the landscape of digital archives and collections documenting COVID-19 experiences in Latin America as a global, yet very local grassroots phenomenon. What are useful theoretical frameworks for such initiatives? How helpful are existing frameworks and terminologies, including the terms "living archives," "rapid response collections," or "digital informal archives?" Marino questioned the implications of the term "living archives," also used in this conference's title, which establishes an implicit and misleading contrast to "dead archives." As a conceptual alternative, he suggested the term "disruptive archives." The term captures that these archives not only document disruptive events and developments (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) but that they also empower communities to preserve their own histories and experiences, while challenging and disrupting established narratives, including in countries with colo-

nialist pasts. Merle Ingenfeld examined virtual humans (photorealistic digital twins) as emotionally compelling yet ethically fraught tools for research and education—raising ethical, historical, and legal issues of ownership, consent, and the risks of reanimating problematic historical figures. In his presentation on hypertextual historiography, Christian Wachter suggested valuing hypertext as a format that does justice to the multi-vocal and multi-temporal diversity of narratives in rapid response archives and collections. Examples for hypertext presentations are Shazad Bahir's 2022 online publication *Islamic Pasts and Futures*, which demonstrates Islam as a discursive network structured by different, yet complementary, temporalities, and Fernand Braudel's 1949 *The Mediterranean*, a hypertext publication *avant la lettre*. The discussion probed terminology of living archives (disruptive vs. lifecycle framings emphasizing continuity), platform sustainability, and the ethics of virtual reenactment. The day concluded with a zine-making session led by Lauren Rever—designed as a moment to decompress from the day's focus on war, trauma, and pandemics. Participants created personal zines, e.g., on defining a living archive or sharing accomplishments, which were later displayed in the hallway.

The third day of the conference kicked off with a collaborative workshop. Yael Netzer presented *Edut 710*, launched on October 9, 2023, by a volunteer collective to record testimonies from those directly affected by the October 7 attacks. The team designed emergency-ready, tool-agnostic workflows (with tables and participatory metadata) to preserve personal stories under rigorous ethical, legal, and technical standards. Sapir Sluzker Amran introduced *Mizrahion: The People's Archive for Social Struggles in Israel/Palestine* (2018), a grassroots initiative documenting human-rights activism—especially Mizrahi, LGBTQI+, feminist, and free-expression movements—through participatory curation,

crowdsourced metadata, and innovations such as QR code uploads at protests and "adopting" legacy collections. Discussion addressed relations to state institutions: While *Edut 710* collaborates with the National Library of Israel, *Mizrahion* relies on community trust outside state frameworks.

The first panel of the day featured LaShawnDa Pittman, who introduced the *Black Grandmother Archive* and *Black Grandmother Worldmaking Library*. These community-driven projects preserve grandmothers' knowledge and histories—especially amid displacement in Seattle's Central District and along the Gullah Geechee Corridor—by enabling contributors to upload stories and metadata, repair harms from systemic discrimination, and reclaim narrative authority. Bella Ruhl examined how mass digitization circulates anonymous vernacular photographs of cross-dressing and "historical lesbians" (c. 1900–1970) with scant context, inviting present-day projections by visitors. She highlighted curatorial strategies that prompt critical reflection (e.g., a *Schwules Museum Berlin* online exhibition) and called for stronger digital archival literacies and ethical stewardship. The discussion revolved around the topic of emotion in research, ethical stewardship of online projects, archives and collections, and the need to develop digital collection literacy in academic and public settings.

In the second panel, Ursula Lehmkuhl analyzed commercial genealogy platforms—especially *Ancestry*—as de facto "living archives": powerful yet problematic due to opaque, location-sensitive algorithms, unstable results, and inaccurate conflation of biographical information from different persons. She urged to develop critically framed user guides and reaffirmed the need for traditional archival/historical verification. Niro Kandasamy and Michael McDonnell reported on participatory action research with Indigenous activists and community workers in Sydney, showing how par-

ticipatory action research (PAR) methods—oral histories, care, and participant control—advance self-determination and address epistemic injustice in histories of communities shaped by colonialism and forced migration. Topics of discussion included developing digital source literacy for analyzing materials from commercial databases and sustainable strategies for encouraging partnerships for participatory community-based scholarship and activism.

In the final panel, titled "Healing Histories: Living Archives of Pandemics and Epidemics," Adetola Elizabeth Umoh discussed *South African Voices: Towards a Museum of HIV Memory and Learning* (2016), a community-anchored archive collecting narratives and artifacts amid one of the world's highest HIV/AIDS burdens, while flagging gaps in long-term digital preservation. Enrico Natale analyzed *corona-memory.ch* (2020–2022), exploring research uses (memorialization, misinformation, personal experience) and noting metadata deficiencies that hinder interpretation. Concluding the panel, Thiago Nicodemo presented *Coronarchive/Coronarquivo* (Brazil), a meta-project monitoring Latin American COVID-19 archives across institutions and communities—including Indigenous and marginalized groups—and linking documentation to memorialization and accountability after 700,000+ deaths in Brazil. As director of the São Paulo State Archives, he argued for state–community partnerships, a shared theoretical framework for "living/informal" archives, and sustaining communities of practice to exchange methods, materials, and lessons.

The conference ended with remarks by the conveners. Peter Haslinger highlighted four crosscutting themes that were addressed during the conference: the work's layered temporalities (historical, biographical, digital); the precarity and asymmetries of data collection and risks of misuse; archives' evolving socio-historical roles—including forensic

functions; and the ways AI can crystallize counter-world perspectives. Torsten Hiltmann emphasized examining the social practices of living archives and reintroduced digitality as a force shaping archival and everyday life. He underscored data culture, resilience, and the role of archives in processing trauma, negotiating identity, and enabling immediate documentation—often serving present communities as much as (or more than) historians. Andreas Fickers noted the situational diversity of knowledge work across regions, the civic dimensions of archival practice, and shifting researcher identities. Above all, he urged rigorous process documentation—the "how" and "what for" of projects—as crucial for future usability, alongside preparedness for crises such as climate change. Simone Lässig concluded the discussion by pointing to dependencies on commercial platforms and waning trust in institutions as unexpected but significant themes, while praising the energy and innovation on display.

