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This issue of the Bulletin opens with the thirtieth Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute, delivered last fall by Adelheid von Saldern (University of Hannover). Her lecture, titled “Benchmark Europe: Liberalism and Cultural Nationalism in the United States, 1900-1930,” examines the role of the so-called quality magazines in American liberal cultural nationalism — including the search for authentic American art and literature — and as transatlantic mediators who sought to construct a transatlantic network among cultural elites in an era of rising anti-Americanism in Europe. In his comment on the lecture, Thomas Bender (New York University) reminds us that, unlike most European countries, the United States did not have a national culture supported by state institutions; instead, American national culture was largely the product of commerce. The next feature, by Martin Sabrow (Center for Contemporary History, Potsdam), presents the lecture he delivered at the GHI’s German Unification Symposium last fall. Examining the question whether the year 1990 represents an epochal break in German history, Sabrow challenges the depth of the rupture and makes a strong case that growing temporal distance has relativized the break of 1990.

As regular readers know, every November the Friends of the GHI award the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university. In this issue, this year’s prize winner, Katharina Matro, presents an overview of her dissertation on the “Soviet Occupation of Junker Estates in Poland’s New Western Territories, 1945-1948.” While most recent studies of postwar central Europe have focused on cities, Matro examines the important transformations that took place in the countryside, focusing on the former landed estates of the Prussian nobility in Western Pomerania, where from mid-1945 to mid-1948 three groups — remaining Germans, arriving Poles, and Soviet military authorities — had to negotiate the return of war-torn lands to agricultural cultivation in a situation in which it remained unclear who owned the land.

The next two articles present lectures delivered at the January 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA). The first, “Arnold Toynbee and the Problems of Today,” is the 2017 Toynbee Prize Lecture, delivered by Jürgen Osterhammel (University
of Konstanz), a former member of the GHI’s Academic Advisory Board, on the occasion of accepting the 2017 Toynbee Prize. In this lecture, Osterhammel, whose recent book The Transformation of the World presented a global history of the nineteenth century, embeds his assessment of the work of Arnold Toynbee in a set of wide-ranging and incisive reflections about the emergence of global history and the challenges facing its practitioners. Paul Nolte’s article “Historians in the Political Arena in Germany” presents a lecture he delivered as part of an AHA panel co-organized by the German Historical Institute. In this piece, Nolte (Free University of Berlin) draws on his own experiences as a public intellectual, a member of public advisory panels as well as informal political advisory circles to analyze and critically reflect on the role of historians in the public sphere in contemporary Germany.

Our final feature article presents the research of GHI Research Fellow Anne Schenderlein on “German Jewish ‘Enemy Aliens’ in the United States during the Second World War.” This article investigates and analyzes the little-known but disturbing story of German Jewish refugees’ classification as “enemy aliens” during World War II, and how the refugees and refugee organizations responded to and negotiated this discriminatory treatment in their newly adopted country.

The “Reports” section of the Bulletin reports on the GHI’s recent conferences and academic events, which ranged from a series of panels on “migration and knowledge” to a conference on the use of digital mapping technology to create “spatial historical knowledge,” and from the history of knowledge restrictions imposed by national security agencies to the economic history of “industrial decline and the rise of the service sector” in 1970s Europe and North America. As always, our “News” section informs you about recent developments at the Institute, new publications, and upcoming events. For up-to-date information on upcoming events, publications, fellowships, and calls for papers, please also consult our website — http://www.ghi-dc.org — as well as our Facebook page.

Simone Lässig (Director) and Richard F. Wetzel (Editor)
Features
Sinclair Lewis, the first American writer to receive the Nobel Prize, called into question all general statements on the United States by saying: "You cannot generalize about America because you can prove anything about it you want to prove."\(^1\) Of course, this statement should not discourage us from researching American history on a non-arbitrary basis. However, it makes us sensitive to the different ways in which the American past has been interpreted — and not only the past, but also present-day issues.

In this article I will focus on the early twentieth century, when America became increasingly industrialized and urbanized and when popular culture, mass media, and the national infrastructure dramatically transformed the American way of life for men and women. The breakthrough of modernity led to severe cultural conflicts about how to organize and govern a democratic mass society. These conflicts touched on the public role of morality and the issue of migration in an era of eugenics, nativism, and racism. These issues featured prominently in the public consciousness when the United States was transformed into a nation of expansion in the 1898 Spanish-American War and subsequently, when the country increasingly became an economic, financial, and political world power, certainly during and after the First World War.

The first section of this article\(^2\) discusses the profiles of the so-called “quality magazines,” whereas the second and third sections focus on cultural nationalism in the United States — with Europe as a benchmark. The fourth and final section analyzes the role of the liberal magazines as transatlantic mediators — including their response to increasing European anti-Americanism. In the existing literature, these topics have usually been investigated separately.\(^3\) By connecting them, I seek to offer some new insights into the connection between cultural nationalism and transatlantic exchange in the early twentieth century.


\(^2\) This article is based on my book *Amerikanismus: Kulturelle Abgrenzung von Europa und US-Nationalismus im frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2013).

\(^3\) One of the few exceptions is the investigation of artists by Wanda M. Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity 1915-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), esp. 5.
I. The Magazines: A Cultural and Transatlantic Forum

At the beginning of the twentieth century, “quality magazines” such as The Nation, Harper’s Magazine, The New Republic, and The Forum provided a lively forum for national and transnational communication. These journals differed from both newspapers and popular magazines. Newspapers were usually connected to specific cities or regions, they carried a lot of advertising, and were committed to differentiating between their “objective” and “interpretative” content, while magazines remained largely dedicated to “interpretative journalism.” Although the boundaries between the different print media were fluid, the popular magazines such as the Saturday Evening Post adapted their style and subjects to reach a broad readership — in contrast to the higher standard of the so-called quality magazines. The latter did not reach a particularly high circulation; their print run usually ranged between 50,000 and 100,000 copies. Nevertheless, the quality magazines were influential in generating nationwide public debate, which was one of their main goals: After 1918, The Nation defined itself as a “magazine of dissent,” The New Republic called itself a “journal of interpretation and opinion” and a “journal of unopinionated opinion” (Lippmann), Harper’s Magazine aimed to participate in the “discussion of the modern scene,” and The Forum saw itself as a “magazine of controversy.” The New Republic, the progressive magazine founded by Walter Lippmann, Walter E. Weyl, and Herbert Croly in 1914, gained significant political influence by interacting with the Wilson administration. Even during the Republican period of the 1920s, the position of this and other quality magazines was so strong that it was a “must” for Washington administrations to look at these magazines in order to know what was going on in the liberal public mind. Distributed all over the country, these magazines promoted the inner nation-building processes of the time and were eager to create a “common body of knowledge.” They wanted their readers all over the country to increase their “social knowledge” on domestic issues and current trends in politics, art, literature, architecture, and lifestyle. Reviews were supposed to guide the trends in literature and the arts on a sophisticated level. Media historian A.J. van Zuilen has argued: “The national magazine played the role of one of the most powerful influences in the nationalizing of the American thought and custom and the increasing unification of the United States around 1900.”

The magazines’ editors worked with numerous writers, many of whom were renowned cultural nationalists, such as Frederick Lewis Allen, Charles A. Beard, Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, John

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From a present-day perspective, the magazines’ writers were the first representatives of an American intelligentsia that developed mainly outside of the universities. They established a close-knit network centered around the magazines. In short, the magazines were a kind of “trade-paper of the intellectuals.” Mostly born in the 1880s and 1890s, a subgroup among these influential authors saw themselves as the “young generation” with a common and critical awareness of modern America, its people and its concerns. They came mostly from the urban middle classes, often had a European immigrant background, and included a significant number of Jews. They usually did not study at special schools of journalism, but had attended Ivy League universities, in particular Harvard, Yale, and Columbia, and some of them kept in touch with these institutions by joining the “old boys” circles. Numerous writers were free-lancers, many of them living in New York, the location of most editorial offices. Writers often had other jobs and contributed only occasionally on a particular topic discussed in the magazines. Some were academics, such as John Dewey, a professor at Columbia University. The networks included critics writing on various topics including history, arts, music or architecture. Moreover, some artists contributed drawings as magazine illustrations to make ends meet.

There were also a considerable number of women among these writers. Although women’s influence had increased due to their work as muckraking journalists and transatlantic networkers in the period of urban and social progressivism of the 1890s, the debates on cultural nationalism remained mainly the domain of male writers. After the First World War, women usually wrote either short stories or covered issues of gender, family, welfare, modern lifestyle, and social order. Occasionally female writers such as Beatrice Hinkle, a social psychologist, challenged anti-feminism and narrow-minded nationalism in favor of a more cosmopolitan way of thinking. As a rare exception, The Nation included Freda Kirchwey in its editorial team in 1923.  

We know much more about the writers and editors of these magazines than about their readers. The most important readers were the

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opinion leaders at the country’s main institutions and the magazines’ writers themselves. Historian Casey Nelson Blake has written: “At its most democratic, the journal of opinion provides a forum where intellectuals can discover one another.”\(^\text{10}\) Other readers probably belonged to the upper classes and academic middle classes. The readership spectrum was, however, clearly limited in terms of race and class. While the majority of working class readers preferred popular magazines or tabloids, some groups among them such as African Americans and Socialists had their own journals. The new white, professional, managerial urban classes certainly were the main target audience of liberal magazines, but the actual number of readers among these social groups was clearly not as high as was hoped for, a fact that was said to be caused by a generally weak interest in politics, public issues, and foreign affairs.

II. Debates on Liberal Cultural Nationalism

Cultural nationalism is a term used by intellectuals at the time as well as by some historians. Cultural nationalists believed that literature, arts, and architecture not only had to be of great quality, but also had to substantially serve the nation-building process and the search for national identity by creating genuine American works of art. Accordingly, cultural nationalism was also closely linked with the desire for a high national (and international) reputation. Sheldon Cheney, a literature and art critic and an outspoken defender of modern theatre, argued in 1938 that a nation’s standing “will be judged ultimately almost solely upon the evidence of surviving works in the field of arts.”\(^\text{11}\)

A large number of magazine articles complained that in terms of arts and literature, America remained a British colony — more than a hundred years after the formal foundation of the United States. For example, Randolph Bourne, the well-known liberal pluralist and cultural nationalist, stated during the First World War: “The Englishman of to-day nags us and dislikes us ... He still thinks of us incorrigibly as ‘colonials.’ America — is still, as a writer recently expressed it, ‘culturally speaking a self-governing dominion of the British Empire.’”\(^\text{12}\) Fellow cultural nationalist and writer Harold E. Stearns expressed a similar opinion when he stated in 1922: “whatever else American civilization is, it is not Anglo-Saxon, and ... we shall never achieve any genuine nationalistic self-consciousness as long as we allow certain financial and social minorities to persuade

\(^{10}\) Blake, Journals, 355.

\(^{11}\) Sheldon Cheney, “Art in the United States, 1938”, in America Now, ed. Stearns, 82-103.

us that we are still an English Colony.” Bourne and Stearns referred to English culture (and finance) here, but many similar statements also rejected American cultural dependence on Europe as a whole.

In particular, the authors detected a lack of cultural independence in contemporary arts and literature. They complained that American literature was often no more than an imitation of English and European models. In this context, the authors criticized the dependence of influential American academies and numerous museums on European art traditions. They also blamed the cultural deficits on America’s frontier heritage; moreover, they blamed the genteel tradition because of its anglophile inclinations and its exaggerated moralism, and they blamed the Puritan heritage for its alleged disinterest in the arts. Finally, they blamed the churches and the state for their lack of support for the arts.

Liberal cultural nationalists not only demanded a higher standard for the arts, literature, and criticism, but also a genuine, authentically American art that was not only clearly different from European art, but also of equal or even higher quality. Their conviction that America was destined to reach such a goal sooner or later was mainly based on a strong belief in the evolutionary progress of history. In one of his articles for Harper’s Magazine, Philip Gibbs, an English Americanophile, journalist, and novelist, predicted that “… there will come great minds, and artists, and leaders of thought, surpassing any that have yet revealed themselves. All our reading of history points to that revolution. The flowering time of America seems due to arrive, after its growing-pains.” While Europe was highly regarded as the leading art continent of the past with its rich cultural heritage, great American art was supposed to determine the (near) future — due to the evolutionary progress that had already led to the so-called machine age dominated by the United States.

The transatlantic cultural “contest” turned out to be very complicated, however, because the European avant-garde severely challenged many Americans in their search for a genuine national art. Vis-à-vis the European avant-garde the question arose whether U.S. artists also needed to search for a genuine American modern art of high quality. Was this not a contradiction in itself? Could art, especially modern art, be nationalized, anyway? Robert Henri, a leading painter of the Ashcan School of American social realism, belonged to the few who recognized the contradiction inherent in this idea. In 1926 he stated that looking at the past one could speak of a Greek, Spanish


or French art, but that this was no longer possible for the future: “... people all over the world are no longer living within the confines of their own geographical barriers, but are in touch with everything that is going on. The art of today cannot be confined to nations, but must be — without barriers — a world art.”

There was another obstacle to introducing avant-garde art in the United States at the time, namely the American audience, who were often shocked by it. Even well into the 1920s, a large part of the audience accepted and adapted European impressionism, but rejected European expressionism, cubism, and abstract painting, often criticizing them as decadent. In contrast to some private collectors and galleries, most museums were reluctant to buy European avant-garde works and acquired such works (often from private collectors) only beginning in the 1940s. In music, the American composer Arthur Shattuck considered European avant-garde music “degenerate,” and he was not alone. In literature, a large part of the public did not accept naturalistic descriptions. In architecture, the first director of the Museum of Modern Art, Alfred H. Barr, himself a committed modernist and supporter of the Bauhaus, complained as late as 1932 that many Americans “oppose[d] the [Bauhaus-] style as another European invasion.”

Among liberal cultural nationalists the rejection of European avant-garde art by many Americans met with disapproval. Alfred Stieglitz and his circle of artists, photographers, and critics in New York’s Greenwich Village promoted knowledge of European modern art and fostered European influences as general inspiration, if not necessarily as direct models for American imitation. Stieglitz’ famous Gallery 291 and his Armory exhibition of European modernism in 1913 functioned as a transatlantic art mediator. After the war, however, Stieglitz loosened his commitment to European modernism in favor of his search for what he called an authentic American organic modernism. Thus it was no coincidence that he called his new gallery, founded in 1929, An American Place. American organic modernism was conceived as a means to express modern national authenticity. Architect Frank Lloyd Wright defined his buildings not only as an expression of (transnational) modernism, but also as organic modernism, which he regarded as genuinely American and different from radical Bauhaus functionalism. Similar strivings and interpretations were also developing among American designers. Looking for an “art of use” detached from European design and defined as typically American,

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Raymond Loewy developed a streamlining shape he then successfully popularized and merchandized.

III. Art Evaluations and Art Resources

The early twentieth century was a period when the arts and literature were fiercely debated. Liberal intellectuals rejected traditional notions of considering morality a main criterion of evaluation. Instead cultural nationalists referred primarily to the degree of national originality and genuineness in their assessments. In this respect, they regarded even American expatriates in Europe with some mistrust, because these writers and artists were said to be too alienated from American life and too Europeanized to be able to create genuine American art. In this spirit, the influential historian Charles A. Beard stated in 1930: “While a few critics go abroad for inspiration, the great body of thinkers still agree with Emerson that we must stand fast where we are and work out our destiny on lines already marked out.”

With respect to the level of quality, comparisons with European arts penetrated many evaluations. When well-known American literary critic Henry Hazlitt presented a list of great American writers in 1932, he argued that among American writers only Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and Eugene O’Neill stood a chance of staying relevant in the long term. In his prediction, only European writers such as Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, and James Joyce would be remembered one hundred years later. Many liberal cultural nationalists also continued to be influenced by the conventional European construct of a dichotomy between high art and popular culture such as cinema. The so-called “little magazines” like Dial, Smart Set, Seven Arts, or Broom initiated many debates on film as a possible artistic expression of modern America. Most of the liberal intellectuals, such as Charles A. Beard, were however still reluctant to accept film as a genre of modern American art. These wide-spread doubts about the value of cinema were only beginning to subside during the 1930s.

Cultural nationalists also faced serious problems of evaluation when considering black spirituals and jazz, even though they recognized them as cultural expressions that were independent from European influences. For most cultural nationalists, African American art was at best an admirable cultural achievement, but it was not at all seen as an essential contribution to the search for national identity. By contrast, the African American writer Alain Locke insisted that the art and music of African Americans should not only be valued as a

“black” achievement, but also as a national American achievement, as “nationally representative” music. Thus Locke defined African American art both as “black modernism” and as an integral part of a new, racially open-minded idea of American national culture, which had so often been considered exclusively white. Music critic Samuel Chotzinoff had a similar view: “It is that genius which has produced the American jazz, the only distinct and original idiom we have.”

The director of the National Conservatory in New York, Bohemian composer Antonín Dvořák, also emphasized the relevance of black spirituals for the creation of national American music. These assessments did not receive widespread support in a very much racially minded and racially divided American society. Within as well as outside the Ku Klux Klan, the common argument of numerous white opinion leaders was that non-whites, especially African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans were to be excluded from the cultural nation-building process and the search for a national identity. Thus Virginia composer John Powell stated: “We Americans, so-called, are no more black Africans than we are red Indians; and it is absurd to imagine that the negro idiom could ever give adequate expression to the soul of our race.”

While liberal cultural nationalists were, as a rule, culturally open-minded individuals, the liberal magazines did not openly promote an ethnically and racially pluralistic idea of national culture that included non-whites. Although the editor of The Nation, Oswald Garrison Villard, for example, supported the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), his journal offended some African Americans by publishing a 49-part article series titled “These United States” in which African Americans were scarcely mentioned at all. In an expression of opposition and self-confidence, the African American journal Messenger published a series with the provocative title “These ‘Colored’ United States.”

If liberal magazines were reluctant to actively support ethnic pluralism in art, the American publicist Randolph Bourne and the German-born Jewish philosopher Horace Kallen did. In their transnational and pluralistic concept of the U.S. as a [white] “nation of nations,” Bourne and Kallen championed a pluralistic idea of what national art should and could be in modern times as early as 1915/1916. Their positive references to the millions of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe not only met with reluctance at the liberal magazines, but with massive disapproval by influential eugenicists, nativists, and racists who regarded these ethnic
groups as “degraded” European races.\(^{28}\) This changed only gradually during the (late) 1930s and 40s, not least in reaction to Nazi racism, the influx of refugees from Nazism, and the Holocaust.

The rise of regional identities also challenged the liberals’ search for a nationally authentic art.\(^{29}\) Was this considered a contradiction? Frederick Jackson Turner affirmed cultural differences between the “sections” and mainly supported separate cultural identities especially of the West and South as creative regions distinct from the Anglo-American East. He combined his admiration of those regions with the idea of a symphonic nation: “We are members of one body, though it is a varied body.”\(^{30}\) When reflecting on the question of how national American music could be created, composer John Powell opined that an “adequate expression to the soul of our race ... must be based [only] upon Anglo-American folk-song.”\(^{31}\) Most liberal intellectuals and some artists — Lewis Mumford, Constance Rourke, and Charles Sheeler, for example — valued regional white folk songs, folk art, and the wide-spread historic pageants as sources for artistic creation. Moreover, painters like Georgia O’Keeffe discovered Native American indigenous art as inspiration for their work or as resource for creating genuine modern national art, beyond European influences. Self-confident regionalist artists from the South and Midwest, such as Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood, were convinced that their regionalist vernacular and popular art represented true modern American art, not least because it was allegedly created without any influences from Europe or the hated urban industrial American North, which, in their view, unjustifiably dominated the U.S. While the liberals regarded regional culture primarily as a resource for creating national art, regional artists considered their art a direct representation of national American identity.

In their search for art sources in their own country, the cultural nationalists refused to recognize women’s potential as artists. Brooks, Mumford, Mencken, and Stieglitz even advocated a so-called re-masculinization of arts and literature, including their audiences and readership. Re-masculinization was supposed to stop the “effeminacy” that had allegedly intruded into society after the end of the frontier period.\(^{31}\) It was the progressive reformer Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. president from 1901 to 1909, who proclaimed not only a “new nationalism” and “new patriotism,” but also advocated a “new masculinity.” This plea for a renewed masculinity appealed to numerous men, not least because the English translation of Otto Weininger’s antifeminist


\(^{31}\) In Thomas Schmidt-Beste, “Was ist ‘amerikanische Musik’? Identitätssuche und Fremdwahrnehmungen,” in Was Amerika aus-macht: Multidisziplinäre Perspektiven, ed. Philipp Gassert et al. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2009), 177-194, 184.

