

instruments in order to build up suspense for his story, in which he himself is the hero fighting his way over major obstacles.

In his presentation "The Body, Sixteenth-Century Autobiography, and Individuality," Otto Ulbricht traced individuality in autobiographies by looking at specific themes, in this case remarks about the body and its states during the process of aging. At least in theory, the ailments of the aging process can lead to the realization of the changeability of one's individual character, thus revealing a central characteristic of the modern understanding of individuality. However, it is well-known that sixteenth-century autobiographers tended to present themselves as unchanging figures from childhood to death. Ulbricht stressed that this point serves as a reminder of the many obstacles facing such an investigation. As the authors are not given to introspection and analysis of emotions, it seems important to start with a reduced understanding of individuality. Or to put it another way, lower levels of individuality (like self-consciousness and self-perception) and awareness of one's individual body are detectable in the implicit comments of the authors. Among numerous texts, Otto Ulbricht examined the autobiography of an old pastor who suffered from a kidney stone and was able to isolate traces of individuality in the expressions of pain. The pastor tried to build up familiarity with his illness, which he regarded as an unwelcome guest who dwelt within him and whom he would have to host for the rest of his life. But the pastor was also worried about how much he could complain in his writing. It seemed difficult for him as narrating self to find a balance. On the one hand, he insisted on writing about his pain, but on the other hand, he felt the need to justify why he wrote about it. This debate with himself indicates a deviation from given models—a degree of individuality.

After the commentator Kaspar von Greyerz pointed out the methodological difficulties of the connection between autobiography and individuality, including a critical evaluation of the literature (for example, Charles Taylor's book *Sources of the Self*) a lively discussion with the audience ensued, many of whom were experts on autobiographical writings from different disciplines.

Vera Lind
Otto Ulbricht

GERMANY IN THE COLD WAR SINCE THE 1960S

GHI-sponsored panel at the Annual Conference of the German Studies Association, Washington, DC, October 5–8, 2001. Moderator: David C. Geyer, (Department of State, Historian's Office). Commentator: Raimund

Lammersdorf (GHI). Panelists: Douglas Selvage (Department of State, Historian's Office), Alexandra M. Friedrich (Stiftung Landheim Schon-dorf), Thomas W. Maulucci, (University of Maryland/University College, Schwäbisch Gmünd).

Revelations from newly accessible archives in Eastern Europe and recently declassified material in U.S. archives as well as from the reshaping of historiographical approaches that emerged after the end of the Cold War have yielded new and exciting results in the history of international relations of both Germanies. The findings of this panel provided new perspectives on the issue of hegemonial relations in a bipolar world and called for a re-assessment of international relations along multilateral and multipolar lines.

The prevailing notion of hegemony is a construct of a Cold War consensus between historians on the left and the right. They attributed to the two main antagonists, the United States and the Soviet Union, quasi-omnipotence. The difference between the political persuasions simply turned on whom to blame for being more abusive of this power. The papers suggested that this hegemonic world view needs to be relativized. Hegemonic power, even in the case of the Soviet Union as an undemocratic and illegitimate hegemon, is never absolute. Client states do not lose agency, and they exert whatever influence or power they have. We would do well to explore their policies as those of more independent actors.

Hegemonic power depends to a large degree on how willing the client power is to withstand pressure and to stake out its room for movement. It also depends on the importance that particular issues have for a client power. In the case of Poland, its traditional mistrust towards the Germanies—never mind that one was a socialist brother country—provided enough pressure to pursue a more self-confident policy. By contrast, West Germany's sensitivity about the recent past called for avoiding militaristic foreign policies and withstanding American demands for German armed participation in the Vietnam War.

A specifically German theme of all papers was West German self-perception versus the view from the outside. It has been a dogma of West German foreign policy that the Nazi past of genocidal imperialism limited its ability to pursue a foreign policy that was as sovereign, that is, as forceful as its relative military and economic power would have allowed for. It seemed necessary and appropriate for the Federal Republic to regain the trust of other nations first. Generally, German policy makers believed that other powers were so distrustful of Germany—even if unfairly so—that it was often enough to assume outside resistance to stop Bonn from wielding its power.

Yet the three papers showed that Germany's room for maneuver was much greater than anybody in Bonn thought. Of course, in case of doubt, the Germans could always be accused of returning to their old aggressive ways. Revanchism was a particularly popular bogeyman set up by the East, whereas the West appeared to be more discreet when raising its individual or collective eyebrows. Yet, overall, the thinking in Washington, Warsaw, and Moscow was far more resigned to accepting Germany's right to pursue its national interests. The foreign policy leadership of the Soviet Union had far fewer doubts about the inevitability of German reunification than generations of West German leaders. In Washington, the successes of Chancellors Erhard and Kiesinger suggest that Germans had more leeway in defending their interests. The outright fear in the Johnson administration about what would happen in Germany if it caused Erhard to fall suggests that the American government believed that the Germans had more options than merely following U.S. leadership.

Douglas Salvage's paper on "The GDR and Poland's Response to Bonn's Ostpolitik" put all this into an even more complex framework as he traced Polish policy towards the two Germanies and the Soviet Union. He argued that Poland's support for Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik was determined more by the inner dynamics of the Warsaw Pact than by Gomulka's desire for improved relations with West Germany. Specifically, the GDR's unwillingness to serve as a buffer state against German unification, along with Moscow's failure to compel it to do so, led Gomulka to make his historic opening to Bonn. Only the utter failure of Gomulka's hard line towards West Germany and within the Soviet bloc led him to seek improved relations with the FRG.