Bringing together scholars, archivists, and community organizers from four continents, the conference crystallized "living archives" as ethically grounded, methodologically inventive infrastructures for documenting crises and everyday life in real time. The conference underscored that we live in an age of data abundance, yet preservation is not automatic: it requires collaborative and active engagement in real-time archiving in the preservation of critical sources and infrastructures by scholars, community activists, archivists, and other information professionals alike. With no guarantee that platforms or even national libraries will provide enduring access, the future of contemporary scholarly analysis depends on preserving and developing open, sustainable pathways now. Participants left with shared practices—rigorous process documentation, participatory metadata, and state–community partnerships—poised to strengthen resilient, trustworthy public memory. In the con-

ference's collaborative spirit, participants compiled community notes and launched a public Zotero group bibliography on living archives for ongoing shared reference.

Jana Dunz-Keck, Joris Figaj, Katharina Hering, Sofie Kassel, Moritz Menke, Lauren Rever
(GHI Washington)

Eighth Junior Scholars Conference in Jewish History: The Place of the Holocaust in German-Jewish History and Memory

Conference at the Indiana University Europe Gateway in Berlin, May 18 – 20, 2025. Conveners: Anna-Carolin Augustin (German Historical Institute Washington), Mark Roseman (Indiana University Bloomington), and Miriam Rürup (Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies, Potsdam), and the Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts. Participants: Hendrik Althoff (University of Hamburg), Jan Burzlaff (Cornell University), Noam Corb Rosenbaum (Tel Aviv University), Micha Danziger (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Emilie Duranceau-Lapointe (University of Michigan/Technische Universität Berlin), Esther Gardei (University of Bonn), Anna Holzer-Kawałko (The Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem/Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Tina Iwen (University of Hamburg), David Jünger (University of Rostock), Charlie Knight (University of Southampton), Josefine Langer Shohat (Humboldt University Berlin/Tel Aviv University), Sandra Lipner (Royal Holloway, University of London), Brian Quinn (Indiana University), Laura Schilling (University of Leipzig), Danielle and Liam Wirsansky (Florida State University), Nina Zellerhoff (MMZ).

This workshop format seeks to bring together a small group of early-career scholars who work in the broad field of Jewish studies or on topics touching on German-Jewish history. It intends to discuss not only single individual papers and case studies but to also broaden the perspective onto general questions of possible new approaches, methods, and questions that may arise in the field and that may become relevant for its future. It was co-organized jointly by the

Leo Baeck Institute, specifically by the German-based network of the LBI, the Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft (WAG) and the GHI Washington and benefited from support by Indiana University's Borns Jewish Studies Program. During this two-day conference, the participants offered insights into their respective individual research projects and at the same time engaged in a broader discussion on sources, methodology, and theory in order to assess current and possible future trends in the modern history of Jews in Europe, the Americas, and beyond. A central objective of the conference was to critically examine the role of the Holocaust within the broader context of German-Jewish history.

The first panel brought together two PhD projects with new approaches and methods focusing on the concept of temporality and material culture/photography in Jewish history. Tina Iwen presented her project on the temporal dimension of German-Jewish experiences in the Weimar era. By analyzing temporal references in the writings of German-Jewish intellectuals such as Victor Klemperer, Gabriele Tergit, and Margarete Susman between the November Revolution and the Nuremberg Race Laws (1918 – 1935), Iwen argued for a general shift from a spatial to a temporal approach in German-Jewish history. Laura Schilling shared her paper on "The Place of the Holocaust in Leonard Freed's Series *Deutsche Juden heute* (1965)." Schilling's presentation focused on Jewish photography and family albums and the processes of building Jewish belonging, and thus clearly reflected the research trend on material culture in Jewish history in recent years.

The following panel discussed three papers presented by Jan Burzlaff, Micha Danziger, and Charlie Knight. Burzlaff kicked off the panel with his contribution that looked beyond traditional turning or vanishing points in German-Jewish history, such as the years 1933, 1938, or 1942. In

his study of German-speaking Jews who fled Germany and Austria before 1940 he draws on the refugee's diaries, postwar memories, and video testimonies in a broad array of archives. Burzlaff argued for positioning the Holocaust as a moment profoundly shaped by earlier experiences of statehood, exclusion, and mobility. His presentation was followed by a case study on Hannah Arendt's essay "The Concentration Camps," presented by Micha Danziger. His project focuses on the crises experienced by Jewish intellectuals in the aftermath of the Holocaust. German-Jewish refugee correspondence and knowledge production or transfer between 1938-45 were at the center of Charly Knight's presentation. The notion of hindsight as a methodological challenge specifically in historiography of the Nazi era played a central role in the panel discussion, as did the relationship between micro and macro historical perspectives, terminologies ("crises," "experience," "trauma"), and certain methodologies and sources (ego documents, letters, and photographs).

With a local focus on Hamburg and material culture, the third panel discussed two case studies: First, Hendrik Althoff, who studies the history of the Hamburg Jewish communities' real estate (1933-1960), delivered a presentation on his findings on the strategic Nazi preservation of Jewish spaces in Hamburg between 1933 and 1938. For example, Althoff interpreted the Nazi state's funding of the local Talmud Tora school as a deliberate strategy of segregation. Brian Quinn, who studies the history of Jewish objects in the Hamburg Ethnographic Museum as well as the museum's institutional history itself, broadened the discussion to include questions concerning the globalization of German-Jewish history and how colonial racist histories and "material kinship" factor in it. "Jewish objects" and their staging in exhibitions were also the central topic of a guided tour and discussion with curator Cilly Kugelmann in the permanent

exhibition of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, which concluded the first day of the conference.

The fourth panel discussed the role of "identity" and belonging in Jewish history. Sandra Lipner's paper added an additional layer to this discussion: Lipner works with a large German-Jewish family archive of letters from the twentieth century, posing the question of subjectivity in a rather unconventional way: the letters are from her own family and she approaches them as a researcher in an anthropological way, constantly reflecting her own subjectivity. Her research focuses on the relevance of kinship in a mixed family of Jews and non-Jews or those who were considered as Jewish under Nazi legislation. Another angle on identity was explored by Noam Corb Rosenbaum, who works on Austrian-Jewish youth in Western European countries after the *Anschluss* of 1938. In a close reading of ego documents by young Jews, he asks in how far they may have "sought refuge" in their Jewish and sometimes Zionist identity as a reaction to persecution just as much as a reaction to their experience of dislocation and displacement. The role of age and generational relations was brought up in the discussion since historic and individual ruptures are experienced differently depending on individual experiences and one's own life stage.