\(^{32}\) See James Truslow Adams, The Epic of America (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1932), 404-411.
book titled *Sex and Character* (1906) had gained considerable influence. Moreover, the popular adoption of Sigmund Freud’s doctrine also implied the degradation of women compared with men. As a consequence, numerous cultural nationalists believed that only a re-masculinization of American arts and audiences could lead to the creation of genuine American artistic achievements of the highest quality. Furthermore, “effeminacy” was considered European and sometimes associated with the anglophile genteel tradition. Such views on gender, and especially the idea of genius as exclusively male, defined cultural nation-building in the arts as primarily a male project. Surely, that was one of the reasons why most female artists remained outsiders.33 Such views were embedded in a society where cultural conservatives, nativists, and eugenicists wanted (white Northern) women to stick to their primary role as (child-bearing) “mothers of the nation.” Of course, this view did not meet with the approval of (young) liberal women, who hoped to emulate the role model of the “New Woman” by pursuing a modern, self-determined way of life, which they hoped would eventually lead to more equal gender relations. (Older) liberal female activists also rejected all attempts at re-masculinization and at limiting female roles in society. Many of these women were strongly committed to the nation-building processes in their own ways, that is, by supporting progressive urban reforms, especially by their work in settlement houses and neighborhood centers to foster the integration and Americanization of European immigrants. Moreover, they represented the nation’s interests through their engagement in international organizations and their commitment to a new liberal and peaceful world order.

In sum, cultural nationalists tended to recognize the relevance of traditional regional sources while excluding other influences for creating great modern American art. First, they dismissed the mass media, female artists, women’s achievements in the nation-building process, and African American art as components of national identity. In the liberal magazines of the 1920s, an open debate about, let alone a plea for an inclusive concept of ethnic pluralism in art and literature, as put forward by Bourne and Kallen with regard to European immigrants, was notably absent. Second, from today’s perspective, the search for national authenticity expressed in high-brow, re-masculinized, national modern art tended to underestimate the quality of contemporary American works of art, including works of Anglo-American imagism as well as American Dadaism and cubism. Historian Nathan Miller characterized this decade as “the greatest period of creativity in the nation’s history.”

IV. Transatlantic Mediators

As transatlantic cultural mediators, the liberal magazine authors were committed to introducing modern European art and literature to Americans, not least by reviewing European works. In doing so, they contributed to the creation of a common transatlantic knowledge and public debate among their readers. Magazines like The Nation reviewed newly published literary works from Europe, especially when they were translated into English, such as Franz Werfel’s Abituriententag (Class Reunion), for example, which the well-known literary critic Joseph Wood Krutch reviewed. German-born literary critic Ludwig Lewisohn, too, introduced Franz Werfel and the German expressionists to the American public. In architecture, the transnational and modernist painter Louis Lozowick reviewed the “Bauhaus-books” favorably. In 1932, Lee Simonson, director of the American Theatre Guild, informed American readers about Max Reinhardt’s modern drama performances at Berlin’s Deutsches Theater. Meanwhile

34 Nathan Miller, New World Coming: The 1920s and the Making of Modern America (New York: Scribner, 2003), 201.
35 The Nation (July 1929): 120-21.
socialist writer Max Eastman expressed his fascination for early Soviet art.\textsuperscript{39}

Magazine articles on Europe were based on various sources, among them the United Press Association (UP), founded in 1907. Moreover, editors invited many European authors to publish their opinions on transatlantic issues in American magazines. The Nation also established close ties with some foreign authors by making them “contributing editors”; these included the English economist and critic of imperialism John A. Hobson, the German philosopher, pedagogue, and pacifist Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster, and the French writer Anatole France.\textsuperscript{40} This diverse range of sources of information about Europe diminished the primary relevance of travel reports — although artists and intellectuals from both sides of the Atlantic used their own travels in other countries for inspiration, communication, and information more than ever before.\textsuperscript{41}

American liberal intellectuals and their magazines also regarded themselves as initiators of contact between liberal American and European elites. They hoped to serve as cultural brokers and peace-makers beyond the official diplomatic corps. Convinced that all like-minded Europeans, especially in England, were also interested in a vibrant mutual culture of transatlantic communication, they distanced themselves from the so-called herds and the mob, because they were said to be hostile to the other continent. Resembling Walter Lippmann’s concerns about democracy in mass society and in the age of complicated politics,\textsuperscript{42} the wide-spread skepticism of democracy at that time also advanced transatlantic elite concepts.

In some ways, European anti-Americanism became the driving force behind numerous American disputes about the old continent. There were reports on translated European books that were very critical of the U.S.\textsuperscript{43} In quality magazines, headlines such as “Does England Dislike America?”,\textsuperscript{44} “Does France Hate America?”,\textsuperscript{45} or “What’s Wrong with the United States?”,\textsuperscript{46} appeared. American liberals asked: Why is it that Europe hates us? “Uncle Shylock we are called,” lamented the American historian Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker. In Europe, America was seen as the most hated nation according to economist and Presbyterian lay-man Francis Miller, historian Helen Hill, and George E. Catlin, an Englishman who taught in the U.S. for many years.\textsuperscript{47} American neurologist Joseph Collins published his observation in Harper’s Magazine that other nations considered the Americans as if they were a
“conglomeration of business wizards, unbeatable polo-players, peerless cup-defenders, whose days are given over to making money.” 48 Many commentators suggested that Europeans were angry about the decline of their own continent and their diminishing influence on America and that this was why they embraced anti-Americanism. The Southern writer John Crowe Ransom confirmed the revulsion in the European public mind and was shocked by the “almost solid barrier of hostility.” 49 American social philosopher and Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr stated: “Any cursory glance at the journals of Europe must convince even the most heedless American that tides of hatred, mixed with envy, are rising against us in the world.” 50 In these debates, American liberals supposed that European anti-Americanism was informed by a developing European identity. Stefan Zweig was characterized as one of the militant Europeans while Thomas Mann was said to be a convinced cultural Europeanist. 51 In 1927, John Dewey similarly stated in Harper’s Magazine that “literary folk” in Europe were developing a consciousness for a “culture which is distinctively European.” In his view, there was an increasing number of Europeans who began to consider European culture a precious culture that needed to be defended in the face of “the invasion of a new form of barbarism issuing from the United States.” 52

There were a lot of reasons why European anti-Americanism was rising in the 1920s. European cultural conservatives feared the Americanization of culture and daily life while other Europeans criticized an attitude ostensibly widespread among Americans, namely to regard their country “as an exception to the rules which he would like to see enforced upon others.” 53 English columnists were shocked by the vulgarity of the Americans, especially as tourists in Britain. Politically interested people did not agree with the hardline position of Republican administrations, who insisted on the repayment of the Allies’ war debts despite protective U.S. import tariffs that exacerbated European exports. And while it is true that Charles Lindbergh’s transatlantic flight in May 1927 positively affected Europeans’ opinion of the U.S., the executions of Italian-born anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti on charges of murder with robbery some months later, in August 1927, once again stirred negative feeling towards America.

“We are not so bad” 54 and have a great future was one of the deliberately dispassionate responses from American liberals. The authors of several articles stressed that Americans invented many things and

49 Ransom, “Reconstructed,” 222.
contributed to modern civilization through peace, democracy, liberty, science, and prosperity as well as the standard for cleanliness and the art of engineering. Moreover, they emphasized that Europe also had its dark and decadent sides.

European anti-Americanism also supported and strengthened the trend in the U.S. to Americanize America, not least by means of its own interpretation of democracy and modern civilization. Various efforts were made to Americanize many other social and cultural phenomena of the 1920s, including space and time. Meanwhile notions of a typically American national character were often combined with the belief in a “single national mind,” for instance when anthropologist Constance Rourke published a book on what she considered typical American humor.

In his frontier thesis of 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner had emphasized the transformation process based on “freehold property” that Americanized the European settlers in the West and led to an allegedly democratic and civilized culture that became the typical American way of life. In arguing this, Turner and other influential opinion leaders not only marginalized the violence of everyday life in the American West, but also downplayed the relevance of the European Enlightenment for the development of U.S. democracy and civilization — a civilization that was said to be in contrast to the wilderness as well as to “Indian barbarism.” Whereas Turner Americanized the settlers’ culture in the past, the influential historian Charles A. Beard (and other magazine writers) Americanized both the present and the future. Beard declared the Americans “the people of destiny” and the present as an “age of machine” that implied U.S. leadership over Europe.
time, expressed this kind of American emancipation from Europe by saying: “At the precise historic moment when the question who should command the machine age, hung in the balance, America went into high; Europe went into reverse.”

The liberals’ defense of America against European anti-Americanism and the general trends to Americanize America did, however, not diminish their criticism of their own country, which culminated in a kind of “negative Americanism.” Thus H.L. Mencken, the well-known journalist and cultural nationalist, sharply criticized American society, putting the blame on the negative legacy of frontier culture, the genteel tradition, and puritan moralism. Simultaneously, liberal critics defended American vitality and American creative capacities in the present and the future, seeing America as “on the way up.” In this optimistic sense American writer John Peale Bishop stated already in 1925: “[W]e certainly in the last ten years become more alive to our own qualities and more anxious for their accurate definition — a state of mind — which does not in the last preclude a certain pride in whatever stands the test of being indubitably our own.”

Liberal cultural nationalists emphasized European difference and considered transatlantic differences as established fact. They were eager to determine the otherness of each side of the Atlantic by decoding national stereotypes on both continents in order to place the mutual otherness on a solid foundation. They wanted the U.S. to achieve a self-confident, but also self-critical national awareness grounded in a consensus about American difference. Contrasting the two continents, John Dewey, for example, self-confidently praised the American people’s special inclination for material things, for the body, and for social practices. Therefore, he defined American democracy primarily as “a way of life, social and individual.” Due to the emphasis on otherness, Europe lost its role as a shining example for America.

The diverse efforts to Americanize America, based on the creed of transatlantic difference, were not the only transatlantic concepts circulating at the time, however. Although scarcely discussed in the liberal journals of the 1920s, two other concepts gradually developed in this period and therefore should be briefly mentioned: First, in their book *The Giant of the Western World*, published in 1930, the liberals Francis Miller and Helen Hill did not stress American otherness, but predicted the development of a common *North Atlantic Civilization*. The communality of this imagined North Atlantic civilization was supposed to

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emerge not only through common norms and values, but also through material goods and a peaceful Americanization of the European way of life, not least via Americanized consumerism. This concept was compatible with the widespread liberal notion that worldwide wealth, democracy, and peace could only be achieved through American missions — through missions conceptualized as peaceful penetrations of other nations in the spirit of classic American civic and political virtues.

The second concept was that of “Western Civilization” (later: “Western Civ”) courses for colleges, which gradually developed in the 1920s — remarkably parallel to the introduction of American Studies. In 1921, at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, AHA President Charles Homer Haskins advocated for a closer interlocking of European and American histories. This plea fell on fertile ground among historians. Ten years later, in 1931, Carlton J.H. Hayes, professor at Columbia University, published a text book that soon circulated in colleges and universities. While liberal magazines’ authors searched for an authentic America by stressing transatlantic differences, the creators of the “Western Civilization” courses emphasized the American-European commonality of values and norms based on a common history. Europe was seen as the “seat of that high civilization which we call ‘western,’ — which has come to be the distinctive civilization of the American continents as well as of Europe.” The concept of Western Civilization incorporated European history in a grand, common European-American narrative. In doing so, the history of Europe was somehow “nostrified.” Simultaneously, the histories of Europe and the U.S. were embedded in a construct of common identity of the West, Western civilization, and the Western world. It was this construct that was considered to deserve worldwide superiority. This grand common historical narrative was based on the assumption of historical progress, allowing authors and readers to conclude that this process had resulted in the rise and hegemony of the United States in the present and future within the West — and as main power of the West. The idea of a common West, also supported by many refugees from Nazi Germany, legitimized the “Western Civilization” courses that finally reached their peak during the first decade of the cold war. Later, beginning in the 1960s, their European-centered focus was heavily criticized.

Conclusion
Cultural nationalism was closely connected to the concept of transatlantic otherness and the project of strong transatlantic communication, which was buoyed by the hope of creating a powerful network


of transatlantic elites and intellectuals that would help to make the world better and more peaceful.

The liberal “quality magazines” provided not only a transatlantic forum for discussion, but also a forum for domestic nation building processes in an era of fundamental upheavals in American society. In this double forum, they generated public knowledge on current issues, discussed the status of America, and discussed modern art, literature, theatre, music, and architecture. European anti-Americanism strongly stimulated the American search for national identity in the pages of these magazines; at the same time, homegrown nation-building in art and literature was considered a high-brow, mostly male and white project.

The concept of transatlantic difference was compatible with various other concepts, such as the briefly mentioned populist approach of the so-called regionalists. The strong trend of cultural nationalism in the U.S. during the early twentieth century was not an exclusively American phenomenon. Rather, cultural nationalism was an inherent part of domestic nation-building processes in many countries at the time — and continues to surface to the present day. Examples for the latter are the French Front National and the German Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). Their anti-liberal ideas of national identities are based on notions of a national culture. However, as more or less culturally “closed shops,” they convey very different messages compared with those of the American liberals during the early twentieth century: Beyond their unconcerned or even chauvinistic attitude towards women and non-whites, American liberal cultural nationalists and artists were often closely linked to an open-minded, reform-oriented civic nationalism. As a result, cultural nationalism has a polyvalent shape and a high degree of multi-compatibility with other ideas and concepts, including right-wing populism in the past and present.

Even as liberal cultural nationalists eagerly searched for an original American art and literature of high or even preeminent quality, they tended to underestimate American achievements in art and literature of the time, although they offered sophisticated reviews of both American and foreign works of art just in this period. Although there was some skepticism already in the 1920s, the anachronistic idea of creating a “singular national art” in modern times only gradually weakened since the 1930s — not least due to the European avant-garde-immigrants — until the Abstract Expressionists of the (late) 1940s decisively defined their art as international.

The peculiarities of American cultural nationalism in the early twentieth century can only be understood as a product of the colonial experience and its aftermath, which found expression in a specific “late colonial mentality.” Although the political liberation of the U.S. from its colonial status had occurred a long time ago, the feeling of artistic and cultural dependence on Europe, and especially England, endured. In this respect, America was caught in a “period of transition” characterized by an unbalanced condition of uncertainty and self-empowerment. The more the U.S. gained economic and political power, the more cultural dependence was rejected. Most liberals did not regard their search for genuine art as an attack on England or Europe, but rather, as the well-known cultural nationalist Waldo Frank had put it in 1919, as a plea for America.

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68 Waldo Frank, Our America (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), 163.
LIBERALISM AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM IN THE UNITED STATES, 1900-1930: A COMMENT

COMMENT ON THE 30TH ANNUAL LECTURE OF THE GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 10, 2016

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Focusing on the period when the United States emerged as a global power, Professor von Saldern offers us a series of challenges that reveal significant complications in our usual way of thinking about several key American intellectuals as liberal cultural nationalists. The history of the Progressive Era, coincident with the rise of American power, has generally been seen as liberal in the modern sense. We now recognize that in that era the idea of national inclusion was troubled, especially with respect to racial practices and nativism. But that is not the topic discussed here. Von Saldern’s focus is on educated, mostly Northeast-based magazines and their contributors.

While Professor von Saldern is aware of these limitations, she chooses to focus mainly on culture and politics in roughly the first third of the twentieth century. Hers is a welcome intervention — and a telling one. She makes her points well, and the range of her research and her command of a vast amount of material suggests that this is a condensed version of a much larger, doubtless more elaborate project.

She begins with the magazines that stimulated many of the debates to come. As she rightly points out, these magazines connected intellectuals and introduced their work to wider circles. It was a great era of magazine journalism, and magazines were flourishing. Some were short-lived, but others, like the principal ones she names — The Atlantic, The Nation, Harpers, and The New Republic — have managed to last for a long time.

Early in the lecture, with subsequent reminders, she points out that there were two weaknesses in American literary culture: it was quite thin sometimes, and it worried too much about its relation to European culture, particularly when copying it, thus weakening home-grown thinking. George Santayana made much the same point in 1911 in a famous Berkeley lecture, delivered on his way out of the United States never to return — “The Genteel Tradition in American
But he missed much that historiography in our time energetically addresses and appreciates: minority cultures, not only Afro-American arts and culture, but the emergent ethnic writers of the time, which Henry James, somewhat surprisingly, had positively described as part of a day on New York’s Lower East Side.²

Professor von Saldern points out that there were a number of women contributing to the magazines she examined, and this is an important point. There was indeed a dramatic increase in women journalists who were writing about issues of public interest in those years. Some were famous, as von Saldern indicates, for “muckraking” and “peacemaking.” I assume she is referring to Ida Tarbell and Jane Addams, although they are not named, and I wish she had named more women writers in her presentation.

Von Saldern carefully read and analyzed an impressively broad set of sources in the interest of getting a sense of the dimensions of American national culture. It is fair to say that the results are critical and compelling: her findings reveal a core representative of her primary source base indicating the virtues and limits of a national democratic culture. She also speaks particularly to the influence of British culture; clearly she would prefer that Americans liberated themselves more from their British origins.

In fact, I think that Anglophilia in American public culture not only applies to literature. The long tradition of emulating and articulating British cultural standards may have been partly a strategy at the time to deny or hide an emerging multicultural America. In the English language and cultural norms, the nation’s anxious intellectual elite found a means to maintain a distance to the new immigrants, the marginalized Native Americans, and African Americans. To that end they sustained the legacy of English cultural forms that had been reinforced by the post-colonial Anglo-American informal geopolitical and economic alliance from 1812 to World War I.

This legacy had deep diplomatic and conceptual roots in the peace treaty of 1783, which ended the Revolutionary War on quite generous terms. This was intended by Lord Shelburne, who fell from grace at least partly because the English political class misread his geopolitical strategy as undue generosity. Shelburne was a close student of Adam Smith, and that inclined him to link the two nations in commerce, including investment as much as trade. Events unfolding in the nineteenth century showed him to have been prescient.
Anglo-American trade on a global scale was protected by the British navy, while American cotton fed the British factories and British capital flowed into the U.S. until 1919. Then came the big shift: In the nineteenth century the United States was the world’s largest debtor nation, with British banks holding a great part of it, but after the First World War the United States had become the world’s largest creditor nation. The United States then recognized itself as a world power, and that would have cultural implications.

A generalization of the national culture of the United States is difficult to grasp from a European perspective. The institutional aspects of national culture such as one might see in Europe were missing in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was a pluralist and localist society with no national school system, no national curriculum, and no national body of “immortals” such as the Académie Française, for example. There never was a national program for “making Americans” such as Eugen Weber describes for France in his compelling book, Peasants into Frenchmen (1976). With no center, there is a huge burden on those who make and critique American culture. American national culture is a product of commerce rather than the state.

New York City represents one of the American culture zones I can be more specific about, as I have repeatedly focused on the city in my research. (Chicago would also support my point, and, to a lesser extent, the San Francisco region as well. Boston would not.) From that perspective, the story Professor von Saldern tells needs to be understood as having two distinct phases, each relating differently to British and European culture. There was a gradual shift that included Germany and France as well as Britain. But the big shift, increasingly apparent after World War I, is the embrace of America as the embodiment of modernity, something recognized more quickly by foreigners — most notably Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp during the war and afterwards. For Picabia New York was “the futurist city … it expresses in its architecture, its life, its spirit, the modern thought.”

After the war, Americans were more open to continental developments, and cultural ties to Britain weakened. More importantly, there was a new appraisal of America — the home of skyscrapers and mass production and a distinctly American art. Alfred Stieglitz reveals this shift. His prewar gallery brought European modernism...
Likewise, Martha Graham, the pioneer of modern dance, increasingly turns to the land, to American space, notably with *Primitive Mysteries* (1931), inspired by the southwest and Hispanic-Indian religious rituals there, and later with *Appalachian Spring* (1944). During the same period Stieglitz turned to the study of American skyscrapers and American space/nature, including his famous cloud photos. Georgia O’Keefe, who never looked to Europe, also explored the skyscraper aesthetic, but increasingly and then wholly turned to American space after moving to New Mexico. And in the interwar years Mark Twain, whose American stories were linguistically and topically far from British literature, became recognized in academe.

By emphasizing this turn by artists and intellectuals from the Atlantic to the continent, with a new appreciation of American history and culture, I am not suggesting American exceptionalism. Von Saldern suggests that it is in this period that American exceptionalism emerged. Nationalism was surely heightened, but not exceptionalism. They are two quite different categories: nationalism is replicated and integrated into the world of nations with formal equality, while exceptionalism literally means against the rule or norm. Daniel Rodgers has made quite a strong argument for the post-World War II emergence of exceptionalism. In fact, he traces the phrase to Joseph Stalin, in 1929, when American Communist Party leaders made excuses that revolution was more difficult in the United States. He accused them of the sin of “exceptionalism,” anathema to him, since his theory of global revolution depended upon a universalist theory of history.

Professor von Saldern discusses the Jewish philosopher Horace Kallen, and I would like to conclude by building on her discussion. He leaned toward a cosmopolitan America, using the image of the fingers on the hand, unified but distinct. Most critiques of him find the separation implied by separate fingers problematic. But with a little imagination the palm could imply a diverse and democratic public sphere. Moreover, he was, admittedly, thinking of immigrants, specifically Jews. But he was not unaware of the question of race. Kallen and Alain Locke, a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance whom Professor von Saldern also discusses, conducted a nearly life-long discussion of race and ethnicity in America. This dialogue began face-to-face while they were students at Harvard, then continued at Oxford and later in the U.S. for the greater part of their lives. They

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6 In fact, during this period public discussion of Jews, as well as African Americans, tended to refer to them as members of a “race.”
came close to a mutual and viable understanding and agenda, but never closed the circle of their discussions. Nor have we yet.

As a nation, the current status of liberalism as a project is unclear, especially after the recent election. It casts doubt on our commitment to our historical challenge of racism. Racism, the founding sin of the United States, remains a challenge to both liberalism and nationalism.