What Salvage's work suggests is that, although it was communist, the Polish government was thinking more in terms of traditional national interests than of Cold War bipolarity. Direct personal confrontations between Gomulka and Ulbricht perfectly exemplified the historical enmity between Poles and Germans, that is, long-standing Polish memories of Prussian and German oppression, and German arrogance and prejudice against allegedly lazy and incompetent Poles, which found its way into the German language in the proverbial *Polenwirtschaft*. Unable to gain Soviet support, Gomulka finally responded to West German overtures, knowing that Moscow would favor improved relations with West Germany despite the fears of East Berlin.

Thus, what has long been perceived as an ideologic monolith turns out to display complex and shifting power dynamics. Poland was not only free to exert pressure, even if unsuccessfully, but the Soviet side obviously understood and acknowledged the Polish motives for objecting to the proposed developments. Salvage's work removes the cover of a

clockwork whose mechanics were far more complicated than those of us who only saw the regular movements on the face could have imagined.

In her paper "Paying for the American Defense Guarantee? The Vietnam War's Influence on the West German-American Offset Negotiations in the late 1960s," Alexandra Friedrich gave an example of how the power of the hegemon depends on the perceptions of the client. The West German government had agreed to purchase its military supplies from American companies in order to offset the considerable American expenses incurred in the defense of Western Europe and because it feared that the United States was about to abandon its European allies in order to concentrate on Vietnam. This mechanism left room for conflict between the two governments both because Germany's military requirements remained far below the desired sums and because of continued American demands for the participation of German troops in the Vietnam War.

Chancellor Erhard was in awe of the Americans and naively believed that he could rely on Johnson's friendship. He was obviously unfamiliar with Truman's adage: "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog." It appears that the Americans understood Erhard's weakness very well as they bluffed him with repeated threats of troop withdrawals. Erhard's successor, Kiesinger, seemed far less enthralled, was willing to call the bluff, and successfully rejected American claims. Here is a case where personalities really mattered as Kiesinger's more self-confident approach empowered the client state.

To German eyes, the fact that members of the Johnson administration showed no concern about Germany's recent past when they called for a German military contribution to the Vietnam war was quite surprising. Cold War thinking had so far displaced the memory of World War II that the White House harbored no fears about a resurgence of German power politics.

This difference in historical consciousness about Germany's past became very obvious in Tom Maulucci's contribution on "The Question of Bundeswehr Out-of-Area Activities, 1955-1999: From Strategic Necessity to Constitutional Doctrine and Back." Here again we find Johnson and his administration apparently unconcerned about the use of German troops in combat situations, believing, in the words of Dean Rusk, that "it is important that we get some Germans into the field." During the early years, it appears that memories of German World-War-II atrocities, at least in Europe, were still so strong, that the German government quite rightly argued that it would be impolitic to get involved militarily anywhere outside of West German territory. Domestically, Bonn also had to take into account the "count me out" attitude of many Germans during rearmament. At the same time, out-of-area activities were so far beyond the realm of possibilities that there was no need for a theoretical explo-

ration of their constitutionality. When the Social Democrats began participating in the Federal Government, the moral conviction that out-of-area activities were out of question took over. CDU chancellors might have perceived German out-of-area activities as possible embarrassments, but for Brandt and even for Schmidt it was a matter of moral conviction. It was easy to turn this into a constitutional prohibition as the *Grundgesetz* was largely designed as the very antithesis to the aggressive militarism of the Nazi dictatorship.

The intent of the German Founders was to create a new German approach to foreign policy. Constitutionally restricting the Bundeswehr to defensive purposes was meant to prohibit any German government from ever again considering military power as a political tool. After two world wars, von Clausewitz's dictum of war as the continuation of politics by different means was to be stricken from Germany's political testaments. To atone for the evil this nation had brought on so many in the past, West German foreign policy sought to establish the Federal Republic globally as a benign power. The emphasis on multilateralism, international law, and international organizations as the basis for conducting foreign policy was an attempt to further a legalization of the international system, quite in contrast to the traditional power politics of the superpowers. Constitutional prohibitions against out-of-area activities therefore gained considerable weight.

Yet for the United States Clausewitz still rings true. The U.S. can act with impunity, even in violation of international law, because it is not burdened with as disastrous and inhibiting a history as that of the Germans, and, of course, because it has the power to get away with it. Therefore it has no respect for what Henry Kissinger called "essentially legalistic argument[s]" if they stand in the way of what the U.S. perceives as its vital interests.

At the same time, in Germany, resorting to the *Grundgesetz* was a way of keeping the issue out of the public debate. A taboo obviated the need to constantly defend this decision, for example against right-wing militarists who stood to gain legitimacy by supporting American demands for troops. The Schmidt government's constitutional arguments may also have been a polite way of disagreeing with some of the power politics that American administrations were pursuing. By putting up constitutional prohibitions, the Germans were avoiding a situation in which they had to publicly disagree with the United States over fundamental security issues, a situation that might have weakened the Western alliance.

Raimund Lammersdorf