The fifth panel explored the postwar period and focused on material culture and heritage, language, and the role of archives and archivists. German-Israeli relations and history were another topic in this panel. By focusing on the acquisitions of German literature after 1945 for the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library, Anna Holzer-Kawałko reflected in her presentation on the German scientific heritage in Israel after the Holocaust. Josefine Langer Shohat devoted her paper to how Alfred Wiener, whose collection of information and material about fascism, National Socialism, racism, antisemitism, and the Holocaust is today well-known as the Wiener

Library in London, navigated German guilt and addressed the Holocaust in the 1950s. In her paper, Esther Gardei discussed the historicization of the German-language weekly *Orient* and the "liberal tradition" in Israel. Analyzing how *Orient,* a journal published in West Germany since 1960, was received and sometimes instrumentalized in the GDR, Gardei expanded the discussion to include criticism of dominant narratives and GDR history.

In the final panel, the relevance of changing legal categories played a role for family experiences under Nazi legislation. Danielle and Liam Wirsansky, who both work for a foundation focused on the history of the 1943 Rosenstrasse Protest, suggested that intermarriages in the Nazi years should be seen as a type of resistance. Not only did spouses refuse to divorce their Jewish partners, but they chose to become visible in the protest. Their presentation also highlighted the postwar perception or rather marginalization of intermarriages in both Jewish and non-Jewish discussions of the Nazi period. Next, Emilie Duranceau-Lapointe discussed Nazi categories that contributed to the legal implementation of the ideology of the racial state. She calls this "the legal process of 'racialization'." All three panelists raised the question of individual Jewish agency, or more generally, the question of individual agency even under totalitarian duress, including the agency of the perpetrators who actively shaped the administration of the racial state. The panel and the workshop's discussions overall revealed the ways in which individuals could "navigate the system."

The conference showcased a new approach to the category of "identity" in Jewish history, not so much as an individual search for one clear category of belonging, but more as a fluid category that adapts and undergoes change over time – and is at times consciously used as a way of navigating through history. It has significant implications not just for the historical actors experiencing and negotiating it,

but also for the historians researching it. A self-reflective approach acknowledging one's own subjectivity was evident in various papers throughout a conference dealing with ego documents.

Anna-Carolin Augustin
(GHI Washington)

Miriam Rürup
(Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies, Potsdam)

30th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History

Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century German History

Seminar held at the GHI in Washington DC and Georgetown University June 3-6, 2025, co-organized by the German Historical Institute Washington and the BMW Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University. Conveners: Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University) and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI). Faculty Mentors: Molly Loberg (California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo) and Christina Morina (University of Bielefeld / The New School, New York). Participants: Emilie Aebischer (University of St. Andrews), Madeline Adams (University of Chicago), Leonie Bausch (University of Nottingham), Carmen Behrendt (University of Jena), Hans-Martin Behrisch (University of Leipzig), Lukas Doil (Leibniz-Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam), Albert Feierabend (University of Erfurt), Svea Hammerle (Leibniz-Zentrum Für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam), Paige Newhouse (University of Michigan), Kathryn Perry (Vanderbilt University), Niels Pohl-Schneeberger (Zentrum für Holocaust Studien, Institut für Zeitgeschichte München), Brian Quinn (Indiana University Bloomington), David Labastida Rodriguez (University of Toronto), Jeffrey Saba (University of Tennessee, Knoxville), Adam Teece (Georgetown University), Jonas Wernz (University of Cologne).

The 30th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History once again brought together doctoral students from North America and Europe working on dissertations in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German history. Taking place over three days, the seminar was organized in eight panels, featuring two papers each, which opened with two comments

by fellow students, followed by discussion of the precirculated papers.

The seminar started with a panel that brought history of knowledge approaches to bear on the history of German colonialism. Albert Feierabend's paper "Deutschlands Einigkeit in Afrika: Die Heuglin/Munzinger-Ostafrikaexpedition (1860–64) als nationales Projekt" examined the relationship between the German national movement and the first major all-German expedition to Africa (1861–64). The paper argued that the expedition did not primarily result from a specific interest in Africa but rather served the agitation for national unity and international competition. Brian Quinn's paper "'Museum Grotesque': The Science and Politics of Colonialism at the Hamburg Ethnographic Museum in the 1920s" examined the interwar period as an era in which the future of Germany's ethnographic museums, much like Germany as a whole, seemed to be in doubt. The cultural anthropologists who ran the Hamburg Ethnographic Museum navigated old commitments in a rapidly changing political scene, cultivated close relationships with colonial revanchists, and developed modern exhibition techniques.

The second panel was devoted to nineteenth-century German history. Kathryn Perry's paper "*Bildung* Meets *Gewerbe*: *Musikwinkel* Instrument Makers and British Markets, 1860-1914" examined the connections between instrument makers in the *Musikwinkel* region in Saxony, Germany's largest orchestral instrument-making center, and their British markets between 1860 and 1914. *Musikwinkel* makers aspired to British industrial sophistication by founding applied arts institutions on the British model, but their violins instead flooded the low-end British market, helping to fuel an explosion of school music-playing. This episode complicates narratives of Anglo-German exchange that focus solely on the soft power of German high culture and suggests a way

of writing the history of musical globalization through the circulation of instruments. Jonas Wernz's paper "Offene Zukünfte: Nachkrieg aushandeln von Leipzig bis Karlsbad, 1813-1819" examined how, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the authors of pamphlets and press articles – acting outside state decision-making circles – opened up discursive space for thought and action through an imaginative readjustment of the public sphere. By arguing that the peace negotiations constituted a legitimate object of public opinion formation, these authors placed themselves in constructive tension with monarchical decision-making power.

The third panel explored the connections between the history of science and political history. David Labastida Rodriguez's paper "German Anti-Malarial Therapy at the Crossroads of Imperial Internationalism, 1925-1937" investigated German-led experiments in Mexico with plasmoquin, a quinine-imitating synthetic drug designed to manage the interaction of human bodies with malaria microorganisms and mosquitoes. Presented as a pharmaceutical technology for sanitizing the environment, German experimentation with plasmoquin offered opportunities to reshape the "tropical" world and to revive German colonial ambitions – among other things, by influencing the Malaria Commission's anti-malarial campaigns during the interwar years. Carmen Behrendt's paper "Die Bütefisch-Affäre oder: Ministeriale Selbstgewissheiten auf dem Prüfstand (Januar 1964 bis April 1964)" explored the interplay of science and politics from a very different vantage point. On February 24, 1964, Federal President Heinrich Lübke awarded the *Großes Verdienstkreuz* (Grand Cross of Merit) to the chemist Heinrich Bütefisch, who had played a leading role in the IG Farben chemical conglomerate during the National Socialist dictatorship and had been convicted as a war criminal in the postwar IG Farben trial in 1948. This award caused a scandal, especially since the Auschwitz trial had just opened in Frankfurt less than two months earlier. The

paper investigated the question whether the ministry officials had deliberately proposed a convicted war criminal for the award to make it clear that they considered the Nazi past to be closed.