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Lectures given on the Day of German Unity provide an opportunity to take stock of research on the recent past. As we all know, nothing is as changeable as the past, and as our distance from the “Miracle of 1989” and the surprising end of Germany’s division grows, our perspective on events of nearly a generation ago is continuously shifting. Perhaps the most important consideration when representing the past and trying to make sense of it concerns the division in the flow of time into separate units and the weighing of continuity and change. Therefore, the core question of my talk today is this: does October 3, 1990, represent a break between two eras or even, as people at the time thought, the defining moment of the twentieth century and its turn to a new century?

Historical epochs, as the historian Gustav Droysen noted 150 years ago, are only conventions, Betrachtungsformen in his language, by which he meant that epochs are points of view, imposed by historians, not attributes of the world and of the past itself. The search for turning points in modernity, with its linear conception of time, stems from the desire to impose order on the continuous flow of time. It is not only the guests in Thomas Mann’s “Magic Mountain” who are reluctant to acknowledge, and I quote Hans Castorp, the novel’s protagonist, that time has “no sense of goals, segments, measurements” and wish that the clock might stop “for a moment or at least give some tiny signal that something had been accomplished.”¹ In the experience of political ruptures, military decisions, and social revolutions, the succession of epochs in human history becomes visible along with a glimpse of the future. On September 20, 1792, Goethe tried to cheer up a group of Prussian officers who were despondent and desperate after the Prussian-Austrian forces’ defeat by the army of French volunteers at Chalons-sur-Mér. “From here today, a new era in world history begins,” he told them, “and you can say that you were present.”²

In the following reflections I will, first, make a case for the thesis that 1990 was indeed a historical turning point; in the second section, I

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I. 1990: A Self-Evident Break between Eras

The claim that 1990 marks a break between two eras is not simply an empirically derived fact, but rests on contemporary and later interpretation. Nevertheless, there are strong arguments to support the thesis that 1990 represents an indisputable break between two eras. All the signs of historical upheaval were evident in this epochal year. First, there was the rapidly growing force and acceleration of events that, in a matter of months, days, or even hours, brought about changes in conditions that had been immobile and impervious to change for years or even decades. In early 1989, Erich Honecker was in a position to say that the Berlin Wall would still be standing in fifty years, a hundred years if the reasons for its existence had not yet been eliminated. Later that year, the Wall was reduced to dust by souvenir hunters.

The fact that the caesura of 1990 transformed Germany into a nation state with secure and politically unchallenged borders after forty years of division, thereby finally relegating World War II to the past, suggests its epochal character even more strongly. The scope of the consequences of 1990, felt far beyond Germany, also attests to the importance of this turning point. It stands at the center of the world-historical upheaval of 1989/1991, which so surprisingly brought to an end the division of the world into two opposing camps — a division that had once been declared permanent. That upheaval signaled the end of the “century of ideology” and of the socialist experiment under Soviet dominance, and it seemed to have universalized the ideas of the West and the principles of freedom, the rule of law, and free market economics.

The field of contemporary history has gone along with this assessment of 1989/90 as an epochal turning point. Francis Fukuyama’s provocative contention that the end of the competition between the capitalist and the communist systems signaled the end of history was an overenthusiastic prophecy, which was soon quoted only by critics who rejected Fukuyama’s argument. Nonetheless, it is generally accepted that 1990 saw not only the end of the division of Germany and of central Europe, but also of the Cold War, which had shaped the lives of people across the globe for forty years. The upheaval of 1989/1990

will then challenge this thesis; and, finally, I will shift the question from history to historiography.

ended, as Hermann Weber noted, the “seventy-year history of German communism,” and transformed a radical counter-project to the bourgeois capitalist social order into a fixed historical entity. From 1990 on, the “central categories and structural defects” of the East German counter-project — for example, its radicalism, its orientation toward violence, its ideological rigidity, its intolerance, its faith in progress, and its obsession with power — can be discussed from a historical perspective, having lost their political power and partly even their political meaning.4

“1989/1990” stands for the end of a century-long epoch that is rapidly becoming more foreign to us with each passing year. This second “world of yesterday,” to borrow a phrase from Stefan Zweig, extends from 1917/1918 to 1989/1990 and encompasses the short twentieth century, a century of obsessive categorization, of radical inclusion and exclusion. It is the century of political faiths that take as their core the friend/enemy distinction Carl Schmitt envisioned. It is the century of all-encompassing solutions and of vast projects and visions for the redemption of humankind. It is the century, as Gerd Koenen put it, of “great songs.” It is the century of rival, mutually exclusive socio-political world orders, a century characterized, with varying degrees of intensity, by the formation of ideological camps but at the same time a century aware of the artificiality of this state of affairs.

The breaks that mark the beginning and end of this “age of extremes,” as Eric Hobsbawm dubbed it, correspond to one another. The “primordial catastrophe” of the First World War, with its apocalyptic violence and barbarism, destroyed the secular confidence in development, in tradition and progress, which were considered the characteristics of modernity. As a result of the war, the struggle for order in a contingent world became a hallmark of the twentieth century. Indeed, the desire for order became an obsession. At the end of this century, the long conflict between dictatorship and democracy, between fascism and communism, between totalitarianism and pluralism was brought to a close not by external force but rather by the internal collapse of the communist project. The central conflict of the twentieth century gave way to a new era in international politics and to new lines of division that created entirely new alliances and conflicts.

The era between the upheavals of 1917/1918 and 1989/1990, marked by competition between liberalism, fascism, and communism,

appears in hindsight to be the era of classical modernity. It defined its chiliastic projects as a “Third Reich” and a “new order,” both distinguished from the so-called “system period” of the Weimar Republic and Wall Street capitalism. At the end of the twentieth century the totalitarian experiments were no longer in existence. But the competing social models, the “free market” or “social market” systems, were in poor shape. In the Federal Republic of Germany, an unprecedented, incredibly radical restructuring of the social welfare system was being carried out against the backdrop of a loss of confidence in the policies of all political parties, which we experience more strongly every year, and which is generally not expressed in terms of socio-political critique, as it was in earlier times. The resulting political uncertainty did not follow ideological lines. The clear preference for uncharismatic politicians and for the confusion of a political landscape with more parties but fewer substantive options suggests that with the upheaval of 1989/1990 we entered into an uncertain post-ideological age. In this age, ideological systems are no longer in competition. Rather, confusing amalgamations have developed that can no longer be categorized as left or right or as progressive or reactionary.

Historians of contemporary Germany and Europe had to adjust to the end of European communism as a governing power. The end of communist rule opened new perspectives on the recent past, and it provided a seemingly obvious end point to historical developments. The appearance of an unpredicted and unforeseeable end point, in turn, challenged contemporary historians to rethink their understanding of the world from a new teleological perspective. East Germans who were adults at the time were deeply unsettled by the collapse of the socialist experiment and the East German states’ all-encompassing incorporation into the Western social order. The rapid, unopposed collapse of Socialist Unity Party (SED) rule in late 1989 and early 1990 was an extraordinary event in the most literal sense of the term. It exploded the framework of political thinking, it exceeded the public’s imagination, and it stultified the predictions of social scientists, above all in the field of GDR studies. A new generation of political scientists adopted this judgment and quickly learned to dismiss this failure with a shake of the head, explaining it away as the result of a regrettable moral indifference or of professional myopia or even blindness. But it was more. It would have been more appropriate to recognize that all of us — all of us who were active in scholarship or politics before and after 1989/1990 — were the fortunate victims of an upheaval of world historical significance that unfolded beyond

5 See the assessment of Gert-Joachim Glaßner, who stated in 1988: “In the 15 years of the Honecker era, the GDR has increased its international importance and inner stability.” *Die DDR in der Ära Honecker. Politik — Kultur — Gesellschaft.* (Opladen, 1988), 11. A year later the same author wrote that the GDR sought to “consolidate its achievements and to set the course for a crisis-free development of GDR society until the turn of the century. In this effort it can, not without reason, self-confidently take stock of the Honecker era.” Gert-Joachim Glaßner, *Die andere deutsche Republik. Gesellschaft und Politik in der DDR* (Opladen, 1989), 73. Even Zbigniew Brzezinski in his 1989 reckoning with the “failed communist experiment” singled out the GDR as the sole Eastern bloc state that still had relative stability and the potential for economic development. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Das gescheiterte Experiment: Der Untergang der kommunistischen Systeme* (Vienna, 1989), 239.
our political horizon. Historical ruptures like 1789 or 1989 create new thought horizons and vanishing points for historical thinking that we can celebrate, but that were not foreseeable from a scholarly perspective or from the experience of everyday life.

The world-historical rupture of 1989/1990 marks a turning point between eras in Germany and Europe because it abolished the previous order of things. It set new normative standards for thought and action that could not have developed under the previous circumstances. It created an inescapable point of view, a point of reference that quickly transformed the unforeseeable into the self-evidently normal. No one would any longer dispute the progressive decline of the East German economy, the terminal erosion of communism or the unnaturalness of Germany’s division. If we want to make the SED leadership look hopelessly ridiculous, we need only quote once again Erich Honecker’s January 1989 claim that the Berlin Wall would still be standing for a whole century.6 That this statement now strikes us as utterly absurd, but seemed entirely normal at the time, makes clear the epochal character of the break of 1989/1990 that still maintains its rank as an epochal turning point a quarter century later.

II. Relativizing the Break of 1990

Now let us consider the opposite argument. For decades, “1990” has been understood as the surprising and fortunate end of an era of war, violence, and dictatorship. But the further we move away from the beginning of the twenty-first century, the clearer it becomes that this view is one-sided, that it does not correspond or no longer corresponds to reality. The master narrative of the twentieth century’s happy end has on closer examination turned out to be more of a romantic myth than a plausible interpretation.

Initially, the upheaval of 1990 was perhaps epochal, but it was a sectoral rather than a total turnaround. For Germany, it was first of all a political turning point, a turning point in the history of power and governance. Moreover, it was a turning point that affected only one-third of a soon-to-be enlarged Federal Republic, namely the so-called Beitrittsgebiet, the accession territory. In Bavaria or the Rhineland, for example, social and political life carried on virtually unchanged. We can also ask whether 1989/1990 really ranks as an epochal turning point on the international level or whether the events of the following years call into question the actual depth of the rupture. There is no question about Germany and its unification or reunification: no

6 “Die Mauer wird in 50 und auch in 100 Jahren noch bestehen bleiben, wenn die dazu vorhandenen Gründe noch nicht beseitigt sind.” (Berlin, January 19, 1989)
one, not even in Germany’s leftist party, seriously wants a return to the GDR, let alone to a communist dictatorship. But on the global level, the euphoric assumption of the early 1990s that the remaining communist countries would sooner or later turn into liberal, free market societies has been refuted by the tenacious survival of the communist regimes of North Korea, Cuba, and, above all, China. And all indications suggest that we are witnessing a cultural roll-back in Russia that invokes czarist imperial tradition but also honors Stalin as the father of the Soviet Union’s victory in the Great Patriotic War.

1990 also looks less significant as a turning point when we look closer to home. Many trends and developments in Germany’s recent past were completely unaffected by the upheaval in Eastern Europe. The creation of the information society with the digital revolution, the transformation of the education system, demographic change, and the critical expansion of the social welfare system are all developments that began before and in some cases long before 1989/1990. They were certainly affected by the events of the fall of 1989, but their general direction remained unchanged. “Unity” remains a success in the political sphere rather than in the social one, and October 3, the Day of German Unity, is still “more an official than a national holiday in character,” as recent accounts have stated. The often traumatic hardship experienced in Eastern Germany during the transition period still does not feature much in public consciousness; it is commonly ignored and only rarely finds articulation. It was only after twenty years, with the “Third Generation East,” composed of those who were children when the Wall came down, that the hardship of that period became a topic of discussion at all. It took twenty-five years before the first exhibition focusing on the shock of transformation and the pressure to adapt that eastern Germany experienced on the way to unity was organized. I am referring to the German Historical Museum’s 2015/16 exhibition “Unification: German Society in Transition” or, as it was titled in German, “Alltag Einheit,” which generated such strong public interest that it was extended for several more months in 2016.

Only with the benefit of distance will we be able to grasp the full scope of how rocky the road to internal unity was — and how often it led to a dead end. Only a few years later than eastern Germany, western Germany also saw its accustomed way of life fundamentally changed — in this case by globalization, digitalization, and the media revolution. Thus we can speak of intertwined turning points in a doubly divided

history in many respects: as my colleague Frank Bösch has argued, after 1990 the neo-liberal transformation of socialist societies also led to delayed, staggered “co-transformations” in the West. 

Our growing temporal distance relativizes the break of 1990 in a much more fundamental way. Doubts have arisen not only about the extent of its reach but also, and more seriously, about the master narrative associated with it, about the interpretations of contemporary history bound up with that break. Those who experienced the upheavals of 1989/1990 saw them as a welcome end to the apocalyptic “century of extremes” (Eric Hobsbawm) and declared democracy the “surprise victor” in the competition between socio-political systems (Hans-Günter Hockerts). But, by the early twenty-first century, the writing was on the wall. Images of the celebration of German unification on October 3, 1990 suddenly stood in contrast to the images of horror from the attack on Western values on September 11, 2001. The threat of global terrorism that triggered a new sense of fear and vulnerability, the collapse of states in the Middle East, and the refugee flows that have tested Europe: All these developments indicate that the master narrative of 1990 as a fortunate ending is a story that is not entirely false, yet also not entirely accurate. Our beloved story of how we arrived at German unity has acquired the patina of venerability, and repeating it anew every October 3rd has become an empty ritual. For an increasing number of Germans, the 1990s’ promise of freedom has been transformed into the threatening prospect of unleashed and uncontrollable globalization. Behind the fallen border fences of the Cold War lurk financial crises and waves of migrants.

Looking back today, 1990 increasingly appears to have been both a happy end and a bad start. For October 3, 1990 led not only to the enlargement of the European Union on May 1, 2004, but also to the British vote to leave the EU on June 23, 2016. The opening of the East-West border created a new North-South barrier. The end of the Cold War made possible a renaissance of martial violence on the front steps of the Western world and at its very heart, in New York as in London, Paris, and Brussels. Many of the courageous citizens who took to the streets of Leipzig in the Monday Demonstrations of 1989 and shook off the yoke of communist rule were soon back on the streets to protest because they saw themselves as the losers in a society that was drifting apart. They believed that society gave them freedom but robbed them of security. And twenty-five years later, a considerable number of formerly courageous

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citizens are using the epoch-making call for freedom first heard in 1989 to express hatred for all that is foreign and to demand that Germany seal itself off from the rest of the world. The declaration “We are the people!” — “Wir sind das Volk!” — lost its innocence when crowds shouted it outside of homes for asylum-seekers that had been set ablaze in Saxony and Mecklenburg. Behind the bright façade of the turning point of 1990, we now see a dark undercurrent, as political commentators have noted with irritation. As Europe found itself caught up in a refugee crisis in the summer of 2015, the Berlin newspaper Tagesspiegel ruminated: “Strangely enough, the fall of the Berlin Wall was not the beginning of freedom without borders but rather the starting point of a new era of fences.”

And in fact, the history of German unification and the end of Europe’s division is not solely a history of positive achievements. It is, at the same time, a history that has come with many burdens. The conflict in Ukraine and Russia’s annexation of Crimea raise the question whether, in the course of German unification and the Two-Plus-Four negotiations, the West had promised Moscow that NATO would not expand eastward. In 1990, the prospect of German dominance made Margaret Thatcher, François Mitterrand, and Giulio Andreotti firm opponents of German reunification, but in the end they were powerless to prevent it. In the past two years, first the Greek crisis and then the refugee crisis have again intensified resistance to Germany’s dominance in Europe, and we have all seen the many hostile cartoons of Chancellor Angela Merkel published in several countries of the EU.

Indeed, doesn’t the identity of today’s Federal Republic of Germany, built upon the happy end of the twentieth century, also have its darker side? The Germany of this year’s European crisis, the Germany, as Herfried Münkler put it earlier this year, that is “a hegemon highly vulnerable on account of its past”? Heinrich August Winkler has argued in even more emphatic terms. He warned of a German “special morality” and “self-singularization” in the refugee crisis that he attributes to Germans’ specific way of dealing with the burden of its past. Traces of this reading of the past can also be found in recent commentaries on the anniversary of the compassionate change in Germany’s refugee policy. Referring to the so-called historical lesson Germany had learned, and thus implicitly proving Winkler’s argument, a German journalist wrote:

10 Nik Afanasjew, “Mauert sich Europa ein?,” Berliner Tagespiegel, August 30, 2015.
As Angela Merkel, with admirable statesmanship, demonstrated humaneness and empathy and invited the masses of migrants stuck in the Balkans to come to Germany, the country that invented genocide showed itself to be friendly and open. Yes, the chancellor invited the people. She did so to prevent a looming humanitarian crisis. That is how wonderful Germany can be.\footnote{Andreas Richter, “Teutonisches Wehklagen,” Mittelbadische Zeitung, August 27, 2016.}

Nonetheless, there is good reason to find Winkler’s warning about a new German \textit{Sonderweg} — a German “special path” — narrow-minded and obstinate. It is perhaps precisely the opposite of the Federal Republic’s historically based understanding of itself as a practitioner of “soft power.” But Merkel’s declaration “Wir schaffen das!” — or “Yes we can!” — is clearly rooted in the generationally based narrative of a successfully managed breakthrough to unity and freedom in 1989. Powerfully inclusive on the one hand, hopelessly out of touch with reality on the other, Merkel’s declaration captures the Janus-like character of the break of 1990, the historical status of a historical triumph of good over evil that has become doubtful in retrospect.

Today, the contemporary history of Germany is increasingly understood to be less a sequel to the era of dictatorship than a prehistory of the constellation of present-day problems, as Hans Günter Hockerts and others have recently argued.\footnote{Hans Günter Hockerts, Thomas Raithel, Thomas Schlemmer, eds., \textit{Die Anfänge der Gegenwart. Umbrüche in Westeuropa nach dem Boom} (Munich, 2014).} Historians of the recent past thus cannot avoid putting the upheaval of 1989-1990 in relation to the continuities that lay behind it, and we must take into account continuities along with the ruptures that came with the upheaval of 1989/1990. The continuing wave of migration to Germany unavoidably creates new historical points of reference for examining present-day issues. When, for example, colleagues at the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung are planning a conference on migration in contemporary history these days, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the completion of German national unity does not play an important role. A much more interesting topic in this context would be the odd joint effort of the Federal Republic and the GDR during the refugee crisis of 1985/1986. Do we still remember that back then the West German government supplicated the SED to be a good neighbor when about 20,000 refugees from Sri Lanka came to West-Berlin via East Berlin’s Schönefeld airport? Do we still know how desperately politicians from the SPD and the CDU urged the Politburo to seal up the hole in the Berlin Wall at the Friedrichstraße station? And doesn’t it ring a bell
that just a few years before the Wall came down, the West German public already feared that a flood of asylum-seekers would pour into the Federal Republic from West Berlin, and that there were the same loud calls for abolition of the right to asylum in the Federal Republic as we hear today?14

III. The Forgotten Break in Germans’ Use and Understanding of History

The debate on the extent and character of the caesura of 1990 will thus continue. In any event, it is doubtful that the field of contemporary history will settle the matter. We have to take into account that in the German use and understanding of history — or what Germans refer to as Geschichtskultur — the date “1990” stands for a decisive rupture. Not only are the facts changing in retrospect, but so too is the way we view them. Herein lies the greatest problem in trying to find a valid way to categorize 1990 and to integrate it within a broader understanding of the recent past. We do not think history as we did in 1990. The standards for looking back on the past in Germany have shifted dramatically, almost without anyone having noticed. Coming to terms with the past — Vergangenheitsbewältigung — has been transformed into assessing the past — Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung — and the project of explaining the past rationally has given way to an almost religious worship of the past, and that in turn has influenced our historical judgment of 1990.

The inflated talk after 1989 about redemptive memory,15 the idea that memorials recalling the dictatorial past are spaces of inner reform or even catharsis and destinations for “pilgrimages,”16 as well as ideas and phrases such as “historical mourning” or “historical reconciliation” point to a clear change in contemporary thinking about the cultural role of history in Germany and Europe. The idea of reasoned explanation is increasingly being mixed up with an impulse to treat the past as sacred.17 This is evident, first, in the pseudo-religious significance we attach to the objects and witnesses through which we enter into a relationship with the


The aura of historical authenticity has taken the place of divine authority, whether in the physical remnants of Germany’s dictatorships or in survivors’ testimonies. The “yearning for the original” manifests itself in the demand for films, both documentary and fictional, about the Nazi era and the GDR as well as in the many forms of historical reenactment and “living history.” It is similarly evident in the interest for “authentic objects” in museums, (private) collections, and archives or in “authentic sites”: the buildings, cityscapes, or memorials in which history appears to have taken material form. The magic power of the original remnant is evident in the fate of the Berlin Wall. In the winter of 1989/1990, it was rapidly disposed of with the aid of the countless citizens who hammered away at it, driven by the desire for souvenirs. Here is a clear example of the conversion of historical relics into hieratic relics, a hallmark of today’s cult of the original.