The fourth panel explored interwar political and intellectual history. Emilie Aebischer's paper "'Eine Tat der Freiheit': Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945) and the Future of the Enlightenment" analyzed Ernst Cassirer's *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung* (1932) in light of his confrontations with antisemitism and anti-republicanism over the course of his academic career. Cassirer's theory of history, the paper argued, allows one to see his defense of the Enlightenment as a call to action aimed at redirecting Germany's future. Adam Teece's paper "Youth and the Land: Far-right Ruralism and Agricultural Youth Movements in Interwar Germany and Britain" examined the development of far-right youth movements in interwar Germany and Britain, which brought urban youth into the countryside through the experience of agricultural labor. In both cases, he argued, the *bündisch* youth movement provided a crucial model for far-right reformers to create, at a very small scale, the kind of organic, harmonious, and "racially pure" communities that they believed a return to rural society offered.

The fifth panel was devoted to post-1945 regimes of occupation. Leonie Bausch's paper "Dating Across the Divide: Intimate Socializing and Spaces of Encounters in the French Zone of Occupation in Germany (1945-1955)" investigated sexual encounters in French-occupied Germany that were highly politicized and therefore rendered otherwise undocumented everyday experiences of intimate socializing visible. Shaped by young people's limited access to private spaces as well as power dynamics between occupiers and occupied, dating, the paper argued, was an essential part of the occupation and provided an outlet for occupation forces and locals' conflicts and desires. Jeffrey Saba's

paper "Growing up around "the Russians": Between propaganda and lived experience 1957-1979" studies local GDR governments' efforts to instill positive feelings towards the Soviet troop presence while simultaneously grappling with the chaotic nature and negative impacts of Soviet military activity from ca. 1957 to the late 1970s. The paper argued that while ritualistic propaganda events and friendship meets produced mixed results in instilling German-Soviet friendship, informal municipal-Soviet relationships, coupled with the obfuscation of negative Soviet impacts, increased the acceptance of the Soviets among locals in towns near Soviet military bases.

The sixth panel explored two different aspects of East German history. Madeline Adams's paper "Carbon Copy Activism: Queer Information Networks in the German Democratic Republic, 1983-1990" examined how queer activists built and used an information network across East German cities from 1983 to 1990. By tracing print and circulation processes, the papers illustrated how activists worked with and against socialist norms and regulations, co-opting state-owned spaces, surveillance, and socialist rhetoric to insist on a future for queerness in the GDR. Hans-Martin Behrisch's paper "Das Ende der stalinistischen Kirchenpolitik: Die taktische Wende von SED und Walter Feurich" analyzed the political transformation of the parish priest Walter Feurich against the background of changes in SED church policy during the 1950s. At the end of the 1950s, Feurich transformed himself from an oppositional theologian into a theologian loyal to the state. His decision to become an informer for the state security services, the paper argues, was not an exclusively personal decision but was based much more on the exploitation of Feurich's private insecurities and problems by the SED state.

The seventh panel focused on the Nazi era. Svea Hammerle's paper "Raum und Zeit in privaten Fotoalben deutscher

Soldaten vom Überfall auf Polen" argued that private photo albums of German soldiers depicting the invasion of Poland in 1939 are narrative "dispositives" that constructed a specific interpretation of the events of the war through the dimensions of space and time. By historicizing their war experiences and locating them in the conquered space, the soldiers created a memory narrative that legitimized their actions and attributed an ideologically framed meaning to them. Moving from the war to the Holocaust, Niels Pohl-Schneeberger's paper "Transnationale Täterpraxis im Holocaust: Die nationalsozialistische Verfolgung von Juden mit ausländischer Staatsangehörigkeit 1941-1945 am Beispiel der Schweizer Familie Lebedinsky in Riga" reconstructed the "problem management" of the Nazi authorities with regard to foreign Jews based on the case a Swiss-Jewish family in German-occupied Riga. Because the Lebedinsky family witnessed the ongoing mass murders from 1941 onwards, the German authorities decided to block their departure even at the risk of diplomatic conflicts with neutral Switzerland. Faced with a hopeless situation, the family committed suicide in the spring of 1942.

The eighth and final panel dealt with the history of labor in East and West Germany. Paige Newhouse's paper "The *Wende* and the End of Socialist Labor: Vietnamese Workers in East Germany, March-August 1990" examined how, after the Berlin Wall fell, Vietnamese workers had to renegotiate their political and economic status in Central Europe. This paper argued that the collapse of the East German state permitted factory managers to fire workers without substantial reasons, while privatization ended the welfare that they had previously received. It also revealed how workers attempted to hold their German employers accountable. Lukas Doil's paper "Prekäre Arbeit: Leiharbeit und 'Prekarisierung' in der bundesdeutschen Sozialforschung und der autonomen Bewegung der 1980er Jahre" examined the analyses of temp agency work offered by empirical social

research and the left-wing autonomous "jobber movement" in the 1980s. Temp work, the paper argued, was interpreted as an expression of "precarization," i.e. the erosion of the social safety net, demonstrating that the concepts of "precarity" or "precarization" were already being used analytically in West Germany well before the 2000s, when they came to dominate descriptions of the transformation of work.

During the final discussion, which closed the three-day seminar, participants reflected on the combination of microhistorical approaches with an interest in big questions that characterized many of the papers. There also was considerable interest in advice about publishing, which the seminar's mentors gladly offered. Characterized by a collegial atmosphere, the seminar had an important networking function, connecting participants on both sides of the Atlantic.

Richard F. Wetzell
(German Historical Institute Washington)

GHI News

GHI Welcomes New Director

On October 1, 2025, Ulrike von Hirschhausen assumed the directorship of the German Historical Institute Washington and its Pacific Office in Berkeley, succeeding Simone Lässig, who led the Institute since 2015. Hirschhausen brings a wide-ranging background in modern European and global history, nationalism, and empire studies. She studied history in Germany (Freiburg) and the United States, earning a master's degree from Stanford University. She completed her doctorate at the University of Tübingen and her *Habilitation* at the University of Göttingen. Since 2010, she has held the chair for modern European history at Rostock University. Most recently, in 2024/25, she was a fellow at Harvard University's Weatherhead Research Cluster on Global History. Her latest scholarship includes *Empires: Eine globale Geschichte 1780–1920* (co-authored with Jörn Leonhard), published in 2023 and longlisted for the 2024 Austrian Academic Book Award, as well as the forthcoming *Frozen Conflicts: Brennpunkte der Gegenwart zwischen Krieg und Frieden,* to be published in 2026. At the GHI Washington, she will establish the study of empires and their legacies as a new research focus, building on the Institute's strengths in migration, European history, and the history of the Americas.

2025 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize

The 2025 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which is awarded annually by the Friends of the German Historical Institute for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university, was awarded to Matthew Hershey for his dissertation "Inclination Toward Death: Suicide, Sacrifice, and State Collapse in First World War Germany," completed at the University of Michigan in 2024 under the supervision of Kathleen Canning and Geoff Eley.

The Stern Prize committee comprised Jennifer V. Evans (Carleton University), Carina L. Johnson (Pitzer College, chair),

and Molly J. Loberg (California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo). The committee's prize citation (*laudatio*) read as follows:

"Matthew Hershey's dissertation, 'Inclination Toward Death: Suicide, Sacrifice, and State Collapse in First World War Germany,' holds many surprises. A surface reading of the title and abstract suggests a familiar story of death and dying during the First World War. But what awaits the reader is actually something very different. Hershey offers a sweeping analysis of shifting sentiments around suicide during the Great War. The imperial government sought to set the terms of death, both through its battlefield decisions and by framing the language in which death was reported. And yet it could not fully control the meanings that everyday people gave to different kinds of death even in the midst of war. In Hershey's imaginative telling, suicide is something more than a lens into medical or psychological categories. Rather, when viewed critically, it opens up a spectrum of behaviors and self-understandings around what it means to live for and at the expense of the nation.

Hershey's biggest contribution is a bold and original engagement with what he calls "citizen inclination towards death." A form of self-destruction which changed and evolved over time, it sometimes served the Imperial state and at other times surpassed the state's ambition and efforts to control death's meaning for its own purposes. Suicide offers a lens into the bureaucratic management of bodies and sentiments during war. Yet, according to Hershey, the inclination towards death is also evidence of citizen agency in dark times. The affective ties between the front lines and home front, built through soldiers' letters and the agony of solitary death, became part of the emotional landscape of defeat, setting Germany on a course for the violent conflicts of revolution and the postwar settlement. Ultimately, citizens disentangled the death of a particular form of "the nation" from their own desire to live on. Suicide created distinct emotional regimes that help us understand loss as both a personal matter and a political one.

Hershey's is an original voice, and this dissertation reflects this originality through the deft ways in which the sources are read, pulled apart, and put back together. From beginning to end, Hershey seamlessly weaves in wide-ranging scholarship and brings compelling new insights to canonical historiography. Moving portraits of individuals from all levels of society populate the narrative and make the difficult subject matter accessible to a broader readership. This dissertation challenges the reader to think more capaciously about the meaning and implications of death and the spaces in between loss and unbecoming, on both a personal and state level. It is a masterful contribution to the literature, a pure pleasure to read. On behalf of the Committee, and the Friends of the German Historical Institute, congratulations to Dr. Hershey!"

2025 Franz Steiner Prize

On May 10, 2025, GHI Washington Deputy Director Axel Jansen together with Johannes Klemm of the Steiner Verlag awarded the biennial Franz Steiner Prize in Transatlantic History at the Annual Conference of the Historians of the German Association for American Studies (GAAS) in Tutzing. The Steiner Prize is awarded by the GHI Washington and the Steiner Verlag for an outstanding work in transatlantic and North American history.

This year's winner was Nadine Klopfer (LMU München) for her manuscript "Trade and Taste: French Things and the Making of the American Nation, 1780s–1820s." At a time when the U.S. once again is distancing itself from Europe politically, it is perhaps of particular interest to explore the old continent's relevance to the evolution of American nationhood. Klopfer's work provides a new and exciting angle for approaching transatlantic cultural relations. Informed by anthropologists' and art historians' longstanding interests in cultural objects, she deftly posits that we have failed to grasp how the elites in early American culture found succinct ways to begin to define national cultural coordinates. In doing so, urban middle-class and upper-class Americans

responded to the desire to not be British, on the one hand, and to set standards of cultural refinement and elite integration, on the other.

Klopfer describes her book as a "cultural history of French things in the post-revolutionary United States." She tells the stories "of gold watches, mahogany chairs, and silverware, of Sèvres porcelain vases and Empire couches, of fans, snuff boxes, and ribbons." By focusing on the networks that made these objects available to but also cherished among American elites, including presidents such as George Washington and James Monroe, she draws a rich picture of transatlantic exchanges. While she emphasizes her contribution to the historiography of the Early Republic, which has long focused on contemporary discourses about the American nation, the implications of her study will inspire researchers well beyond this particular subfield.

The prize committee consisted of colleagues from Europe and from North America, all of whom were immensely impressed by Klopfer's achievement. Committee members touted, in particular, her deft construction of the manuscript, her meticulous research, and her elegant explication of the early-nineteenth-century American fascination with artefacts either from France or at least regarded as "French." They appreciated not only Klopfer's demonstration of how elite Americans began constructing a more refined national culture, but also of how French things served as foils against which they sought a sense of national identity based upon ideals of straightforwardness and transparency. By the 1820s, this enthusiasm for French things had become part of a broad project of national cultural definition. The committee highlighted how the manuscript, by focusing on objects, their networks, and their social significance, opens exciting new perspectives on a seemingly well-researched period.

The GHI is proud to note that Klopfer's research was supported by a GHI postdoctoral fellowship. The manuscript will soon be published in the Steiner Verlag book series *Transatlantic Historical Studies*, and will be available in Open Access Gold.

GHI Publications

Studies in German History (Berghahn Books)

Christina Brauner, Renate Dürr, Philip Hahn, Anne Sophie Overkamp, Simon Siemianowski, eds. *Encountering the Global in Early Modern Germany: Microhistories of Mobility, Materiality, and Belonging*.

Staff Changes

Emma Clarke joined the GHI Pacific Office as Events and Administrative Assistant in April 2025. She holds an MA in European History, Politics, and Society from Columbia University.

Alexa Lässig, who joined the GHI in December 2015 as Social Media Coordinator, left the institute in June 2025 in order to continue her career in Germany.

Simone Lässig completed her term as GHI director at the end of September 2025 and returned to her position as Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at TU Braunschweig.

Bénédicte Pillot-Bechtold, who joined the GHI in February 2022 as Administrative Assistant and Receptionist, left the institute in June 2025 in order to return to her position at the University of Bonn.