The power of this religious engagement with the past is manifested not only in sacred objects, but also in sacred spaces. This is evident in the move of memorial sites “from the periphery to the center” of Germany’s engagement with history since three major sites of Nazi terror in eastern Germany — the Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, and Sachsenhausen concentration camps — were declared national memorials by the Federal Republic in the wake of unification. Professional tour guides at such sites report how visitors always hope “to see what things were really like in those days.” The elevation of memorials to “holy sites” has been accompanied by “dark tourism” pilgrimages. Berlin’s “Historic Mile” appears to have as strong an appeal in this respect as the Obersalzberg, the former inner-German border or Peenemünde.

Beyond sacred objects and holy sites, contemporary German engagement with history converges with the sphere of religion in a third way. It also offers a promise of healing. The effort to address the legacy of dictatorship focuses on the question of “how pacification and reconciliation can be achieved within societies or between different states.” One important function of exhibitions about and memorial sites recalling East Germany’s communist dictatorship nowadays is to do justice to the victims of political persecution and to give their lives meaning by acknowledging their suffering. The demand that former Red Army and Stasi detention prisons be


22 Thus read the invitation to a lecture series titled “Transitional Justice. Erfahrungen mit der Aufarbeitung von staatlicher Gewalt und massiven Menschenrechtsverletzungen” and hosted by the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur in the winter semester 2015/16.
turned into memorials before the last of the former prisoners die still plays a significant role in German public debate.23

Our contemporary culture of remembrance offers a healing message not only for victims of past injustices, however. The offer is open to all willing to receive it. The hope for the most immediate experience of the past possible gives expression to the wish to make yesterday available for today, to prevent it from being lost to the past and to preserve it unfaded and imperishable. This desire is expressed in the very German concept of Aufarbeitung, which could be literally translated as “processing.” Semantically, it calls to mind the Freudian concept of “working through” a past traumatic experience to break free of it. But in current German usage, Aufarbeitung has precisely the opposite meaning. It is equated with the “duty of remembrance,” as the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in East Germany, the official body responsible for the Aufarbeitung of GDR history, defines its mission, for example. The promotion of an emotionally charged remembrance as a key element of German social self-understanding encroaches upon the régimes d’historicité, as analyzed by François Hartog, or, in other words, on the organization of the relationships between past, present, and future.24 The ascent of remembrance reflects the change of places between the future and the past that occurred in the final third of the twentieth century. Today, the historical look backwards is as much a comforting anchor of identity and point of orientation as the faith in a better future once was.

Given this situation, historians might still have good reason to doubt the epochal character of the break of 1990. But that will by no means diminish the attraction of 1990 in public historical consciousness. Fragments of the Wall were among Berlin’s most successful exports, and, conversely, the massive flow of history tourists to Berlin has contributed significantly to the upturn in the city’s economy in recent years. For the foreseeable future, 1990 will mark the historical point where the postwar era’s faith in progress finally gave way to our contemporary culture of remembrance, and this turning point will remain culturally significant for decades to come — as far as we can foresee today.

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I. Introduction

In November 1945, the head of the county land office in Gryfice, a small town in Western Pomerania in the northwest of Poland’s new postwar territories, reprimanded the mayors and village heads in his jurisdiction for that fall’s “sad” harvest campaign. “We cannot allow that the fall sowings [which were underway] have the same outcome,” he wrote.

Everyone has to be mindful of the fact that there will only be a Poland in the west in as much as the Poles can take over the west [as their possession, wstąpić w posiadanie]. But to take something over as one’s possession, that means to farm the land correctly. There cannot be space for fallow fields [Nie może być miejsca na odlogi]! Consequently each horse must work in the fields. Any other occupation is not just something criminal, it’s treason against one’s own fatherland.¹

As a state representative charged with the welfare of the impoverished incoming Polish settlers, the county head was, of course, worried about food production. Starvation and hunger-related diseases ran rampant in most of postwar central Europe, even in rural areas. To let arable land waste away was irresponsible. But the root of his anxiety lay elsewhere. If Poles did not farm the new land they were given, he recognized, the legitimacy of the Polish takeover of former German territory east of the Oder and Neisse rivers would be questioned. This concern was widely shared. Polish officials from all over the province pleaded with their superiors in Warsaw for help in the fields. Newspapers instructed arriving settlers to root out thistles covering large swaths of territory. Mastering, owning a territory, Polish officials understood, meant making the land yield harvests. But in the context of postwar chaos and Soviet military occupation competent land ownership proved elusive.

¹ Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie (APSz), Oddział w Międzyzdrojach, Gminna Rada Narodowa w Trzygłowie (GRNTrzg) 24, 28. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
My dissertation—the main arguments of which I present here—examines postwar daily life on the former landed estates of the Prussian nobility (the *Junker*) in Western Pomerania between the spring of 1945 and the summer of 1948. During this time, three groups of people—Germans, Poles, and Soviets—were forced to work alongside each other on the estates’ vast holdings and share space in the manor homes and workers’ quarters. Throughout this period, it remained unclear who actually owned the land in the region, who was responsible for tilling it, and who would invest in its future. I argue that in a space where borders were not definitively drawn and at a time when property and land had not been officially assigned to new owners, how people acted towards their surroundings mattered. In the countryside of northwestern Poland, landownership was not defined by international treaties or property titles but by whether or not a given population took proper care of the land. Thus, for the first three years after World War II, in the estate villages of the Prussian nobility, Germans and Poles watched each other relate to the land. They also watched a third group, the Soviet military force occupying the area, block most attempts at restoring the region’s agricultural economy. Germans—mostly (but not exclusively) the noble families who had farmed this land for generations—wanted to stay in Western Pomerania and preserve the land for future generations. Arriving Poles were aware that they had to return war-torn land to cultivation. The Red Army, in contrast, was not interested in looking after the land in Pomerania, but in exploiting the territory under its occupation for the short-term provision of troops. In the summer of 1948, after three years of military occupation, a large share of arable land in the province lay fallow, many fields not having been tended since 1944. The land, seemingly, belonged to no responsible owner. It was literally No Man’s Land.

II. Land and Landownership

Whereas most recent local studies of postwar central Europe have focused on urban environments, I examine the postwar transformations of the continent from a new angle: the countryside, where the majority of central Europeans still lived and worked after 1945. I focus specifically on a relationship that was altered by the war and the chaos that followed, the relationship between rural communities and their land.

The idea for this dissertation came to me when I read the diary of a Pomeranian estate owner, Käthe von Normann, who carefully recorded...
Käthe von Normann was clearly aware of the commission’s objectives. In a letter accompanying the submission of her diary, she noted to the historians,

Barkow was, by August ’46, cleared of all Germans; at the end the skilled workers were removed. Specific reports about current conditions there are not available. The estate in Barkow seems to have been turned into a state-owned farm. [...] Of the 2,000 acres of arable land belonging to the estate only 280 acres are being tilled. Root crops are not being harvested in time before the
winter frost arrives. The cemetery is completely overgrown.4

It was this letter that caught my attention. Her note confirmed what the Ministry’s efforts sought to demonstrate: that Polish farmers were incapable of properly tilling the land in Pomerania, and were thus not worthy of owning it. Poland should return this land if Polish farmers were not able to use it properly. But I also sensed that aside from pursuing this political agenda, von Normann’s letter simply revealed her as a landowner worried about the fate of her holdings. She knew of the damage that might result if hundreds of acres were left to lie fallow for too long; she knew when the sugar beet harvest needed to begin for the crop to be brought in before it was frozen in the ground. She knew because her and her husband’s families had resided and worked in Greifenberg County for generations. Von Normann, attached to this land and familiar with its challenges, was probably right in observing that new settlers struggled to farm her former fields properly. I wanted to find out more about this traumatic transition in the countryside: the profound loss of homeland suffered by rural German expellees and the overwhelming anxiety of newcomers who had to build an emotional attachment to this new land as well as acquire the competency to farm and own it.

Rural populations experienced forced displacement differently than did urban communities. For the German landowners and rural laborers who had worked the land for generations, it was painful to be forced off land they and their families had tended for decades, if not centuries. Certainly the inhabitants of Breslau (Wrocław) felt a deep sense of loss when they were forced from their urban homes, but the sense of loss was of a different character for those in the countryside who were pushed from their farms. For landowners, leaving their land meant ceasing to take care of something they had inherited from their ancestors and which they had planned to preserve for their heirs. It meant losing their calling, the (pre)occupation of their adult lives. New arrivals found it hard to develop the same kind of emotional attachment to an unfamiliar and foreign landscape. More importantly, as the Polish sociologist Zdzisław Mach has pointed out, relocated peasants lost not only their homes, but also the knowledge, cultivated and passed on in families for centuries, of how to grow crops in their specific environment.5

In the first few years after the war it remained unclear who exactly “owned” the land in Western Pomerania. If landownership meant

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4 Normann, 179, fn 52.
properly taking care of arable fields and forests, then Germans continued to act as owners long after the end of the war. On the former Junker estates, Germans still constituted the largest labor force. Even on farms where Germans were in the minority, Polish and Soviet authorities usually kept a few former German estate employees around in order to draw on their local knowledge. On paper, Poland was given the right to administer the Oder-Neisse territories, but between 1945 and 1947, the Soviet Army, not Poland, was the largest landowner in the region. This occupying army, however, hardly acted like a normal "landowner." Rather than taking care of the land, keeping it fertile and productive for the future, Soviet officers had their men exploit the territory for short-term gain, the temporary provision of their troops. Arriving Polish settlers felt overwhelmed by their assigned task, feeling they could never be successful landowners in this hostile environment. The land and climate were unfamiliar; material conditions prevented them from farming successfully on their own; and the Polish state was too strapped for resources to be of much help. This added greatly to Polish fears. Germans saw how the Poles and Soviets failed to act as proper stewards of the land. Poles, aware of this German judgment, grew increasingly anxious as the share of fallow fields in Western Pomerania increased. Soviet soldiers on the ground seemed poised to hand this wasteland back over to the Germans at the end of the “occupation.”

III. Postwar Settlements and Landownership in Western Poland

International agreements during and in the aftermath of the war did not yield final border settlements in central and Eastern Europe. At the Allies’ wartime conferences in Tehran (in November 1943) and Yalta (in February 1945), the American, British, and Soviet leaders had agreed in principle that Poland would be compensated for a significant loss of territory to Stalin in the east with portions of former German territories in the west. Germans living in those western territories would have to be expelled. But neither during these two conferences, nor during their August 1945 conference at Potsdam, did the Big Three agree on the final delimitation of the Polish-German border. Increasingly worried about large-scale population movements, the Western leaders were more comfortable postponing final territorial decisions to a future peace conference. They were also hesitant to cede too much German territory to postwar Poland. At the Yalta conference in February 1945, British Prime Minister
Winston Churchill had famously agreed to the expulsion of Germans from western Poland and for Poland to take over formerly Germany territory, “but not more than they wish or can manage. I do not wish to stuff the Polish goose until it dies of indigestion,” he told Stalin and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov. He reassured them that he was not afraid of a transfer of populations, “as long as it is in proportion to what the Poles can manage [...].” A peace conference never took place, and a Polish-German Border Treaty was not signed until 1990.

While Stalin wanted Poland to expand as far west as possible, the Soviets would impose clear limits on Polish sovereignty in former German lands. Following the Yalta decisions, the Soviet wartime leadership did formally recognize the Oder and Neisse rivers as the temporary border of postwar Poland. And, at this time, Stalin officially allowed the Polish government to set up civil administrations east of that border. But no one doubted that the new territories of western Poland were effectively under Soviet, not Polish, control. This was evident in the agreements signed between the provisional Polish government and Moscow. These agreements stipulated clearly that Poland did not own anything there. Rather, the Red Army had the right to treat all real estate, farming implements, and livestock available in the former German territories as its property. The Polish state only owned those landed estates, factories, warehouses, machines, and animals that individual leaders of the Soviet Army voluntarily handed over to the Polish civil authorities. In the countryside, this meant that the Red Army was the largest proprietor of livestock and agricultural machinery and by far the largest proprietor of land.

The presence of Red Army troops in the western territories was overwhelming. The Oder-Neisse lands were occupied territory. In the first few months after the war, Soviet soldiers were stationed in every Pomeranian town and in almost every village. In Western Pomerania in November 1945 (the first month Polish authorities could gather data), divisions of the Red Army occupied about half of the largest landed estates. Each estate housed a staff of ten to twenty Red Army soldiers. In addition to these military headquarters, about sixty thousand men belonging to the Soviet secret police moved in. The NKVD set up and staffed about seven or eight POW camps for German soldiers in the region. This meant that in a small rural town, Red Army soldiers often greatly outnumbered the civilian population. Polish historians estimate that during the first year after the war, through the summer of 1946,
at least 100,000 Red Army soldiers were stationed in the province. This state of affairs changed only gradually. Warsaw and Moscow signed a series of agreements that had the Red Army draw down troop numbers and give up most of their military headquarters by the end of 1945. But generally, the Red Army leadership did not heed these agreements. In May 1948, the Soviet military still occupied 177 large estates in the Szczecin Voivodeship comprising an area of over 80,000 hectares (just over 300 square miles). On the ground, Germans, Soviet soldiers, and arriving Polish settlers were not necessarily aware of the agreements re-ordering the boundaries of central Europe. This was certainly true for most of the first year after the war. In Western Pomerania, the population was completely cut off from the rest of the world as early as January 1945. Mail service and newspaper deliveries had stopped with the Soviet advance and did not resume after the armistice. Many Germans on the Pomeranian estates only learned about the armistice weeks after it had occurred. Germans and Polish villagers in the Pomeranian countryside lived day-to-day, their expectations for the future completely dependent on rumors they heard from Soviet and Polish military members or other travelers who happened to be passing through. This sense of isolation and the way in which their anxiety about the future waxed and waned with bits of information trickling in is especially apparent in diaries written during this period. In her daily notes, Käthe von Normann, the owner of Barkow, obsessed over every piece of news she heard and what it might mean for the future of her holdings. In mid-March 1945, a Soviet officer told her neighbor that all women would be sent to Russia and could return to their homes after four years. On May 7, just after she learned about Hitler’s death, von Normann heard that the future German border would run near

14 Machalek, Przeminany, 75-78.
Stolp in the north-east of the province. In early May, villagers in Barkow heard first that the Soviets would leave the region on May 20, 1945. Later that date was revised to May 27. Finally they were told that both Russians and Poles would withdraw from Pomerania for good in October. At the end of May, rumors circulated that Great Britain and the United States had declared war on the Soviet Union. Everyone in the village spent June waiting for “America” to help them. At the end of June, von Normann was plagued with worries that the Germans would be expelled from their homes, but her fears were allayed when she saw Poles rapidly leaving the village in droves. Some rumors suggested that all Germans (including women and children) would be deported to Siberia. People also believed that the territories east of the Oder and Neisse rivers would be occupied by the Soviet military for twenty years and then revert back to Germany. Interestingly, diary entries by villagers note that Soviet and Polish military personnel themselves never seemed quite sure what the future would hold. For the Germans, these rumors were a never-ending source of hope that they might remain in their homes.

For those German workers whom the Soviet military retained as the main workforce on the Junker estates past the main phase of the expulsions in 1946 and 1947, this hope remained alive well into the 1950s. For the new Polish arrivals to the region, circulating rumors about impending border revisions were of course deeply unsettling. In the absence of more reliable information, both groups closely scrutinized what was happening to the countryside around them to draw conclusions about their future on this land.

IV. Germans and Soviets

German memoirs and diaries of the Soviet invasion and occupation brim with the Germans’ moral outrage and pain over the destruction

15 Von Normann, 31, 86, 94, 105, 123, 125.

16 See also the diary by Ilse von Zadow who continued to live on her family’s estate in Dramburg county until the middle of 1946, Bundesarchiv (BA) Bayreuth, Ost-Dokumentation 2, Nr. 130, Kreis Dramburg, 376-378, 380, 387, 391.

17 See for example, Irma Gloor-Radünz, Mein Leben (Unterentfelden: unpublished manuscript, 2002).
of the landscape that surrounded them. As has been well documented, the civilian population of eastern Germany suffered a lot of violence during the Red Army invasion. In their recollections, Germans commented on this violence (including the sexual violence to which a large share of German women fell victim). They expected that the victors would exact revenge, but were outraged when Soviet soldiers acted with what seemed like excessive and unjustified brutality. Interestingly, when Soviet soldiers abused nature and the land around them, Germans were just as deeply affected. That the land should be punished seemed egregious and immoral to them.

Regrettably, it remains unclear what individual Soviet soldiers thought they were doing on the former estates of the Prussian nobility. Soviet soldiers appear in this account only as the Germans and Poles perceived them. There are two reasons for this. First, in 1950 Soviet authorities ordered the Polish government to destroy all Polish and Soviet materials relating to Red Army involvement in the administration of Poland’s new territories. Even the Russian archives to which Polish historians have had access do not provide a complete picture of the Soviet experience on the ground in postwar Pomerania. Second, it is difficult to find personal testimony from Soviet soldiers who were stationed specifically on Western Pomeranian estates during the postwar years. A number of recent studies have analyzed the experience of individual Soviet soldiers during World War II and their lives in occupied Germany afterwards. These studies have helped render the Red Army soldier, often a flat and cartoonish character in German and Polish accounts, more three-dimensional.


Questions about the role Soviet soldiers thought they were playing in the Pomeranian countryside—for example, whether they expected the land to become Polish or be handed back to the Germans—are important. But locating enough diaries or letters to reveal details about Soviet soldiers’ perceptions of their postwar life on Pomeranian estates exceeded the scope of my project.

Still, it is clear that the Soviet military, and the individual officers and soldiers that comprised it, were intent on extracting as much value as possible from the territory under their control. This meant that Red Army soldiers not only plundered Pomeranian homes, but that they also dismantled the basis for a functioning agricultural economy in the province. Villagers and estate owners alike understood that Soviet soldiers stole their personal belongings—china, fur coats, jewelry, or foodstuffs—either in revenge or for personal gain. More surprising to them was how, in the spring and summer of 1945, the Soviet military showed so little regard for the occupied land itself. Fritz Bonow, the son of a tractor driver from an estate near Köslin (Koszalin), was shocked at how one Soviet soldier tanned the hides of cows and sheep:

> He collected for this the bark of oak trees, which he stripped up to a height of three meters. Inevitably, the trees died after this, because without bark, the roots cannot supply the necessary sap for the growing of new shoots. In winter 1946/47, which was very cold, the dried-up trees were felled and used as firewood. For stoves and ovens the oaks were of course good fuel. [...] So many trees were felled that by spring one could see from afar across the whole forest, something which had never been the case before.²²

From the German perspective, the Soviet occupiers and Polish army units were thoughtlessly and wastefully ravaging the countryside, without regard for the long-term consequences. Most Pomeranians found this behavior heartbreaking and inexcusable.

The landscape began to look desolate, and not simply because the Soviet military did not care for it. Over the course of the first few months of the occupation, Soviet officers ordered all agricultural machinery to be shipped off, and so it gradually became impossible to take care of the estates’ vast holdings. “All the farm implements and machinery, anything that could be moved was moved and taken

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away in lorries and on trailers, driven by Russian soldiers,” Barbara Fox von Thadden, the daughter of an estate owner in Vahnerow, in Greifenberg county, remembered. She wondered how the Soviets were going to plant anything in the spring without any inventory or seed grain. At small train stations across Pomerania, Germans watched all kinds of machinery being loaded onto freight trains. A villager from Köslin County recalled that in his county all agricultural enterprises were robbed of their machinery: “From the most complicated machinery to the most primitive tool, everything was loaded up under the supervision of the Russian military and brought to the station in Pritzig. From here, everything was shipped off, after they had first shipped off sewing machines, grandfather clocks, […] pianos and upholstered furniture.”

A woman from Deutsch Krone County in southeastern Pomerania, whose family leased an estate in Schrotz, had to help load onto trucks all of the agricultural machinery, radios, and furniture from the estate.

More shocking to Pomeranians perhaps than the shipping off of agricultural machinery was that the Soviet army was also sending large herds of cattle either west towards Berlin, or east, all the way to Moscow. The villager from Köslin County remembered: “All livestock was being herded together. There were many villages in which one could not find a single head of cattle.” The von Thadden’s estate in Vahnerow was without a single animal by early spring 1945. Everyone in Pomerania remembered thousands of heads of cattle on Pomerania’s roads. “Often large herds of cattle would be driven by us, going east, then again going west. We couldn’t quite make sense out of this chaos [Wirrwarr],” remembers a countrywoman from eastern Pomerania. As she noticed, these cattle herds were organized only haphazardly. German women and men were ordered to accompany them, to feed the cattle on the road, and to make sure that the cows were milked. Barbara Fox von Thadden and Irma Radüntz, the von Thaddens’ kitchen maid, accompanied one such march westward. The animals’ suffering on these marches was immense. Max Heger, a farmer from a village in Belgard County who was ordered to go along with one of these herds, recalled that most of the cattle perished because the few accompanying Germans were unable to take proper care of the thousands of animals:

Because it was impossible to milk even just a small share of the cows, diseases and epidemics were soon rampant, for example milk fever, foot and mouth disease, and others.

We had to get fodder from the villages in the vicinity, but with thousands of cows even a primitive feeding was impossible. Hay and straw were thrown on the ground. Those in the front would get something, but those in the back pushed after them, and immediately everything was trampled into the ground. We had to build feed racks, we also had to ready shacks at a brickworks for the animals. But all these were only half measures. The cattle died *en masse*.²⁸

Most of those who were sent to tend to the cattle eventually made it home, but the Pomeranian villages lost forever the livestock necessary to sustain agriculture. Germans took the Soviets’ seemingly callous and careless attitude towards these animals as further proof that the Red Army did not care about the land it was occupying.

Soviet soldiers were not the only ones stripping the province of its livestock, resources, and farming equipment in the first year after the war. The Polish army also gathered cattle from some estates under its command and sent the animals to Warsaw. On June 18, 1945, Käthe von Normann watched “hundreds of sheep and cows” being transported to the Polish capital. “One can conclude from this,” she noted in her diary, “that the Poles also have to vacate this land again, but by taking our last cattle with them.”³⁹ The Polish historian Małgorzata Machałek points out that Polish civilians arriving in the province had drawn the same conclusions. Many central Polish enterprises and factories treated the province as one big tool shop. Poles arrived from the former Polish-German border areas and took furniture, household goods, machines, or cattle from estates and farms. Bands of so-called szabrownicy (the Polish word for plunderers) roamed the countryside, looking for machinery, horses, cows, and other valuables to be sold on the black markets of central and southern Poland.³⁰

To the Germans, this disregard for the needs of agriculture, the lack of foresight evidenced by all of this plunder, and the destruction of valuable agricultural resources, signaled that neither the Soviets nor the Poles were truly interested in staying in Pomerania. No responsible landowner would have treated the land, animals, or valuable machines in the way Germans saw them being treated. So, despite the horror they felt while watching sick and dying herds of cows trudging along country roads, Germans drew hope from the spectacle. In May 1945, Käthe von Normann was planning a new beginning at

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²⁹ Normann, 123-124.
³⁰ Machałek, 69.
home. She wrote in her diary: “As long as we can keep the land and the empty house! Somehow we’ll be able to rebuild everything!”

Soviet commanders on the large estates reinforced Germans’ sense that they were still the keepers of their natural surroundings. Because Red Army troops in Pomerania and those further west had to be provisioned, many officers did try to return the largest estates to working order by the summer and fall of 1945. This meant that all Germans still living on the estates and their adjoining villages had to work. The work was arduous; most workers were not fed sufficient rations, and many succumbed to diseases, weakened by hunger and fatigue. Still, the cyclical demands of agriculture and the daily encounter with a familiar environment also provided Germans with a sense of continuity.

The Pomeranian landscape itself gave Germans a sense of hope that first year after the war. First came spring. In women’s joyous descriptions of the budding trees and bushes in May and April 1945, one gets the sense that this recurring spectacle of nature was a source of comfort and succor to people whose lives had always been paced by the change of seasons. On April 29, 1945, a Sunday, Ilse von Zadow, an estate owner who continued living on her estate in Dramburg county through 1946, noted in her diary: “A glorious morning. [...] I take a walk around the park. The beeches are already green, the firs are blooming, and the cherry trees are also starting to bloom. Wonderful spring.”

Barbara Fox von Thadden remembered that the spring of 1945 was “so beautiful.” Her mother, Barbara von Thadden, insisted that the spring of 1945 was more beautiful than any other spring: “...spring began regardless of all the horrors. Was there ever such a spring? The grass greener than green, and everything, everything in bloom, wild and raging. [...]” She and her daughter remembered that the wisteria plants covering two sides of their house, which had never bloomed, were suddenly covered in blossoms filling the air with their scent.

That first summer, the idea that life would eventually return to normal must have been especially strong in rural communities when villagers began to see the fruits of their previous year’s labor grow and ripen. On the von Zitzewitz estate in the east of the province, German women joyfully donned their white harvest dresses and left singing to cut hay in the fields. “The scent of the ripening fields, the calm cycle of life between sowing and harvest welcomed us back into their peaceful midst. We almost forgot what had happened to our

31 Normann, 86.
32 Firs “bloom” (i.e. grow new cones) every six to ten years. BA Bayreuth, Ost-Dokumentation 2, Nr. 130, Kreis Dramburg, 377.
33 Fox, 91. BA Bayreuth, Ost-Dokumentation 2, Nr. 132, Kreis Greifenberg, 476.
the cousin of the estate’s owner recalled. Eva-Maria Mallasch, an East Prussian refugee, remembered that in the spring of 1945, when she and her mother arrived in Zimmerhausen, a village neighboring that of the von Thadden’s in Vahnerow, the German agricultural workers from the estate went about their usual business (almost) as if nothing had happened. In her memoirs she wrote how “[a]griculture, farming, has a simple regularity: at the right time one has to do the right and necessary thing. And so that this is going to work out here, the Polish administrator allows the Germans to continue working mostly under their own direction.” The Polish administrator, Jan Wojciechowski, a former forced laborer who had worked in Zimmerhausen’s gardens during the war, put the old foreman of the estate in charge, who in turn delegated each day’s work to the rest of the workers in the village. Mallasch remembered being amazed at how smoothly the estate continued to operate. The summer of 1945, she remembered, seemed to the workers on the estate like every other summer:

As fateful and consequential as this year may be from a political and a human perspective, the everyday in the countryside is as monotonous and uniform as the previous years, too. [...] On the estate, the hay harvest, then rapeseed and winter barley follow in quick succession, and then rye is ready. I am not a stranger to farming, but I am deeply impressed by how systematically and practically each chore is undertaken and how the highest degree of efficiency is achieved.\textsuperscript{35}

Zimmerhausen might have been an exception. But there was a widespread sense in the first year after the war that despite the hardships they endured Germans continued their work on the land as they always had, because it was their duty and because they believed that ultimately they would stay.

Finally, the fact that Soviet commanders relied so heavily not only on Germans’ labor, but also on their skill and expertise allowed Germans to think that they were still the respected and competent owners of their holdings. The Soviet commanders looked to German landowners and former inspectors for help in administering the large domains; they employed former German foremen and skilled craftsmen to run the day-to-day operations on the estates, and to manage the unskilled German labor force. In some cases, skilled laborers enjoyed better

\textsuperscript{34} Monika von Zitzewitz, \textit{Auch so ist der Iwan: Ein Erlebnisbericht aus Pommern} (Zurich: Origo Verlag, 1953), 57.

\textsuperscript{35} Eva-Maria Mallasch, \textit{Erinnerungen an Zimmerhausen: Eine aufgehaltene Flucht: Leben und Arbeit auf einem ostpommerschen Gut in polnischer Hand} (Greifswald, 2009), 14.
conditions — higher provisions and better living quarters—than unskilled farm workers. Many of the Germans working on the estates felt pride in their accomplishments and drew comfort from the fact that the Soviet commanders so clearly needed them. When, during the height of the harvest (both in 1945 and in 1946), most Soviet commanders prevented the Polish military and Polish militia units from expelling Germans across the Oder, Germans were even more reassured that they would remain the owners, guardians, and permanent residents of this land, their Heimat. The land needed them.

V. Poles and Soviets

Not surprisingly, if the Soviets’ actions were (at times) reassuring to the remaining Germans in Pomerania, they were deeply unsettling and upsetting to the Poles who began arriving in the region in the spring of 1945. As Polish historians have noted in numerous works published in the last decade, Polish arrivals in Poland’s new northern and western territories were often subjected to the same kind of violence that Red Army Soldiers inflicted on the defeated Germans. In fact, in many cases, Soviet officers treated the Germans better than they did their nominal allies. Settlers complained to the Polish authorities that in disputes, Soviet soldiers often took the side of Germans and protected Germans from Polish law enforcement officials. Across the province, the Soviet military command made it impossible for both Polish settlers and Polish administrative officials to take over the land and establish themselves.

The Red Army’s continued presence became especially vexing in the countryside, where Polish administrators struggled to plan for and execute their two most important tasks: the swift return of all arable land to agricultural production and the distribution of incoming rural settlers to those farmsteads and estates where they were most needed and where they were most likely willing to stay. Settling and tilling the land were important, not just because the population in postwar Poland’s cities desperately needed to be fed, but also because Poland had to show the world—not only the Germans, but also the Soviets, the Americans, the British—that it could effectively and productively govern its new territories. No land could be left to lie fallow or unproductive for too long. The problem was that during the first two years following the war, Soviet actions made it all but impossible for Poland to re-establish a functioning agricultural economy in Pomerania.

36 Bonow, Zu Hause Fremd, 35.
37 Normann, Tagebuch, 127-132.
39 See for example, a report by the Białogard land commissar complaining to the voivodeship office about preferential treatment for Germans, APSz, Urząd Ziemski (UZ) 15, 5. Other complaints about violence, looting, and rape are in APSz, Urząd Wojewódzki Szczeciński (UWS), sygnatury 1259-1282, “Intervencje Biura Łącznikowego.”
Because Soviet forces controlled so much land, the first Polish officials in Western Pomerania had no access to territory that was, on paper, under Polish administration. Soviet commanders did not allow Polish town clerks to enter villages occupied by the Red Army; Soviet commanders did not grant permission to Polish agronomists to survey estates where Soviet troops were quartered. Thus local government officials were unable to take stock of the region, to get to know the land (and the people) they were to govern. Individual administrators frequently voiced their frustration over their inability to do the work they were sent to do. The plenipotentiary of Drawsko (Dramburg) County reported in May 1945 to Szczecin that he could not verify the amount of fodder, foodstuffs, and grains in silos and barns across the county. The Red Army would not give him “any information” on the amounts they controlled. In his June 1945 report to Szczecin, the Białogard Land Commissar Radoski complained to his superiors in Szczecin that the military administration was withholding information: “This data [on agricultural inventory in the county] is very imprecise, since the army units who have certain economic objects in the county under their command do not want to share information […].” A year later, land office clerks in Gryfe County faced a similar problem.

They were tasked with compiling statistics on the size, state of the inventory, livestock, and buildings of estates of over one hundred hectares in Trzygław (Triegla), the home village of another branch of the von Thadden family. Clerks were able to describe estates under Polish administration in great detail. They listed the number of rooms and kitchens on each property, described the quality of their construction, noted the number of agricultural machines and livestock, and the amounts of available stocks of seed grain and artificial fertilizer. By contrast, the clerks were unable to gather any information about the estates under Soviet command. The questionnaire for the von Thadden’s estate was left blank, except for the size of its holdings and the estate’s distance to the county seat, information Polish administrators would have easily gathered from older German statistics. At the end of the four-page-long questionnaire, the clerk wrote a note to explain the meagre information: “This cannot be verified, because the estate is occupied by the Red Army.” A clerk trying to collect similar information about the estate in the fall of 1946 was equally unsuccessful. Without precise information concerning many of the largest landed properties within their jurisdiction, land that the Polish state was slated to own and to manage, county officials could not properly plan ahead.

40 APSz, UZ 15, 229.
41 APSz, UZ 15, 1. Most likely the commissar meant Polish and Soviet units.
42 APSz, Oddział w Międzyzdrojach, PUZGr 19, 13-59; the questionnaire for Trzgów is on pp. 52-59.
43 APSz, Oddział w Międzyzdrojach, PUZGr 19, 54.
Soviet exploitation of the province's agricultural resources and the constant requisitioning of material by Soviet army units made it impossible for Polish officials to return arable land to production. In April 1945, the Białogard Land Commissar Radoński shared his worries about the spring sowing with his superiors: “About 60 percent of this year’s sowing has been completed. [...] We meet with a lot of difficulties because of a lack of draft power. There are even a lot of horses in the county, but they are systematically requisitioned by the Soviet army.”  

As the first harvest approached in the summer of 1945, local Polish officials across the region sent exasperated pleas to their superiors in Szczecin. The Soviet military was not only withholding essential economic information on the estates it was occupying. Red Army soldiers also gathered all inventory—livestock, agricultural machinery, seed grain, fertilizer, and fodder—from the surrounding villages and brought them to their respective estates. This left Polish settlers and administrators on Polish estates without sufficient draft power to bring grains, potatoes, and root crops from the fields to the barns. In mid-June 1945, the Polish head of Drawsko County Grzybowicz wrote to Szczecin:

It has to be emphasized that there are villages, made up of some ten or so farms which together have maybe two or three horses, where cases of sudden requisitioning and taking of the horses from the fields are not a rarity. Meanwhile the number of livestock on the estates administered by the Red Army or the Polish Army exceeds everywhere by a factor of two the necessary amount. [...] The Russian military leadership requisitions agricultural machinery without paying attention to the needs of a given farmstead. Some villages remain without harvesting and sowing machines.

In July 1945, the land commissar for Gryfice County also shared his worries about the approaching harvest with authorities in Szczecin. Neither Polish settlers nor the county land office owned enough horses. The few functioning tractors that were available were useless without gasoline. By contrast, the Red Army had collected all livestock from the large abandoned farmsteads in the county and held them on the twenty estates under its command without granting Polish officials any access to the animals.

At harvest time, Soviet soldiers not only brought in the harvest on their own estates, but also took the harvest on the holdings controlled
by the Poles. In July 1945, the starost of Kołobrzeg (Kolberg) County wrote to the voivodship land office in Koszalin that the Soviet Army in his district was not only organizing the harvest on its own estates, but also on Polish farms. “This creates great confusion both for the harvest campaign as well as for the settlement campaign, as it contradicts the circular from the county land office.” In an August follow-up letter sent directly to Leonard Borkowicz, the head of the province, the Kołobrzeg County office specified that the Soviet Army was taking the harvest from holdings that exceeded by 12,881 hectares the area to which it was officially entitled. In their letter, the county starost, the land commissar, and the manager of the district’s harvest campaign pleaded that the voivodship office intervene on their behalf with the Red Army command. “We consider this concern very important, since the people, both the Poles (around 10,000) and the remaining Germans (around 38,000) are threatened by hunger.”

When Soviet divisions handed over an estate to the Polish administration, they usually left it devastated. In July 1945, the land commissar for Gryfice County reported to Koszalin that none of the estates over 100 hectares taken over by his administration had any livestock. “Each administrator had to show much energy and devotion in order to bring to life the estate anew and to return it to a functioning state.” The same month, the starost of Łobez County reported to Borkowicz that the Red Army in his district had only handed over four large estates “almost with no living inventory.” His administration would not be able to take over more estates that had been stripped bare. He explained that doing so “would amount to taking on the responsibility of bringing in the harvest without the slightest chance of success.” In a January 1946 letter to the voivodship office, the Kołobrzeg land commissar also complained about the state of landed estates his administration took over from the Red Army. While the transfer protocols described orderly hand-overs, he wrote, the reality was quite different. At three estates in the region, instead of handing over the estates complete with inventory and machinery, Soviet commanders had herded cattle away and moved the machinery to other Soviet-occupied holdings before handing them over. They also moved the Germans still working on the estates along with their inventory and tools. In February 1946, the head of state farms in Gryfino County complained to the State Land Office in Koszalin that in his district one Red Army unit often simply abandoned estates without notifying the Polish authorities. “So [...officials of] the State Farm Administration only by coincidence, passing by, confirm that
the [estate] is completely empty, without people, seed grain, inventory, and supplies, not secured and open. Buildings and the rest of the implements are mainly in a deplorable state ...”53 In April 1946, the Kołobrzeg County land commissar wrote to Koszalin to complain that Polish institutions responsible for them had not bothered to secure these empty and devastated estates. In the meantime, locals and the Red Army were looting the estates even further. On one estate in the county, ten families of “Siberians”54 had now settled without official permission from the settlement office and were sharing the remaining seven cows and five horses.55 In Kołobrzeg County, the Polish officials charged with properly settling and administering the large estates were clearly not in control.

As time went on, Polish officials anxiously watched how Soviet soldiers treated the holdings of the estates slated to be handed over to the Polish Land Office. Polish agronomists and engineers considered the Red Army’s agricultural skills to be dismal. Already by July 1945 the Kołobrzeg County starost wrote to Koszalin complaining about the behavior of both the Red Army and the Polish Army units stationed on the large estates: “The winter rape seed has been destroyed to a great degree because of the incompetent upkeep of the holdings of estates occupied by the Red and Polish Army.”56 The longer the process of handing over estates lasted, the more worried local officials grew about the properties they would eventually have to administer. In January 1947, the voivodship land office reminded Borkowicz that the Red Army still occupied 166 estates covering over 57,000 hectares and 1,678 smaller farmsteads covering over 32,000 hectares, all in violation of the treaties signed by the Polish and Soviet governments in April 1946. The economic situation on these holdings was growing worse by the day. On the estates the Red Army still occupied in violation of the April treaty, workers had barely sown 30 to 50 percent of the fields.

[O]ne part lies completely fallow. As far as the buildings are concerned, there are cases of complete devastation. For example: The Voivodship Land Office reports most recently: in Bialogard County a unit of the Red Army stationed on the estate Czarny Wąs, which has been promised the PZHR [Państwowe Zakłady Hodowli Roślin, the State Enterprises for Plant Cultivation] has destroyed the living quarters (the palace). [...] On the estate of Nowy Buków, a unit of the Red Army stationed there, takes apart the farm buildings for

53 APSz, UZ 68, 102.
54 The Polish document says “Sybiriaków,” a derogatory term often used for the repatriants returning from forced exile in the Soviet Union.
55 APSz, UWS 1271, 11.
56 APSz, UWS 1271, 11.
firewood. (Has already managed to take apart half of the stables.) On the estate Rambin, a unit stationed there takes apart the buildings for firewood, the destruction is estimated at 50%.\(^{57}\)

The continued occupation of the region’s large landed estates would render the future work of the Polish administration virtually impossible.

Polish administrators soon began to grow worried that the Soviets might never leave. In Gryfice County in January 1947, ten large estates were still occupied by the Red Army in violation of official agreements, including Batzwitz (Bzowo), which was right next to the von Thadden’s Vahnerow estate.\(^{58}\) In some reports sent to superiors, Polish officials mention anxiously how many Soviet civilian employees were working on the large farms.\(^{59}\) Civilian employees on the large estates heralded plans for an even more extended Soviet presence in the countryside. Local Polish administrators and agricultural experts knew that a continued Soviet presence on the large landed estates in Pomerania would harm the rural economy. By the end of 1946, it was clear that it would take Poles a long time and a significant amount of resources to return these large holdings to working order. Polish officials were outraged by the behavior of the Soviet Army. Like the Germans before them, they observed that Soviet soldiers did not act as responsible caretakers of the land in Pomerania, and they certainly did not seem interested in preserving the long-term value of a given piece of territory, or in carefully preserving the holdings for the future use of their Polish ally.

Quite clearly, the Soviet military and Polish authorities were working at cross purposes. The Soviet Army was essentially interested in itself, in short-term material gain—well-fed, rested, and content troops; well fed, strong, and fast horses; and modern machinery and other loot shipped off to Moscow. This was not land the Soviet state would eventually own. In contrast, Polish authorities and Polish settlers were very much interested in the land and what it had to offer. By 1946, that no longer seemed to be much. In January 1946, Leonard Borkowicz, the head of the province and a long-time Communist, wrote in his monthly report to Warsaw that settlers were losing hope and might leave the region again: “[…] part of the population does not see in the Red Army an ally and a friend. Voices saying, why has the Red Army been in Poland until now and why does it exploit Poland like a vanquished country, are being heard more frequently.”\(^{60}\)
VI. Consequences of the Soviet Occupation

The consequences of Soviet occupation for the Western Pomeranian countryside were dire and they were visible almost immediately. In March 1945, Borkowicz had traveled the region and found it wealthy and full of economic potential. But as early as August 1945, an employee of the Warsaw Ministry of Public Administration reported from an inspection trip to Western Pomerania that the countryside there resembled a desert, a barren, empty wasteland. He warned his superiors that settlers were leaving the area in droves. A year later, in June 1946, Borkowicz reported to Warsaw: “Everywhere one sees fields overgrown with weeds, and for the young crops the appearing thistles are especially harmful.” The winter sowing was delayed again in 1946. In October, Borkowicz estimated that out of Western Pomerania’s 1.5 million hectares of arable land more than 100,000 hectares would lie fallow, and since most of these fields were lying fallow for the second year in a row, their productivity would certainly be hurt.

Fallow fields meant weeds, which began covering arable fields beginning in the late summer of 1945, and which, by 1946 and 1947, had become an ever-growing concern for local authorities. Borkowicz lamented “chwasty” (weeds) in almost all of his monthly reports to Warsaw in 1946 and 1947. For example, in his report on the harvest sent to Warsaw in October 1946, Borkowicz noted that due to the fields’ “overgrowth” with weeds, the loss to the grain harvest was significant. Patrycja Dziurzyńska, the Warsaw official in charge of rural settlement at the Ministry for Recovered Territories, estimated that the fast growth of weeds in the fields was just as much an impediment to successful rural settlement in the province as was the lack of draft animals or agricultural machinery. Weeds had already lowered the expected yield per hectare below the level of all previous calculations. But the battle against weeds would take time, Dziurzyńska warned. Thus, in issue after issue, the advice columns in Osadnik, the Ministry of Recovered Territories’ biweekly publication for settlers, obsessively covered all kinds of weeds—thistles, couch grass, burdock—and different methods to eradicate them. One article exhorted its readers in bold large print: “Weeds—a universal plague—let’s fight them collectively!”