Ray Savord, who joined the GHI Pacific Office as Events and Administrative Assistant in April 2021, left the GHI in March 2025.

Christine Winkler joined the GHI as Administrative Coordinator and Receptionist in June 2025. Before joining the GHI, she worked for many years as International Assignment Coordinator for professional services firms in Germany.

GHI 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 fi t into the following fields:

German and European history, the history of German-American relations, the role of Germany and the USA in international relations, and American history (European doctoral and postdoctoral scholars only).

The 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 five months.

The GHI also offers a number of other long-term doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships with more specific profiles to strengthen key research interests at the institute, including: the history of knowledge, the history of race and ethnicity, the history of religion and religiosity, the history of family and kinship, the history of migration, and North American history. In addition to these opportunities, the GHI also offers the following fellowships: The Binational Tandem Research Program for "The History of Knowledge" and "Global and Trans-regional History," and the Gerda Henkel Postdoctoral Fellowship for Digital History.

For further information about these programs and current application deadlines, please check our website at www.ghi-dc.org/fellowships.

GHI 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. They receive a small stipend. The program is very flexible in the sense that the GHI tries to accommodate the 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, 2025-26

Long-term Visiting Fellowships

Max Gaida (University of Cologne)
From Red Light to Rainbow: The Politics of Sex and Space in Philadelphia's Urban Crises

Sara Halpern (St. Olaf College)
Stateless by Design: Jewish Denationalization and Imperial Politics in Europe and Beyond

Laurelin Middelkoop (EUI Florence)
Unions before the Union: Perpetual Peace Plans before the American Founding

Douwe Schipper (Johns Hopkins University)
Mass Transit, Regional Governance, and the Politics of Knowledge in 1960s-1970s American Transportation Planning

Didi Tal (Columbia University)
Papers and Trails: The Holocaust and U.S. Immigration Control

Gerda Henkel Fellow for Digital History

Ronny Grundig (University of Greifswald)
The History of Neighborhoods in Germany in the 20th Century

Short-term Doctoral Research Fellowships

John Balz (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
Slavery's Church: German Pietism, Empire, and Race in the Danish West Indies

Randall Chaves Zamora (Freie Universität Berlin)
Das intellektuelle Imperium: Die Ford Foundation, Sozialwissenschaften und der kulturelle Kalte Krieg in Zentralamerika (1948–1979)

Linus Lanfermann-Baumann (University of Graz)
Armed for Peace? Solidarity with Central America, Anti-nuclear Activism, and the Question of Violence during the Global Second Cold War

Barbara Mercier (Technische Universität Berlin)
Learning about the Atmosphere: Numerical and Material Modeling from the 1920s to the 1960s

Argyrios Sakorafas (University of Düsseldorf)
Within and beyond the Mediterranean: The History of Travel on Transatlantic Steamships ca. 1900-1940, and the Case of Migration from Southern Europe

Simon Schulz (University of Heidelberg)
Red Weather: Soviet Atmospheric Science between International Cold War and Regional Expertise

Lauranne Wolfe (Boston University)
Bodies That Belong: Disability and Displacement in the Postwar World

Short-term Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

Christiane Hoth de Olano (University of Bern)
From Source to Sea: An Environmental History of River Pollution and Accountability in the Caribbean Basin (1970s to 2010s)

Dianne Violeta Mausfeld (University of Bielefeld)
Portuguese Migrant Networks in California: Contact Spaces, Knowledge Flows, and Identity Formation (19th and 20th Century)

Sari Siegel (Cedars-Sinai Medical Center)
Healing after the Holocaust: Jewish DP-Physicians and the Provision of Medical Care to Fellow Survivors in Germany, 1945-1950

Horner Library Fellows

Jennifer A. Merriman (College of William & Mary)
Circulating Print, Knowledge, and Power in the German Atlantic, 1670-1870

RESEARCH SEMINAR AND COLLOQUIUM, SPRING 2025

February 20

Colloquium
Claas Oberstadt (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)
Between the Lines: Accounting, Insurance, and Resistance in the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Jasmin Goll (University of Bern)
"The World's Telephone Concert." Music by Telephone Wires as an 'Audible Infrastructure,' 1870-1930

March 27

Colloquium
Alexander Obermüller (University of Erfurt)
Piecing Together Emergency Medical Care: Philadelphia's Early Ambulance Service

Stefan Pulte (University of Bochum)
Security in Transatlantic Discourse: The Munich Security Conference and the Making of the Strategic Community

April 9

Research Seminar
Nina Mackert (University of Leipzig)
"Lifestyle Diseases," Race, and Responsibility in the 20th Century U.S.

May 4

Washington-Area German History Seminar
Angela Zimmerman (George Washington University)
Clausewitz's Communists (Chapter 4 from the book manuscript "'If we fight': Conjure, Communism, and the Revolution against Slavery in the American Civil War")

May 21	**Research Seminar** **Joshua Teplitsky (University of Pennsylvania)** Contagion, Crisis, Coexistence? Epidemics and Jewish Life in Early Modern Europe
June 23	**Research Seminar** **Valeska Huber (University of Vienna)** Language Barriers: Global Communication and its Limits

Calendar of Events, 2025–2026

2025

July 7-10 — **Historicizing the Refugee Experience, 17th–21st Centuries**
Fifth Annual International Seminar in Historical Refugee Studies in Berkeley, CA. Organized by University of Tübingen (UT), the German Historical Institute in Washington (GHI) and the American Historical Association (AHA)

September 4 — **The Legacy of World War II in American Society and Politics**
Panel Discussion at the GHI
Speakers: Katherine Benton-Cohen (Georgetown University), Thomas A. Guglielmo (George Washington University), Jeremi Suri (University of Texas at Austin); Moderator: Axel Jansen (GHI Washington)

September 10-12 — **Universities and the Public Good: Research, Education, and Democracy since 1945**
Workshop and Young Scholars Forum at Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover, Germany
Conveners: Charles Dorn (Bowdoin College, Maine), Axel Jansen (GHI Washington), Charlotte Lerg (LMU München), Till van Rahden (Université de Montréal), and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI Washington)