Worse than the weeds were the mice that were attracted in large numbers by ripe crops left standing in unplowed fields. The destruction these rodents caused was devastating. According to a Polish
historian, in the summer of 1945, in Lubieszewo (Lübsow), a small village in Gryfice County, mice ate fifteen hectares of rye.\textsuperscript{70} The following summer, Borkowicz wrote to Warsaw that in some of his counties, such as Nowogard and Kołobrzeg, field mice had destroyed about sixty percent of the cereal harvest.\textsuperscript{71} Mice continued to be a problem through the early fall of 1946. In addition, wild boars were destroying all kinds of crops.\textsuperscript{72} The state had no means to help the settlers fight the mice invasion or battle the boars. New settlers from central Poland, Dziurzyński warned, would not go near those areas “haunted by the mice catastrophe.”\textsuperscript{73}

The settlers themselves were completely overwhelmed by the rodents. In their memoirs, they described the growing invasion of mice in the summer of 1946 as a scourge of biblical proportions. Henryk Zudro, a young settler from Drawsko County in the east of the province, remembered that walking through the fields of ripening grains that summer, everywhere one saw piles of stubble, chewed to pieces by small teeth. “The stalks of the grains were chopped up to straw. [...] I remember how after the harvest I was shocked to see such a huge number of mice turned up. Looking into the furrows, I would see them teeming with a mass of escaping gray creatures. The crows, not very numerous in this area, were not able to destroy the mice. They were only destroyed by torrential rains in the fall of 1946.”\textsuperscript{74} Zudro’s memory was that in that summer eighty percent of the harvest in his area of Drawsko County was lost. Tomasz Piłka, a settler from Duminowo in the north, described what the mice did to his fields in a stream of consciousness revealing his despair:

Mice there was no help against them and they thrived not only in my field but also on the other farmers’ the little that was left to be harvested they destroyed I thought that someone in the middle of the night was harvesting my rye and was taking it away because the mice cut up everything to straw [...] in my life I have never seen so many mice and I didn’t even know that mice could do something like that and if not for the torrential rains in the fall I and others would have been forced to leave the west.\textsuperscript{75}

Tomasz Piłka had little to harvest that fall. After a very difficult start in Duminowo, hostile and unpleasant encounters with Germans, Soviets, and the Polish settlement authorities, suffering from poverty, and complaining constantly of not having sufficient draft power or


\textsuperscript{71} AAN, MZO 204, 109. In some communities 70 percent of the harvest was lost that year; others lost the entire cereal harvest. See Machałek, Przemiany, 152.

\textsuperscript{72} AAN, MZO 204, 168.

\textsuperscript{73} AAN, MZO 943, 33.

\textsuperscript{74} Instytut Zachodni (IZ) Poznań, P62.

\textsuperscript{75} IZ Poznań, P136.
seed grain, Piłka felt that the plague of mice had almost done him in. Reading his memoirs, one meets a man who was thoroughly ex-hausted and demoralized. For him, the invasion of mice confirmed his complete powerlessness as a farmer operating in an inhospitable, if not hostile, environment.

The solution to dealing with this hostile environment, Polish authorities decided, was reforestation. Borkowicz realized early on that the arriving, mostly destitute Polish settlers were not equal to the task of managing the vast stretches of arable land in Western Pomerania—at least not without state help and certainly not amidst chaotic postwar conditions. In September 1946 he wrote to Warsaw, alarmed that Polish settlers had only sown 18.4 percent of the area that had been sown in 1939.76 Later that fall, he noted that “agricultural affairs” were one of the most difficult problems for him to solve, which is why “they show such numerous shortcomings, of which the most glaring example are the gargantuan territories that are lying fallow.” 77 Without more competent and well-equipped farmers moving into the region, some of the areas that Germans had used as arable land would need to be turned into woodland. Those were areas, Borkowicz wrote in October, “which, given the character of the soil, the water conditions, or other factors, are only suited to forestation in the current, new, general economic conditions.” 78 Borkowicz sounded like he was giving up. And Polish struggles with the Pomeranian countryside continued. Reports by the head of the “sowing campaign” for Western Pomerania show that up to the end of the decade a significant portion of the voivodship’s fields was not tilled. 79

Germans, most of whom were forced out by late 1947, left the area with images of overgrown, barren fields in their heads. In their recollections, they described their former Heimat as a wasteland, a desert, a steppe, a thicket of sky-high thistles and other weeds. 80 Germans consciously employed these images to emphasize that they left formerly fertile (and beautiful) land in the hands of incompetent stewards. The presence of fallow fields to them (and they assumed to everyone else) was ample proof that the transfer of territory to Poland had been and remained illegitimate.

Interestingly and, I would argue, tragically, most German expellees ignored that it was not Polish incompetence that was to blame for fallow fields, but the initial and rather long postwar Soviet occupation of large tracts of land in the northwest. I should note here that the Soviet occupation was not the only factor hindering the

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76 AAN, MZO 204, 162.
77 AAN, MZO 205, 124.
78 AAN, MZO 205, 43.
79 AAN, MZO 1765 and AAN, MZO 1765a.
80 Schieder, Vertriebunng, vol. 2, 217, 279; BA Bayreuth, Ost-Dokumentation 2, Nr. 125, Belgard, 37; Ost-Dokumentation 2, Nr. 143, Regenwalde, 186.
establishment of a properly functioning agricultural economy in Western Pomerania—one also has to blame the soil, the climate, the war, and the drastic demographic decline of the region. Still the Soviet occupation certainly robbed local Polish administrators of any chance at a successful beginning in new surroundings. Germans had lived through the Soviet occupation and had seen with their own eyes what this occupation had wrought. But Germans conflated the Soviet occupation of their land—an act of exploitation, not of stewardship—with the Polish attempts at establishing a new government in this region. In the Germans’ eyes, because Soviet soldiers treated the environment so recklessly and not in a way a legitimate owner ever would have, by extension, Polish settlers (the Soviet soldiers’ allies and their successors after all) were also not legitimate owners. How the Soviet occupation transformed the countryside in northwestern Poland does not feature in the German narrative of the postwar period in this region. Instead, German expellees carried west with them the memory of a destroyed homeland that forever tarnished the moral legitimacy of the transfer of the Oder-Neisse territories to Poland. That Nazi Germany would be punished was something most Germans could accept. That their land had to suffer, that it would be handed to—in their eyes—irresponsible and incapable caretakers, that to them was a sin.

VII. Conclusion

Some of the tensions that still exist in the Polish-German relationship regarding this topic today stem from this postwar narrative of what happened to the land after 1945. Rural Pomerania today remains empty. Young Pomeranians are leaving the villages to find work in Germany or the United Kingdom. After the closure in 1990 of the voivodship’s large state farms (all housed on former Prussian estates), a significant portion of the land lies fallow. Today, this is mostly a story about post-communist transition in agriculture and about the consequences of EU expansion, which has brought large agribusinesses (which do not rely on Polish labor and plant crops that do not require much caretaking) to the region. But former German inhabitants of Pomerania, who experienced the postwar destruction of their homeland as children and who are now returning in great numbers as tourists every summer, do not see it that way. When I interview them, they show me pictures of fallow fields, of shattered greenhouses, and sadly shake their heads. Polish Pomeranians in turn are frustrated by the Germans’ condescension and their continued criticism of Polish stewardship of the land. They are also very aware of what the region
looks like in German eyes today. They resent this German gaze, but accept the notion that ownership requires proper caretaking. On a visit to a former Prussian estate village in Drawsko (Dramburg) County four years ago, I noticed a large banner on the grey and crumbling facade of the nineteenth-century manor house in the village center. It reassured visitors in German: “Dieses Objekt wird aufgebaut.” To me, this banner is a continuation of the story about the early postwar encounters between people and the Pomeranian countryside I have described in this paper.

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ARNOLD TOYNBEE AND THE PROBLEMS OF TODAY
TOYNBEE LECTURE, DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, DENVER, JANUARY 6, 2017

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It is one of the greatest possible privileges for a speaker to give a surprise address under nothing but a formal title. In this lecture, gratefully overwhelmed by an award that is much too big for someone who is anything but a “typical” global historian and who represents no particular tendency or school, I am going to take Arnold Toynbee as my guide.

The same role might have been played by several others on the list of illustrious recipients of the Toynbee Prize: by Sir Christopher Bayly in whose memory I had the sad privilege to speak in Cambridge last June; by Dipesh Chakrabarty whose turn to issues of climate change will become even more urgent and important in the future; by Ralf Dahrendorf whose books have had an enormous impact on me since my first encounter with them in 1968 and whose lectures I followed at the London School of Economics in 1977; or by Raymond Aron who was one of the most astute observers of the twentieth century. Aron, perhaps even more so than the other scholars and intellectuals mentioned, was a truly universal mind — in the universe of universalisms the very opposite of Toynbee, though there were certain proximities in their respective comments on the age they lived in.

I will be playing, if you will forgive this conceit, Dante to Toynbee’s Virgil leading the way. Rather than confront you head-on with my own ideas about what global history is or ought to be, I will let my thoughts pass through the prism of the work of a master, a master remote and strange enough not to keep me in intellectual bondage. In other words: not my master.

My chosen title is “Arnold Toynbee and the Problems of Today.” It echoes one of the greatest, though nowadays almost entirely unknown, essays ever written in German by an economist and sociologist. In 1926, Joseph Alois Schumpeter published a long article entitled “Gustav von Schmoller und die Probleme von heute,” in which he paid tribute to the influential Nationalökonom and economic historian. Proceeding from his homage, he then used motives from

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1 This lecture was given in grateful acknowledgment of the Toynbee Prize awarded during the same ceremony by the president of Toynbee Prize Foundation, Professor Dominic Sachsenmaier. The Toynbee Prize was established to recognize social scientists for significant academic and public contributions to humanity. Currently, it is awarded every other year for work that makes a significant contribution to the study of global history. The Toynbee Prize Foundation was established in 1987.
Schmoller’s work to shed light on a contemporary scene that had changed dramatically since the time of Schmoller, who had died during World War I.²

I. Arnold Toynbee in Context

The Toynbee Foundation is no Toynbee Society. It is not devoted to celebrating the memory of the great man. Most of you probably don’t care very much for Toynbee. It may therefore be appropriate to remind us of who Arnold Toynbee was and what he stood for.³

In the late 1960s, Toynbee, born in 1889 — like Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Charlie Chaplin, and Adolf Hitler — was a world-famous public intellectual and widely hailed as the greatest historian alive, especially in the United States. A few British and Dutch critics were decidedly of the opposite opinion and accused Toynbee of sloppy work and megalomania.⁴ His main claim to fame was the completion, in 1961, of his twelve-volume A Study of History, altogether more than 7,000 pages.⁵ However, being incredibly erudite and having the stamina for a multi-volume work that carried a nineteenth-century work ethic over into a more hectic and nervous age is probably not enough for immortality.

Bulk is one of the more vulgar attributes of scholarly production. Outside Germany, where until recently quite a few professorial careers have been capped by massive trilogies (or worse), the reading public has lost patience with shelf-bending monuments. The only weighty work that still enjoys an undiminished and well-deserved reputation is Joseph Needham’s Science and Civilisation in China, a series of such powerful momentum and potential that it keeps propagating, sustained by the Needham Research Institute at Cambridge, long after the principal author’s death in 1995.⁶


4 A notoriously vicious attack was launched in several articles by the Oxford historian Hugh Trevor-Roper (later Lord Dacre), a quintessential establishment figure. See esp. Hugh Trevor-Roper, “Arnold Toynbee’s Millennium,” in id., Man and Events: Historical Essays (New York, 1957), 299-324. A more sober assessment came, for example, from the Dutch historian Pieter Geyl. The intricate bibliography of criticism of Toynbee cannot be detailed here.


6 Joseph Needham, et al., Science and Civilisation in China (Cambridge, 1954-).
It may, incidentally, be taken as a discouragement from such excessive onslaughts on readers’ precious energy and time that some of the greatest minds of the past hardly ever finished a proper monograph. Leibniz, Max Weber, Wittgenstein or Isaiah Berlin belong to this distinguished category, and quite a few historiographical masterpieces — not just Theodor Mommsen’s history of imperial Rome — have never been committed to paper.

Toynbee’s merits as a world historian cannot be seen in isolation from his global celebrity. Yet, the one does not explain the other. Many world historians languished in obscurity, and books of the very first order have failed to reach a wider audience. Conversely, a behemoth work (of a similar size as Toynbee’s twelve volumes) like Will and Ariel Durant’s *The Story of Civilization*, published between 1935 and 1975, was a great favorite with the public. The Durants were free-lance authors with a liberal and quasi-Enlightenment message. Their well-documented volumes sold much better than Toynbee’s, one reason being that the authors possessed an ability that Toynbee also had, though he did not make much use of it in *A Study of History*: the ability to write well and to tell nicely crafted stories. The Durants’ ten fat volumes, a kind of history of Europe projected onto a global canvas, have never been considered first-rate historical writing, although their impact on audiences in many countries must have been immense. One looks in vain for them in the historiographical literature.

A third example complicates the picture: the youthful work of another great humanistic scholar and Toynbee’s peer in many respects, Ernst Gombrich’s *A Little History of the World* (first published in German in 1935, and in the current American edition with Yale University Press comprising 280 pages — four per cent of Toynbee’s work in terms of pages, much less in terms of words), remains an unfading classic. Originally written for children, it has in no way damaged Gombrich’s reputation as one of the leading art historians of the twentieth century.

What explains Arnold Toynbee’s unique status as the only world historian other than Fernand Braudel among the recognized giants of twentieth-century historiography? The contrast to Fernand Braudel is revealing. Braudel (who died in 1985, exactly ten years after Toynbee) shared with Toynbee a dislike of narrative history and the history of political events. They both pursued a certain theoretical ambition.
Toynbee devised a scheme for understanding world history as such, which he decided to begin with the Sumerian Empire. Braudel was much more cautious. Apart from his semi-popular book *Grammaire des civilisations* (1963), he limited himself to three or four centuries. Just like Toynbee, who began as a specialist on ancient and modern Greece and who ended his career with a scholarly work on Hannibal and his legacy, Braudel started out as a historian of the Mediterranean. The second edition (1966) of his book on the Mediterranean World in the sixteenth century arguably remains his greatest work. Braudel reached out to the world rather late, only with his trilogy *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme* (XVᵉ–XVIIIᵉ siècles), published in its entirety in 1979 when the author was 77. At age 84 he modestly returned to French history with yet another three-volume work. Whereas Toynbee offered a key to almost all history, Braudel’s theoretical contribution was much more modest and focused: Firstly, *La Méditerranée* provided a model of how to analyze a large geographical space where several civilizations coexisted and interacted. Models are always easier to apply and to adapt than theorems and even general laws. This explains why a Braudelian perspective was highly influential and could easily be modified for the study of other seascapes and, in general, vast spaces all over the world. Toynbee never had this kind of impact on concrete research. He had followers but few disciples. There seems to have been not a single first-rate monograph in Toynbee’s footsteps — compared to K. N. Chaudhuri, Denys Lombard, and many others making creative use of Braudel’s suggestions.

Secondly, Braudel was influential with two other simple yet strong models that are basically useful distinctions rather than elaborate theories: first, the differentiation between three layers or orders of time with their specific paces, and secondly, a model of ranges of action and experience upwards from everyday life to the great “wheels” moving the world economy. Thus Braudel, who never forced detail under the yoke of dogmatic schemes (as Toynbee was sometimes tempted to do), was aware of the local-global problem and developed a sense of “glocalization” long before that term existed.

Thirdly, Braudel in his ripe old age struck up a mutually beneficial collaboration with a rising star of sociology: Immanuel Wallerstein, who was Braudel’s junior by twenty-eight years. Wallerstein’s first (and foundational) volume of *The Modern World-System* appeared in 1974. It had taken on board ideas that Braudel had developed in a
kind of pilot volume to his later trilogy of 1979: *Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme*, published in 1967. Braudel in turn referred to Wallerstein in his trilogy. The dialogue between the two continued until the French master’s death and deserves further study.

The comparative point to make is that Toynbee, too, had a theoretical bend of mind, but, despite his insatiable appetite and capacity for reading, failed to team up with the social sciences. Admittedly, that would have been more difficult in the Britain of the 1920s, the time when Toynbee developed the basic ideas of his great enterprise.¹⁷ British sociology was backward compared to the European continent, and even geography (so important for Braudel) was of limited use. Even so, Toynbee’s lack of interest in authors from neighboring disciplines (apart from archaeology and religious studies) is astonishing.

I see him as a very good historical sociologist who had the misfortune to fall under the spell of Oswald Spengler, a philosophical mediocrity with high pretensions and a patchy knowledge of history.¹⁸ Perhaps not surprisingly, Spengler remains the most frequently cited German writer on history, especially abroad. Nowadays his celebrated pessimism makes him attractive to the gloomy worldview of Trumpism. Until his last recorded interviews, Toynbee expressed his admiration for Spengler’s vision of rising and dying civilizations. While criticizing the Munich prophet’s biologistic language and disagreeing with his right-wing political views, Toynbee remained loyal to Spengler’s idealistic *Geschichtsphilosophie* that inhabited an intellectual island remote from the exciting sociology, ethnology, and economics all around it. This identification with a particular kind of philosophical speculation about the past (and the future) isolated Toynbee from the social sciences and deprived him of vital intellectual input. It also fed his self-identification as a philosopher, which became stronger over the decades.

The mature Braudel remained a historian with far-reaching interests beyond the confines of his own discipline, powerful as an academic mandarin and one of the heads of the *Annales* school — as a member of the Académie Française firmly entrenched at the pinnacle of French culture, in short: a multiply embedded scholar.¹⁹ By contrast, during the last two or three decades of his life, Arnold Toynbee presented a highly paradoxical picture.

He was widely revered, even hyped, as the world’s foremost historian. Yet, few of his colleagues agreed with that assessment. He was

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certainly not a historian’s historian. At the same time, only a handful of
his admirers are likely to have penetrated the dense prose of his principal
achievement — volumes one to six of *A Study of History*, published
between 1934 and 1939. He was famous for the wrong reasons.

Whereas Braudel was a man of the cultural establishment, Toynbee
half endured, half cultivated the role of an outsider, compared, for
example, to a quintessential insider like George Macaulay Trevelyan,
the best-selling doyen of British historical studies in the first half
of the twentieth century.20 Toynbee was never appointed to a major
chair in the British university system (the Stevenson Chair at the
LSE of 1948 was more or less a formality) or a leading position at an
Oxbridge college. He taught very little and had hardly any influence
on academic students. He was never awarded a knighthood, as his
contemporary Lewis Namier was, or a life peerage like the cultural
historian Kenneth Clark, also a Toynbee Prize winner.

Still, his views were solicited worldwide, and he commented on any
topic under the sun. I still treasure a clipping of an interview on the
Biafra crisis that he gave to *Der Spiegel*, Germany’s leading political
magazine, in August 1968. In statements like these, he neither spoke
as a world historian nor as a philosopher of history but rather with
the undefined authority of a universally competent sage. We young
students did not care for him. Our long path toward world history
or global history did not begin with studying Toynbee. We read Karl
Marx, the philosophers of the Frankfurt School, American civil rights
activists, Frantz Fanon, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, U.S. critics of
the war in Vietnam, and the early *dependencia* theorists.21 That was
my generation’s earliest exposure to political globality. Here we face
Toynbee’s last paradox: He was omnipresent in the media, but not
many people listened to him anymore.

II. Toynbee’s Fragile Success

So what accounts for Toynbee’s success? First of all, Mr. Somervell.
A two-volume abridgement of *A Study of History*, cleverly done by the
English schoolmaster David Churchill Somervell on his own initiative
was the true key to Toynbee’s worldwide fame.22 This slimmed-down,
though still door-stopping version sold very well, was translated
into many languages (whereas there seems to have been not a single
complete translation of all twelve volumes), and has remained in
print ever since the publication of the first volume in 1946. Still, one
of those Toynbeean paradoxes prevails.

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21 The atmosphere of the time is captured very well in Ulrich Raull, *Wiedersehen mit den Siebziger* (Stuttgart, 2014).

Even Somervell’s space-and-time-saving digest is a difficult book — “putdownable” for those who believe world history should be enjoyable reading. Earning the eternal gratitude of the serious reader, Somervell — no doubt with the author’s consent — preserved the original structure of the work. What he discarded were volumes ten to twelve and four thousand pages of material from the other volumes. A brief glance at the intricate table of contents reveals that this is not a narrative world history from Sumer to Harry Truman’s America. The book is arranged systematically in a way requiring careful study and puzzling the unprepared reader. It is hard to imagine what to expect behind chapter headings such as “The Stimulus of Hard Countries” or “The Mechanicalness of Mimesis.” This enigmatic attraction, as we might call it, must have drawn a certain type of adventurous reader right into a book that presents itself as some kind of enchanted garden with mysteries behind every bush.

Why such a complex theoretical work became a bestseller among the less adventurous as well is not difficult to explain. Somervell’s resistance to popularization put the abridgement in a relation to the original like that of a bottle of brandy to a cellar full of good white wine. In other words, you get the same value at a fraction of the cost and effort. Whether read or resting untouched on the shelf: the high-proof digest preserves the mystique of the original. This also implies the advice to the Toynbee novice to tackle Somervell with a good conscience. His one thousand pages are indeed the essence of Toynbee’s work. From here, it is absolutely no problem to turn to the full version and go deeper into any matter of personal interest. Inversely however, the success achieved by the good history master at Tonbridge School casts a shadow on Toynbee’s own skills as a writer of history and theory. Imagine anyone condensing Edward Gibbon or Marc Bloch, Chris Bayly or Natalie Zemon Davis! So much for the size and oversize of books and, by the way, for the supreme artistry that makes Gibbon’s more than three thousand pages a perennial pleasure to read.

My second argument also has a general core. It raises a question that can (and should) be directed at any kind of history writing, the question of its location in its own time, its place in life (Sitz im Leben). Historical research and writing does not only evolve within autonomous academic institutions. It responds to contextual demands and ideally addresses an audience outside academia. Reading Hervé Inglebert’s new history of world histories — I am referring to his magnificent book *Le monde, l’histoire: Essai sur les histoires universelles* (Paris, 2014) — one
contemplates the problem (not thoroughly discussed by Inglebert himself) of the social and cultural circumstances under which the “globalification” of historical writing (a generic term I suggest for “global turns” in various discourses) is likely to occur.\textsuperscript{25}

It would be a naive mistake to think that global history simply reflects globalization in the real world. When, where, and why did waves of historiographical globalification emerge, and how did they ebb away and vanish? Why that first golden age of European world history writing from Voltaire to Hegel? Why the great revival of the 1990s of which we still form a part?

One should not hope for any general rules, but a few observations concerning Toynbee are possible. Toynbee started to work on \textit{A Study of History} in 1921, and he completed the series after his work was interrupted by the Second World War. He was a post-catastrophic writer twice over, responding to the two most devastating disasters in modern world history. The two historical situations differed. After 1918 two sentiments were characteristic for intellectuals in Western Europe. The first was the impression of a general decline of Europe \textit{vis-à-vis} other parts of the world. Oswald Spengler was only the most melodramatic representative of that view, but no one drew the consequence of a rejection of Eurocentrism more radically than Toynbee, and he did it in a remarkably tough-minded mood and without the lamentations of the Spengler camp.

The other attitude was a widespread disillusion with technical progress that, after all, had led to industrial warfare of unprecedented destructiveness. Other writers, Heidegger for example, threw themselves into extended critiques of instrumental reason. Toynbee, by contrast, simply marginalized what Marx had called “the means of production” in his conception of history. His vision of history revolved around growth without progress. Technical, political, and moral progress had ceased to serve as a frame for world history.

Toynbee thus threw overboard the entire progressivist intellectual baggage of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries without losing himself in metaphysical pessimism. In this sense, the 1930s volumes of \textit{A Study of History} were a major analytical statement. Although he emphasized the clash of civilizations, an example of which he had personally witnessed taking place between Greeks and Turks in the eastern Mediterranean, his politics were those of liberal internationalism. He was a League of Nations man until, as William H. McNeill

points out in his splendid biography, the spring of 1936, when Britain and France abandoned Ethiopia to Italian aggression.²⁶

After 1945 and especially after 1954, when volumes seven, eight, and nine appeared (eleven was to be an atlas, and ten and twelve somewhat lame conclusions and responses to his critics), Toynbee became a global celebrity less on the strength of new insights than of his Stakhanovite reputation and his ubiquity as a lecturer, broadcaster, and author of innumerable short pieces for which he found time in retirement from 1955 onward. Since there was no upswing of world history after 1945 comparable to the 1920s (a strange phenomenon still to be investigated), Toynbee virtually found himself alone in the field. Who nowadays remembers his few competitors, people like Christopher Dawson?²⁷ Toynbee was “Mister World History” and everyone turned to him for the broadest possible picture.

His personal mood as well as that in Western Europe and the United States during this period was much more optimistic than after 1918 — despite an even more violent war. “Civilization” with a capital “C” had survived its mightiest challenge and was now set to flourish in a peaceful age. The errors of the Versailles settlement would not be repeated, and the emancipation of the colonies was regarded by the serene world historian as a natural course of events. Toynbee was no hardliner in the Cold War and considered Soviet Russia to be a civilization in its own right. Of course, he was no socialist either. He offered a comprehensive world view suitable for liberals and moderate conservatives in the U.S.-dominated West. The integrative scope of his vision — Big (or biggish) History *avant la lettre* — in a way distracted from the horrors of the recent past and assigned everyone a legitimate place in the great drama of civilizational evolution. This is why he had many admirers in West Germany.²⁸ For some, Toynbee’s ideas served to counter the only other historiographical grand design pitched at the same level of generality: the Marxist drama of class struggle, modes of production, and imperialist exploitation. Yet, intellectual Marxism had been bled white under Stalin’s tyranny and offered few attractions until the rise of a less arid neo-Marxism in the 1960s.

My second point in explaining the extraordinary resonance he found late in life is that Toynbee said many critical and incisive things about specific topics; he never lost his well-trained ability to interpret international politics. But he mainly enjoyed a kind of Olympian harmony with the dominant mood in the postwar West. His prominence may

²⁶ McNeill, Toynbee, 169.
²⁷ On these postwar authors see Paul Costello, *World Historians and Their Goals: Twentieth-Century Answers to Modernism* (DeKalb, 1993).
²⁸ A careful study of Toynbee’s reception in Germany would be worth undertaking.
have exceeded his influence, and not always did his wisdom suffice to give satisfactory answers to the very big questions that his numerous interviewers loved to put to him. He did not always retain the enormous intellectual precision of Raymond Aron, Lord Ralf Dahrendorf or, another Toynbee Prize winner, George F. Kennan. The public had difficulty following his preoccupation with religious universalism and a world state: no doubt a noble vision, but one based on personal spirituality rather than on the scholarly authority of the professional historian who feels uncomfortable when he moves too far away from his sources.

How we judge this almost unique public performance is a matter of debate. The historian as sage and as councilor to the powerful has not disappeared from the scene. Alexander Dugin in Putin’s Russia is such a figure, preceded by the slightly less sinister Lev Gumilev.29 And Henry Kissinger is still active as an oracle. How many world historians appeared in the Obama White House, how many will be summoned to advise President Trump? How many will present their own TV shows? Arnold Toynbee personified the dilemmas of the historian in the media and on the marketplace. On the one hand, the humanities desperately need spokespersons who prove the usefulness and legitimacy of “soft” disciplines to people who have no time to read books. If they fail to reach those people (which seems more than likely), they should speak up critically in the public forums accessible to them. On the other hand, handling the media rather than being handled by them is tricky business. Even Toynbee, the media virtuoso disguised as a quaint English professor, would surely have struggled today.

Let me add a personal observation to these remarks on historians and politics. Germany may lag a little behind the United States in the development of global history studies. Therefore, this observation probably does not fully apply to the U.S. The current generation of our (German) Ph.D. candidates and postdocs is the first that approaches global history without a strong political motivation. Their interest originates from inside a fairly well-established subdiscipline. They have been socialized within research programs, they design their work as “projects” and know where to present their papers and publish their articles. In short, they follow the path-dependency of firmly established research routines and thus are the beneficiaries of specialization and professionalization. They live in the academic cocoon. This enables them to produce work far

superior to what was possible thirty years ago. For them, Arnold Toynbee is an antediluvian figure.

He became a world historian because he wanted to preserve peace after two world wars. My generation, born sixty or seventy years later than Toynbee, arrived at global history via twisted and highly individual paths. We were not trained as global historians as that specialty did not exist at German universities, and even the history of Asia and Africa was seldom taught in history departments. We had a primarily political motivation, call it an “extrinsic” impetus, which did not emerge from inside academia. What impressed us was the end of empires, the attempt of new nations to establish viable societies, persistent misery in the global South, military dictatorships in Latin America, China’s course of international autonomy and, above all, the Vietnam War that ended in 1975, the year Arnold Toynbee died.

For us, non-Western history was “Third World” history; it was a political project originating at a time when nobody talked about “globalization” yet. This kind of global history predated the internet, the collapse of communist rule in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the economic rise of China. It had nothing to do with an old-style world history of the so-called “great civilizations,” and it was absolutely free from any rise-of-the-West triumphalism. In fact, looking from Europe towards Asia in the 1970s, many developments seemed to suggest the “rise of the East”: Japan’s economic miracle, Vietnam’s military victory, China’s position of independence between the superpowers, the sudden bargaining power and influence of oil-producing Arabian states, the toppling of a Westernizing client-regime during the Iranian Revolution of 1979. All these were exciting developments we wanted to understand. Those among us who got a chance to do that professionally were happy that at some point someone invented the glamorous label of “global history” and made academic life at the margins of the discipline a little easier for us.

III. The Three Professor Toynbees
Arnold Toynbee reinvented world history less as a feat of compilation than as a serious intellectual enterprise. His massive tomes are useless for checking facts and figures; a great number of canonical topics are left undiscussed. They basically contain an empirically based philosophy of history that has to be judged by the quality of its reasoning alone. For an author, this is a risky strategy to pursue.
In the end, Toynbee’s harshest critics have claimed, he combined the worst of two worlds: bad history and bad philosophy.

There were three different Toynbees: (1) the sage of the last twenty years of his life, (2) the constructivist master of world-historical comparison of the 1930s, and (3) the analyst of the contemporary scene that he became through the publication of his first book in 1915 and somehow remained to the last. Toynbee the Director of Studies at the British (later: Royal) Institute of International Affairs — his bread-and-butter job from 1924 to 1956 — prevented Toynbee the historian from getting lost in the endless depths of world history. He always kept an eye on the twentieth century.

The second Toynbee, the author of volumes one to six of A Study of History (published in two installments in 1934 and 1939), would have been a worthy recipient of the prize named after him. In those volumes he showed himself to be a social science historian, developing his own brand of historical sociology, uneasily camouflaged as a philosophy of history. As you have well realized by now, my counterfactual dream is that Toynbee might have read Max Weber.

Explicitly or implicitly, Toynbee has raised many questions that continue to be relevant, even if most of his answers do not satisfy us anymore. His deficiencies jump from the page after the briefest immersion in his texts: he had little use for economic history in a technical sense. He wrote before the great upswing of social history. Eschewing the tools of Marxist or Weberian social analysis, he lacked a convincing approach to analyzing “societies” (a word he uses frequently) rather than “civilizations.” He devoted two volumes of A Study of History to contacts between civilizations, and it is a caricature to say that he studied cultures as isolated monads the way Spengler did. But this interested him much less than it does today’s global historians, and he framed it somewhat narrowly — though innovatively for the 1930s — as “the impact of external forces” and the encounter with “the modern West.” The perhaps defining concept of global history — dynamic connectivity — lay beyond his intellectual horizon, however. The notion of “circulation,” in his time mostly used in medicine and economics, was left unexplored — as it was until about twenty years ago.

Yet how could someone who started his career with a thorough examination of the relations between Greeks and Turks ever neglect encounters? He was a trained expert on classical and modern

30 From 1924 to 1956, Toynbee was on the staff of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. During that time, he authored (or partly co-authored with his wife Veronica) sixteen large volumes of the series Survey of International Affairs. Today one would call him a professional International Relations scholar. Arnold J. Toynbee, “Thirty-three Years at Chatham House,” in id., Experiences (London, 1969), 60-87.


32 Especially in vol. 8 (1954) of A Study of History.

Greece, but his sympathy for the Turkish side cost him his first professorial appointment. Writing his best books in the 1920s and 1930s with a keen sensitivity for the world around him, his experience prevented him from being a naive ideologue of the rising West. Nobody since Gibbon had studied dissolution and breakdown with greater seriousness.

Toynbee did not really care for globality as such:34 his preferred levels of analysis were intermediate structures, large spaces, civilizational ecumenes, and empires. Many of us, too, feel more comfortable with such units than with the planet as a whole. His geographical coverage was patchy: South America and Sub-Saharan Africa rarely caught his attention. This, too, should be seen as a pardonable sin, and it reflected the state of archaeological and ethno-historical knowledge in the 1930s. Good world history and global history does not bow to the vulgar demand for encyclopedic completeness.

Toynbee was a cultural historian with a sense for much more than just elite culture. Whereas the mainstream of nineteenth-century Historismus, that offspring of German idealist philosophy, had excised nature from history, narrowly defined as a story of unfettered human agency and individual choice, Toynbee brought it back in, writing comprehensively on climate and environmental determinants. His most famous concept of “challenge and response” is a simple environmental model.35 He is incomparably more materialist than Spengler and the Kulturphilosophen in Spengler’s footsteps, people such as Alfred Weber, Max Weber’s brother. Thus he remains largely immune to the essentialist fantasies popular in the early twentieth century that attributed “souls” or “physiognomies” to individual cultures or even endowed them with “racial” characteristics — although it has to be said that some of his remarks on “race” betray the spirit of his time.36

IV. A Few Systematic Questions

In short, while unsuitable as a blueprint for global history, Toynbee’s work addresses questions of lasting importance. Let me briefly discuss a few of them.

Firstly: Krishan Kumar, in a recent thoughtful reassessment, recommends Toynbee, above all, as a much more sophisticated theorist of “civilization” than the crude Samuel Huntington, who made that somewhat stale concept fashionable again.37 My own response would be that we have moved beyond a simple mapping of humanity, 34 But see Michael Lang, “Globalization and Global History in Toynbee,” Journal of World History 22 (2011): 747-83.
35 The model is described at great length in vols. 1 and 2 (1934) of A Study of History.
36 Toynbee, A Study of History, vol. 1 (1934), 207-49. But Toynbee was in no way a racist. His conception of history was a kind of anticipated countervision to the kind of “völkisch” historiography that became prominent in Germany at exactly the same time.
past and present, in terms of a set of “great civilizations.” Toynbee was honest and playful enough to admit that he arrived at different numbers whenever he started counting his civilizations: sometimes twenty-three, sometimes thirteen, or anything in between. He did not really care.

But the general problem has not changed since Toynbee’s day: what are suitable units of global history if we want to avoid the nation-state? I somehow managed to do without “civilizations” in my own book, *The Transformation of the World* (2014). Yet, we often need some kind of macro-unit, perhaps, *faute de mieux*, “civilization.” In that case, two major theorists provide more refined concepts than Toynbee: S. N. Eisenstadt and Jóhann Páll Árnason (whose comments on Toynbee are extremely insightful).

Secondly: the temporal framing. Nowadays one receives e-mails from demanding readers such as: “I enjoyed your book on the nineteenth century. But why didn’t you start with the Big Bang?” Well, Toynbee would have faced this with gentlemanly composure. The time scale was not an *a priori* problem for him, no matter of fundamental belief. The famous conductor Sergiu Celibidache used to say, a little whimsically, that tempo in music was a function of the musical structure. Likewise for Toynbee — and this seems to be a sensible point of view — the problem at hand decides about temporalities. He studied civilizations. Where else should he begin than with the first cities? Unlike Braudel, Toynbee has no original theory of historical time. He did not need one.

A third issue concerns methodology. World history since the time of Spengler, H.G. Wells, and the Toynbee of the interwar period has struggled hard to overcome its fatal image of irresponsible dilettantism — dilettantism being the naive accumulation of knowledge regardless of its origin and validity. The problem is not just one of scholarly critique and correct scientific methods. It has far wider ramifications and concerns world history more than any other kind of history.

The popular book market, history magazines, and various media from television to internet games abound with crude world history, ranging from the trivial to the lunatic. To this day, world history is a favorite verbal and visual idiom for myth-making, panic mongering and conspiracy theories. We should know and confront this fantasy world that many of us only meet through questions from popular...
audiences, who believe in evil empires and pharaonic curses and have been told that the Chinese discovered Australia and that Charlemagne never existed.

Until the Herculean labors of William H. McNeill and Fernand Braudel, the respectability of world history remained in doubt. Toynbee himself was attacked from many quarters as a waffling fraud, and it is amazing how readily he conceded ground to his critics. That academic world history managed to pull itself out of this quagmire is due to several factors. One is that it now uses the full range of available primary sources, and that it successfully applies the normal methods of the historical sciences and adheres to their standard methodologies. World history, as Raymond Grew pointed out a long time ago, gained respectability by not being special.

However, this can only be one half of the story. The other half concerns the peculiarities of world and global history. Are there methods and approaches characteristic of and, perhaps, unique to world history, or more precisely, global history? Are there methods created or refined in this particular sub-discipline? Might they even be applicable to other fields? Can non-global historians learn from them? Is there a methodological surplus to be gained by taking a global view?

Toynbee is not completely reticent about methodology, although he never treats it in a systematic fashion: he left that to R. G. Collingwood, his exact English contemporary. Volume one of A Study of History begins with a reflection on “the relativity of historical thought,” and later in the book Toynbee digresses on the “comparability of societies.” Both chapters are still well worth reading. They started debates that have never ended.

The “relativity” of historical thought was no original discovery. The German Enlightenment author Johann Martin Chladenius had already developed his theory of Sehepunkte, and nineteenth-century hermeneutics was keenly aware of the epistemological problem of perspectivity. Toynbee discusses it within a decidedly post-World War I context. His powerful critique of national conceptions of history establishes a close connection between national visions of history and the kind of nationalist and self-centered politics that led to the catastrophe of 1914. Acknowledging the relativity of points of view is a methodological and, at the same time, moral, pedagogical, and political corrective against ethnocentrism. Before the war, Toynbee memorably says in 1934, nation states and other “communities”
had “an aspiration to be universes in themselves.”

Nowadays they must learn to see themselves as “parts of some larger universe.”

The world historian should help both national historians and the reading public to overcome their dangerous narrow-mindedness.

Toynbee’s politics, more hinted at than made explicit in the early volumes of *A Study of History*, is similar to that of Marc Bloch in his famous lecture “Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes,” which he delivered at the International Congress of Historical Studies at Oslo in 1928. Bloch combined his methodological case for comparison with the hope that talking about variants of a common European experience would transform the “dialogue among the deaf” (as he put it) into a genuine exchange across borders. He himself later compared European and Japanese feudalism as an example of relating independent occurrences of similar phenomena to one another. Bloch and Toynbee shared an interest in comparison at several levels, and it might be fruitful to read their programmatic texts of 1928 and 1934, respectively, in parallel. Comparison is best understood looking at the practice of comparative historians. Those who expect Toynbee to compare systematically between his various “civilizations” will be surprised to discover that he does nothing of the kind. One does not find anything in his work resembling the carefully laid-out comparison between ancient Greece and China of which Geoffrey Lloyd at Cambridge is such a great master.

I would describe Toynbee’s procedure (one hesitates to call it a “method”) as a kind of fast-moving change of contexts in the service of generalization. Amazingly, it reminded me faintly of my own practice — in *The Transformation of the World*, though not in other books — of micro-comparison across varying distances. Since I had not read Toynbee for decades, some mysterious subliminal force must have been at work.

Today, the vigorous debates between comparatists and champions of transfer analysis are over. In the late 1990s, the transfer faction seemed to have carried the day. The consensus now apparently is, to quote Sebastian Conrad, that “comparative history in recent years has taken a global turn as well, and indeed there are no inherent contradictions between the two approaches.” In historiographical practice, however, the problem of balance reasserts itself. As soon as attempts are made to integrate world history (understood as a comparative history of discontinuous phenomena on a planetary scale) with global history (as a history of connections), fine-tuning is necessary between static and dynamic factors. Comparative thinking...
prefers observable structures of a certain stability; relational thinking favors flux and dissolution, metamorphosis and hybridity. To bring the two together is possible but difficult.

Since this particular problem is more pronounced in global history than in other fields of historical (and in general: social scientific) inquiry, it may be one of those specificities mentioned before. Even more than in the past, the methodology of global history should focus on a theory of dynamics and motion, of speed, acceleration and retardation, of unilinear and reversible processes, of flows, counter-flows, and the non-flowing. This moves far beyond Toynbee and requires the kind of cooperation with the social sciences that he himself neglected.

I am not a theorist and I am happy to leave to those better qualified than me the challenges of historical theory. A few final remarks may suffice.

Toynbee was pilloried by his contemporary critics for having invented his own terminology: “challenge and response, withdrawal and return, blows, pressures, standardization, disintegration, cataclysm,” and so on. In the eyes of a good historicist (in the sense of Historist) this was a sin against the spirit. His critics believed that a historian’s language had to keep as close as possible to the sources, more precisely: the historian was a mediator between the language of the sources and the language of the educated reading public in her or his time. It is difficult to imagine the shock caused by the bombshell of Toynbee’s initial volumes. In the late 1890s, the much more restrained Karl Lamprecht had been ostracized in Leipzig for similar reasons. To be sure, both innovators had produced readable prose; their terminology should not be confused with jargon. From our present perspective, the riddle is easily solved: Toynbee offered social science history, and the modern social sciences from Adam Smith via Comte, Marx, and Spencer to Toynbee’s contemporaries (whom he ignored) based their very existence on terminological innovation. Toynbee’s analytical language was idiosyncratic, and few of his key concepts have caught on. Even so, he made a laudable effort absolutely worth discussing. That such a discussion did not take place is a major missed opportunity in twentieth-century historiography.

Historical studies, beyond Historismus, are dependent on terminologies borrowed from economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, cultural geography, political science, law, and, recently, also from the natural sciences. They then have to adapt those concepts to their
own specific needs. Global history, for example, profits from a critical and selective appropriation of the language of globalization studies.