September 10	**Können Universitäten die Demokratie retten?** Panel Discussion at Herrenhausen Palace, Hannover Panelists: Julika Griem (Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen), Ian McNeely (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Shalini Randeria (Central European University, Vienna), and Till van Rahden (Université de Montréal); Moderator: Johannes Völz (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt); Welcome: Axel Jansen (GHI Washington)
September 16	**Church Bells and the Toll of Culture in Postwar Germany** Lecture at IES, UC Berkeley Speaker: Alice Goff (University of Chicago)
September 25-28	**Beyond Refuge: Legacies of Forced Migration and Transit in Post-1945 History** Roundtable at the 49th annual conference of the German Studies Association, Arlington, VA Conveners: Swen Steinberg (GHI Washington / Queen's University) and Rebekka Grossmann (Leiden University)
September 26	**German History in Documents and Images 2.0: Editing a Primary Source Collection for the Digital Age** Roundtable at at the 49th annual conference of the German Studies Association, Arlington, VA Speakers: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Pamela Swett (McMaster University), Jonathan Wiesen (University of Alabama at Birmingham), and James Retallack (University of Toronto); moderator: Insa Kummer (GHI Washington)

September 29-30	**Food, Migration, and Belonging in 20th Century European History** Conference at German Historical Institute | Pacific Office at UC Berkeley Conveners: Maren Möhring (University of Leipzig), Isabel Richter (GHI Washington Pacific Office at UC Berkeley)
October 6	**The Complex Legacies of Nazism: Current Perspectives on the History and Memory of National Socialism** Lecture at UC Berkeley Speaker: Michael Wildt (Humboldt University, Berlin), Moderators: Mia Fuller (Institute of European Studies at UC Berkeley) and Isabel Richter (German Historical Institute Washington | Pacific Office Berkeley)
October 9-10	**The Campus and Beyond: Higher Education and Social Inequalities in Europe and North America, 1850s-2000s** International Conference at the German Historical Institute Washington Conveners: Raphael Rössel (GHI Washington), Elizabeth Tandy Shermer (Loyola University Chicago), and Stefanie Coché (Gießen University)
2026	
March 6-7	**Eighth West Coast Germanists' Workshop: German History at the Crossroads? New Narratives, Perspectives and Approaches** Workshop at University of Colorado Boulder Conveners: David Ciarlo (University of Colorado Boulder), Thomas Pegelow Kaplan (University of Colorado Boulder), Isabel Richter (GHI Washington | Pacific Office, Berkeley) Raphael Rössel (GHI Washington)

March 18-19	**Listening to the Past: Digital Approaches to the History of Sound and Language** Workshop at the German Historical Institute Washington Conveners: Hans C. Boas (University of Texas, Austin) and Atiba Pertilla (GHI Washington)
April 23-24	**Rebuild or Retreat? Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Climate Migration and Mobility in the Global North** Conference at GHI Washington Conveners: Jana Dunz-Keck (GHI Washington), Sarah Beringer (GHI Washington), Simon Richter (University of Pennsylvania), Andreas Hübner (Kiel University), Max Gruenig (POCACITO Network and Georgetown University, BMW Center for German and European Studies), and Brendan O'Donnell (POCACITO Network and Heinrich Böll Foundation)
May 28-29	**Imperial Legacies? (Dis)continuities and Comparisons between Colonialism and Nazi Rule** International Conference at the German Historical Institute Washington Conveners: Ulrike von Hirschhausen (GHI Washington) and Robert Gerwarth (University College Dublin)
September 17-18	**The Moralization of Science** Conference at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna Conveners: Daniel Brewing, Moritz Fischer, Elke Seefried (RWTH Aachen), Alexander Bogner (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Axel Jansen (GHI Washington)

GHI Library

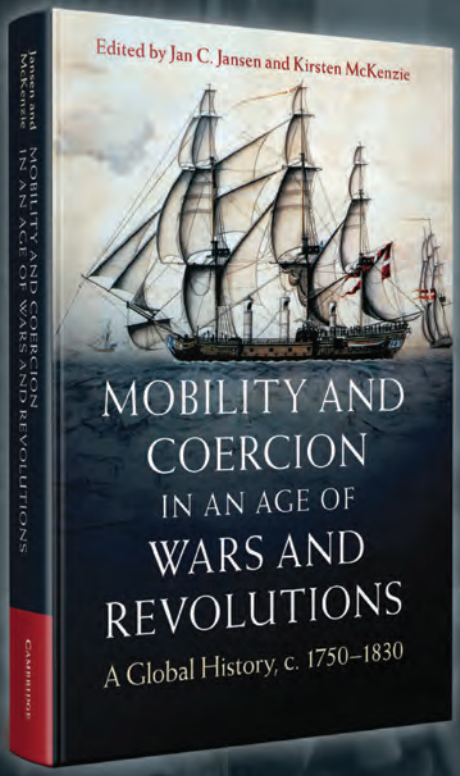
The GHI library concentrates on German history and transatlantic relations, with emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition to providing essential literature for scholarly research, the library fulfills an important cultural mission: no other library in the United States offers a similarly condensed inventory of modern German history. The library offers access to about 50,000 books, DVDs, CD-ROMs, microfiches, and 220 print journals. In addition, we offer access to about 500 e-books and 100 online journals.

The collection includes books on American history written by German authors as well as historical literature of the institute's past research foci: global history, religious studies, exile and migration studies, environmental history, and economic history. The collection includes only print materials, mostly secondary literature; there are no archival holdings.

The GHI library offers free access to scholars as well as the general public; appointments or reader cards are not necessary. The library does not lend materials but visitors may consult material from the entire collection in our beautiful reading room, which also offers access to a variety of databases for journal articles, historical newspapers, genealogical research, and bibliographical research.

For the library catalog or a list of our databases, please visit www.ghi-dc.org/library. Or send an email to library@ghi-dc.org for any further questions.

The **library hours** are Monday to Thursday from 9 am to 5 pm, Fridays from 9 am to 4 pm, and by appointment.



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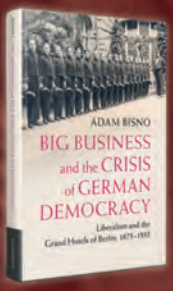

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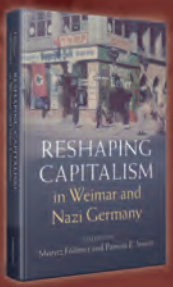

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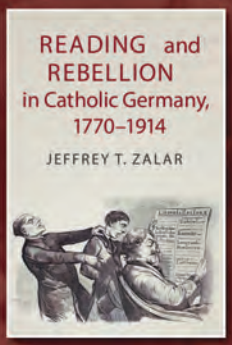

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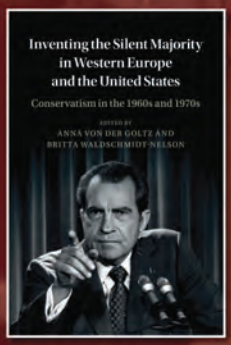

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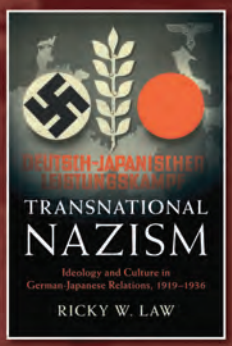

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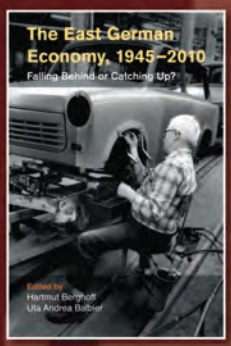

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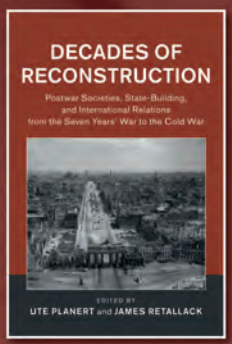

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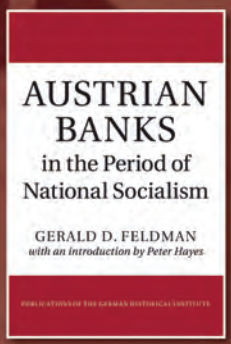

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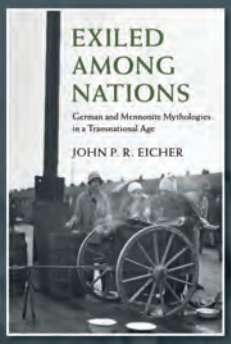

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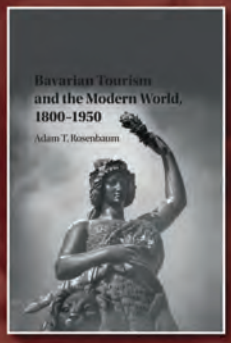

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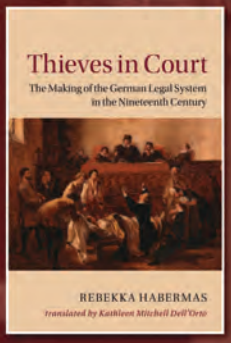

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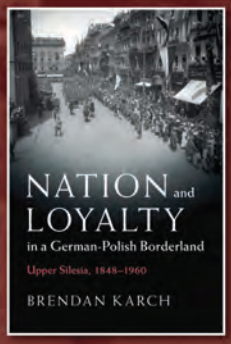

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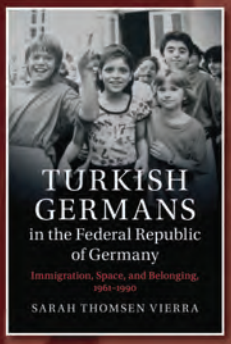

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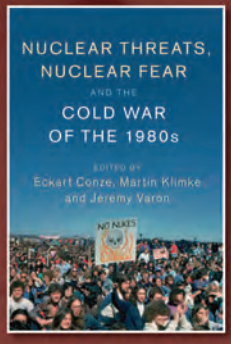

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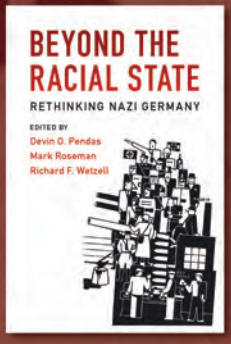

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Maximilian Klose is a historian of modern American foreign relations. He received his PhD from the Graduate School of North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin in 2021 and has held positions and fellowships at Freie Universität's John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, the University of Freiburg and the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC.

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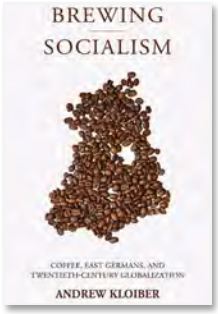

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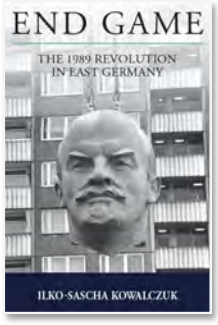

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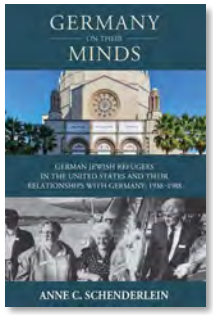

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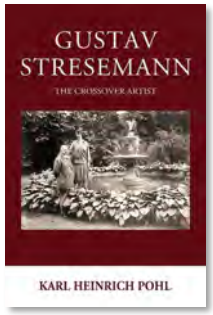

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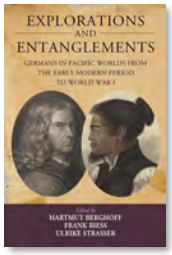

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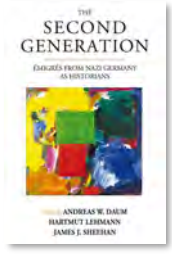

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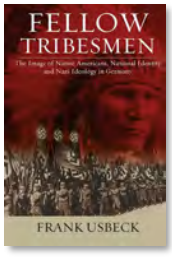

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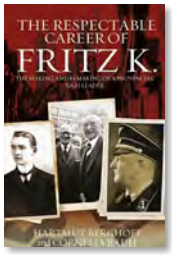

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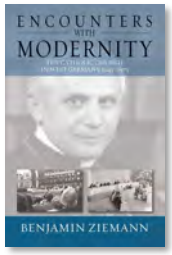

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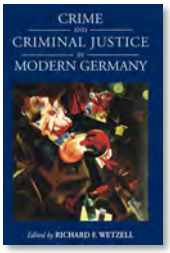

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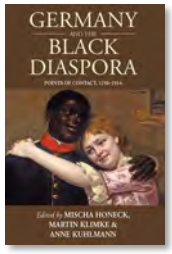

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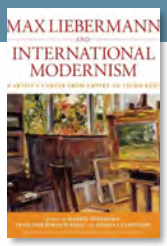

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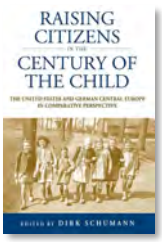

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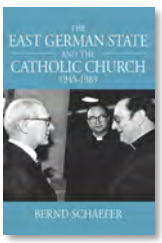

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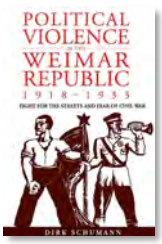

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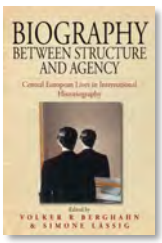

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