The very concept of the “network” comes along with heavy theoretical baggage and shouldn’t be used in a merely metaphorical way. From time to time, imaginative historians themselves are successful as terminological innovators and introduce such seminal concepts as “the frontier,” “the invention of tradition,” the “gunpowder empire,” the “Columbian exchange” or “the industrious revolution.” Toynbee would have felt comfortable in their company.\(^{50}\)

V. Conclusion

The Toynbee of the 1930s (whom I earlier called “the constructivist master of world-historical comparison”) is closer to us than the Toynbee of the 1950s and after — “the sage.” He surely does not rank among the greatest classics to whom one returns time and again. He is no Tacitus, Gibbon, or Marc Bloch. Some of his books deserve a few more readers, though not his problematic last work, *Mankind and Mother Earth.*\(^{51}\) My personal favorites, next to the early volumes of *A Study of History*, are an account of a journey to East Asia in 1929/1930 and a collection of essays on current affairs: *Civilization on Trial*, published in 1948.\(^{52}\) One of his late books containing dialogues with Japanese interlocutors bears a title that is of obvious urgency in January 2017: *Surviving the Future.*\(^{53}\)

Toynbee lived through two world wars. He took part in the Paris Peace Conference and chronicled the emergence of the second big war at close quarters from his office at Chatham House in London. He alerts us to the burning issues of war, peace, and the military, which do not feature prominently enough in current global history. It certainly was in a Toynbeean spirit that William H. McNeill wrote his book *The Pursuit of Power.*\(^{54}\) Looking at the contemporary scene, Toynbee would be puzzled by the marginalization of organized violence in today’s global history studies. Likewise he would be surprised that global history and international history have parted ways. To some readers, a long chapter on international orders and war in my book *Transformation of the World* seemed like a redundant relic of an out-of-date type of historiography.\(^{55}\) It is nothing of the kind. The most pressing problems of global significance — above all, climate change and nuclear armament — cannot be solved by the benign workings of global governance alone. They still require the old instruments of inter-state diplomacy. Toynbee knew all about it. So did Raymond

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Aron and George F. Kennan, and so does Sir Brian Urquhart, the former Undersecretary General of the United Nations — at age 97 the oldest living member of our imaginary Toynbee Prize club.

Great women and great men are most impressive when they remain down-to-earth. I once invited Professor Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt (who spent a few days at the University of Konstanz) to my class. We expected the most eminent living sociologist to make some grandiose statement about theory or the world as such. Instead, he brought along the morning paper and immediately started up a conversation with students about the front-page news. It is hard to imagine how Arnold Toynbee would have behaved in a similar situation. What is certain is that, until his final years when he was very old, he rarely succumbed to pomposity and over-generality. That, of course, is a temptation not for young researchers who are the ones to take global history forward, but for retired professors past a certain age.

I remember a world historian talking on a radio panel. When he was asked to comment on the 2015 European refugee crisis, his answer was: “Well, there have been population movements throughout history. Societies have mostly coped, and sometimes they have not.” This sort of cloudy wisdom from stratospheric detachment will not do. The generalist Toynbee would have been much more incisive. He did his duty as a commentator and as an educator of the public. And it is with his encouragement that we should now, with the Presidency of Donald Trump in view, turn to the task ahead: surviving the future.

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HISTORIANS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA IN GERMANY: AMPLE OPPORTUNITY AND THE AMBIVALENCE OF SOFT KNOWLEDGE

PAPER DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION IN DENVER, JANUARY 7, 2017

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In times of political attacks on the humanities in the United States, their ideas as well as their budgets, American scholars are often in disbelief when they hear about the public appreciation their colleagues receive in Germany. Far from being an expression only of recent trends in political polarization, and perhaps even an attitude of contempt that has become fashionable in certain conservative circles, the differences in the role of the humanities in Germany and the United States are deeply rooted in the political cultures and institutional settings of both countries. While history certainly remains a discipline with broad popular appeal and public legitimation in the U.S., especially when compared with literary or cultural studies or the specialized study of non-Western cultures, American history professors find themselves restricted to their role on campus and in the academic ivory tower to a much greater extent than their counterparts in Germany. The boundaries between academia, on the one hand, and the general public, the media, and the political and policy arenas, on the other hand, are much more rigid in the United States, while they tend to be more open and fluid in Germany. Hence, historians in Germany are provided with a plethora of opportunities, should they wish to embark on that territory, to participate in political communication and consulting in a multitude of ways, from contributing an op-ed piece to a national newspaper to participating in an official parliamentary or governmental advisory board.

What chances, but possibly also risks, does this entail, and how exactly are the bridges between academia, on the one hand, and the public sphere and politics, on the other, constructed for historians in Germany? It may be helpful to share some personal experiences and insights before considering larger, historical, and institutional explanations for this constellation. Therefore, the following reflections are arranged in four sections. First, I would like to give an account of my own ventures into the public and policy arenas over the
past fifteen years or so — not for reasons of vanity, but to give those less familiar with the German public sphere an idea of the particular communicative spaces open to historians in that country. I will try not to be overly impressionistic, but make some systematic points concerning the differentiation (or entanglement) of certain types of public-political action. The second section will briefly discuss the context in which such action is embedded in Germany due to certain long-standing historical traditions, as well as more recent developments in the “Berlin Republic” after reunification, be it in German political culture or in the structure and self-understanding of its academicians. The relatively “open spaces,” or weak boundaries, have roots going as far back as the nineteenth century, but have also benefitted from the acute sense of crisis that had gripped Germans around the turn of the millennium. In a third step, I will ask what it actually is that interests politicians in the knowledge of historians, as compared with scholars from other humanities disciplines, and in particular, compared with social scientists. This will shed light both on the general “attractiveness” of historians based on the peculiar kind of knowledge and judgment they can offer and more specific factors that result from Germany’s modern history, and especially the postwar period. Finally, in order not to draw too rosy a picture, I will point out some tensions, conflicts, and ambivalences in the encounter between historians and the political sphere.

I.

With regard to my own experience and how it might speak to opportunities for historians in the German public arena, I should start by saying that from a biographical as well as historical point of view, I have been born, or at least raised, as a “political animal.” My propensity for occasionally leaving the inner academic circles for public statements was strongly reinforced by the example of my academic mentor, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, one of the leading historians of his generation, pioneer of social history in Germany, and astute public intellectual.\(^2\) Although they had been influenced by Nazi ideology in their Hitler Youth years, after the fall of the Third Reich many in Wehler’s generation (he was born in 1931) felt a public responsibility to advocate for democracy and an open, liberal society. Other historians such as Hans Mommsen, and sociologists such as Jürgen Habermas and Ralf Dahrendorf are equally representative of this conviction.

The generation to which I belong, however, about thirty years younger, overall has not felt an equally strong impulse for public engagement

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or even political partisanship. Growing up in the aftermath of the 1968 student revolt, a democracy that was both stable and vivid was almost taken for granted, while career paths were becoming lengthy and difficult in a tightening job market, much as they are now in the United States. Engaging in public debate implies taking some risks vis-à-vis the profession and one’s colleagues, and therefore a consolidated, tenured position often is (or at least seems, from a subjective point of view) a prerequisite for entering the policy arena. Also, from the demand side of the game, politicians (but the media as well) tend to put a premium on academic honors and reputation, especially in Germany with its long-standing status tradition of a professorial elite. Politicians seek academic authority, and before they can look into content, they rely on positions and titles. Nowhere else am I more formally addressed, sometimes even with a strange attitude of deference, as “Herr Professor Doktor Nolte” than when I am with politicians.

My “career” in the public arena started not on any political party track, but with historically informed opinion pieces in major German newspapers such as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung or the leading weekly Die Zeit. Editors and journalists read them, and I soon received follow-up invitations to write more pieces, or to appear on a radio broadcast. And yes, politicians (and their staff) also read newspapers and listen to public radio. Hence, I started to receive invitations to informal, political consulting circles convened by individual politicians. There was the head of a federal state (Ministerpräsident) trying to establish a consulting circle (Beraterkreis), and there were others who invited experts to “fireside talks” (Kamingespräche) in an informal setting and on an irregular schedule. And here, important transitions begin: although formats like this belong to the democratic political sphere, they are not really “public.” Also, there is often a conflict between listening to an expert or someone considered an “independent mind” and the interest in winning them over to your cause. If you disagree too much with a politician’s agenda, you may not be invited a second or third time. You will hardly be told explicitly, but I have sensed several times that my analysis frustrated the expectations of those inviting me: too conservative in a leftist environment, too liberal for a conservative audience.

In Germany, the transition from an individual politician’s inner circle to an appointment to an official expert or advisory body can be fluid. The politician who has consulted you may, after an election, be
appointed to office and hence be able to extend invitations for a scholar’s participation in a more official way. And yet the quite intimate nature of political consulting may not change all that much in this transition. Whereas scholars, especially at an educational institution such as a university (as opposed to a research institute), are used to doing their communicative work in public, as they do when they teach a lecture course, the work of governmental or parliamentary expert committees is mostly done behind closed doors — not in secrecy, but under the Chatham House Rule, or “unter drei,” as it is called in the German code of political journalism. This may apply even if the mandate comes from the public and the results produced are for public-political use, such as a report that is later discussed in parliament or appropriated by a federal ministry or government agency.

My experience as a historian in those bodies has been ambivalent, both in terms of offering or “applying” historical knowledge and with regard to consequences and effectiveness. In the “Council for Innovation and Growth” (Rat für Innovation und Wachstum, 2006-2008) hosted by Chancellor Angela Merkel for a few years, I was the only academic representative of the humanities and social sciences among many scientists and CEOs of major German companies; some of the latter, in particular, regarded me with suspicion because my agenda was not clear to them. And, indeed, I did not have a clear-cut agenda compared to their barely disguised lobbying interests. In this environment, any attempt to pursue some form of “meta-agenda,” as humanities scholars would naturally be inclined to do, was in vain: no one was interested in questioning the very concepts of “growth” or “innovation,” or of demonstrating their historical contingency.

A few years later, in the expert commission for the first report on gender equality by the German federal government, I was the lone historian among a group consisting mostly of social scientists, political economists, a law professor, and other providers of “hard data,” and therefore seemed in some way responsible for the “grand narrative,” or the historical foundations of more recent trends in education or the labor market. While this turned into a kind of friendly struggle with colleagues, the transition into policy was still difficult to make. Once experts have finished their report and hand the paperwork over to the politicians, they also turn over authority, and lose much of their command over their previous work, which now becomes subject to political spin in the policy arena. Still, the significant interest in issues of
gender equality in civil society provided more opportunities to speak publicly about our work than the members of the expert commission could possibly seize.

Yet another type of political communication is at play when scholars are invited to join a political delegation for diplomatic purposes, as academic experts or, in a broader sense, as representatives of “culture” (as opposed to business, in particular). When German Federal President Joachim Gauck visited the United States in October 2015, the emphasis was on cultural relations and on strengthening a sense of shared history between Germany and the United States. Therefore, history mattered in quite an immediate sense, as the delegation visited places and documents of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. But the rules were different from those of an academic seminar, even when, as part of the program, a historian and a law professor were scheduled to meet with American academics and discuss their respective constitutional traditions. Five minutes into the event, my colleague and I had to discard our carefully assembled notes because the discussion was taking a different turn, and it became more important to improvise, as President Gauck commanded the situation with his shrewd, but hardly scholarly questions.

While more examples and other formats of interaction between historians and politicians might be added, it is important to note the wide variety of constellations. There is no single scheme of “history entering the public sphere,” or “scholar meeting politics.” Manifold distinctions have to be made between institutional settings, communicative formats, and functional roles in which a historian may appear in the public arena, with or for politicians. There is a difference between more closed or internal communicative spaces, and more public ones. Somewhat paradoxically, entering the public sphere may draw scholars into a world of confidentiality unknown to them before. More important is the distinction between the role of critical public intellectual, on the one hand, a free-roamer in the grey zone of knowledge and opinion, and the “expert” on the other hand, as someone who has unambiguous facts at their immediate command, facts that ideally serve as a basis for policy decisions. Yet historians rarely come up with those facts. And after the cultural and poststructuralist turn, in particular, they often deliberately challenge the myth of the “expert.” Still, historians, at least in Germany, are very much sought after in the public arena, and I shall now turn to some of the reasons for this.
II.

Historically speaking, the prominent role of historians in Germany’s public arena is due to a peculiar combination of continuity from the nineteenth and rupture in the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century German professors in general, whether in medicine or in theology, were close to the state in several respects. Universities, as in the Prussian reform system of the Humboldt brothers, were modernized as state institutions, and they mostly remain public universities to this day. Academics, and historians in particular, committed themselves to the Hegelian idea of the state as the steward of the public interest, apart from and above the partisan interests that, as many Germans believed, increasingly shook and splintered society. Academics were members of the ruling elites, and given the noncentralized, federal structure of German politics as well as the university system, they had relatively easy access to the circles of power in their respective territories. Mostly conservative (and protestant) in their worldview, they styled themselves as nonpartisan, and through the Prusso-German idea of civil servants (Beamte), as potentially loyal to any government. For the vast majority of the historical profession, this included loyalty to the National Socialist reshaping of Germany in 1933, be it in reluctant complicity or in outright enthusiasm.

And yet the consequences of the Third Reich fundamentally altered the position of academic elites vis-à-vis the state in the new democracy of the Federal Republic. (The communist transformation of the professoriate in the GDR is an entirely different story.) In many ways the 1950s marked a transitional period, in which classical patterns of academic authority were still pervasive, and biographical continuity was typical. When the eminent Göttingen historian Hermann Heimpel was considered for the Federal Presidency in 1957/58, this demonstrated the overlap of Nazi partisanship, reluctant adaptation to a new democracy, and persistence of protestant nationalism in the German Bildungsbürgertum. It was only in the context of the liberalization and protest movements of the 1960s that a younger generation jettisoned the seemingly apolitical attitude and the governmentalist conservatism and nationalism at the same time.

While social scientists, such as the members of the “Frankfurt School” of philosophy and sociology since the 1920s, had previously been more left-leaning, historians now came to join the new professorial positioning as critics of power instead of acting affirmatively, and they increasingly affiliated themselves with the moderate
Left, especially with the Social Democratic Party (SPD). As understanding the Nazi catastrophe and the Holocaust moved to the very center of German national identity, the public function of historians seemed obvious: instead of remaining defenders of government, they would now reinvent themselves as custodians of democracy, and as keepers of memory not for its own, antiquarian sake, but in the light of new and future threats to an open society that was considered fragile and susceptible to authoritarian regression. This role continues to be of special importance today, and is potentially even gaining influence in the era of a new populism and right-wing extremism. The central question for the historian as public councilor in Germany therefore remains: What ought we to do to ensure that it never happens again?

However, there are other factors as well that contribute to the relatively easy access, not just of historians, to the public arena. Leading national media, also in part continuing traditions from the nineteenth century, are relatively open to professors as voices of authority, as op-ed contributors, and may even build part of their reputation on winning them as authors. Overall, the structures of the public sphere in Germany facilitate overlaps and discursive spaces in the triangle of academics, politics, and an educated general audience. Public broadcasting, in the system of öffentlich-rechtlicher Rundfunk, retains its cultural dominance, long after the liberalization of German media and telecommunications markets in the 1980s: what is a mere niche market in the United States with radio stations such as NPR enjoys institutional and public hegemony in Germany, with flagships such as Deutschlandfunk radio. In the book market (an arena that historically has lacked direct state influence, even in Germany), trade publishing houses such as C.H. Beck in Munich see their mission not only, as American trade publishers would also do, in bridging the gap between academic research and a wider, non-university readership, but in reaching out into the political sphere and policy discourses.

In a very broad sense, civil society in almost all its dimensions, be it education or religious life, is much less independent from the state in Germany than it is in the U.S. This para-governmental structure of German society is in part a century-old legacy, as with the churches, but it has been transformed in the Federal Republic in a very characteristic way that allows scholars to act, in an almost dialectical way, as “loyal critics”; certainly as part of the system, and overall in an affirmative position vis-à-vis the freiheitlich-demokratische Grundordnung of

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the liberal constitution, and yet as critics of power, and of everything that they regard as a possible deviation from post-Nazi accomplishments. Apart from the media, on the one hand, and direct political engagement (in political parties, in government or parliamentary committees), on the other hand, platforms for public roles of historians (and other humanities and social science scholars) include the churches and religious organizations, and the foundations associated with the major parties (Politische Stiftungen) that function as think tanks and transmission belts between the academic and the political spheres.

The most recent historical layer in the transformation of the “German model” was added in the post-reunification era, especially with a certain type of neoliberal reform that, in a very broad sense, has been a salient feature of Germany’s trajectory, especially when compared to the United States. While American neoliberalism is market-driven and has put additional pressure on public systems of education and on public support for the humanities, its German counterpart is driven by the quest for governmental control, featuring the introduction of market-emulating mechanisms of competition under state governance, and increasingly under the governance of the federal (that is, national, rather than state) bureaucracy. The “Excellence Initiative” for German universities begun in 2005 is an important case in point, as is the commitment of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) to assigning new research funding to the humanities, rather than withdrawing funding from them. In those contexts, scholars in the humanities, many historians among them, have become more important to politicians and administrators, and vice versa. It is now not uncommon for a German history professor to make a phone call to an official in a federal ministry about an application for project funding. A new academic–political complex has emerged that builds on the traditions of the complicated German mélange of bureaucracy and academic self-governance originally institutionalized in the late 1950s and 1960s.

As a part of this post-unification reform thrust, often associated with the so-called “Agenda 2010” reforms implemented by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in the early 2000s, experts were in especially high demand. The problems that Germany (like other advanced Western societies) confronted seemed to demand scholarly expertise — in this case, not primarily in the field of historical identity and memory, but in economics and social science: demographic change and the challenges of an ageing society, the restructuring of the welfare state,
and the consequences of immigration and a multicultural society. Much of what I discussed as my own experience earlier in this article belongs to this specific context of expertise-based policy-making. In the past five to ten years, however, the mood has changed, and the political system has lost much of its interest in academic experts as consultants. The number of government advisory councils and parliamentary committees has shrunk, and only a few of them, such as the Council for Sustainable Development (Rat für nachhaltige Entwicklung) and, in particular, the German Ethics Council (Deutscher Ethikrat), remain influential. However, the Ethikrat is dominated by scholars from medicine and biology, law and theology, and currently there is no historian among its twenty-six members. The knowledge that historians have to offer is too vague, not “scientific” or “expert” enough, to be considered relevant in those councils’ suggestions for German lawmakers.

III.

What, then, do historians have to offer, what kind of knowledge or judgment do they (supposedly) command that proves attractive to wider public arenas, to politics more general and perhaps even to policy-making? Actually, there is a marked difference between the “public arena” and “politics,” for the larger, non-academic readership for history books mostly expects some sort of storytelling, a crisp and possibly entertaining narrative, often — to use Friedrich Nietzsche’s term — in an “antiquarian” mode of history. Politicians, and certainly those in a more instrumental sphere of policy-making, by contrast, are hardly interested in the past as such, or even the past as a refuge from the present.

Still, there is a certain expectation, again based on a specific German academic, or bildungsbürgerlich, tradition, that historians offer a coherent “grand narrative” of the nation’s history in which a political agenda may be situated — not so much in the sense of specific decision-making, but as a horizon of legitimation for the larger thrust of government action, and in order to situate contemporary politics in a historically meaningful Weltbild. The two-volume history of modern Germany by Berlin historian Heinrich August Winkler, Der lange Weg nach Westen, published in 2000, has often been referred to by politicians in that way: as historically vindicating reunification against skeptics, both domestic and abroad, and as laying the groundwork for the politics of the new German nation-state in the post-reunification era. For the political communication of history in Germany, relating

6 Friedrich Nietzsche, Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben (Leipzig, 1874).
the present to the Nazi past remains fundamentally important, and current challenges in populism, racism, and antisemitism challenge historians to run the “Nazi litmus test.”

Overall, the national framing of history proves enormously resilient in the political arena. While this is only partly due to Germans’ obsession with the burden of their history in the twentieth century, it still nourishes an increasing tension with the post-national methodologies and narratives that have emerged in the historical professions — in Germany, the United States, and elsewhere — in recent years. Because of the legislative and policy implications that pertain to a nationally framed political society, even topics that refer to general issues in modern societies, and one might say, belong to the realm of social history, are easily being subjected to a “national” (not nationalist) interpretation: migration and population change, inequality and poverty, or gender relations.

There is, however, one general function that historians can fulfill, and that sets them advantageously apart from scholars in other disciplines — not with regard to topic or specific subject matter, but rather in terms of representation and rhetoric. Historians — certainly in Germany, but possibly in other countries as well — are sought after as what one might call practical generalists. They offer their knowledge in a not overly specialized way, they are used to arguing in broader contexts and to making multi-causal arguments. And what is very important, they are mostly using understandable, jargon-free language that relates to tangible issues and is immediately accessible to those outside of their professional community. While German historians are often said to be more academic, scientific, and “Teutonic” in their writing styles and not quite as elegant or forceful in their narrative prose as their British and American colleagues, their publications are still much more accessible, on average, than those of a typical sociologist or economist. All of this sets history apart not only from the sciences, but also from the social sciences, which have suffered a remarkable loss of public and political authority since their heyday in the 1970s.

This mode of practical and accessible generalism also distinguishes history — overall, of course not in every single case — from other disciplines in the humanities, such as philosophy and literary studies, with their more hermetic (while perhaps more theoretically profound) styles of thought and writing. Since more advanced trends in the historical profession — under the influence of the cultural turn, or
postcolonial theory — have moved in that direction over the past
decades, there may be a danger that historians lose their authority in
the public arena because they are losing their immediate understand-
ability. In other words, politicians and the media may prefer more
conventional, traditional, if not necessarily politically conservative,
modes of history writing, which could pose a challenge to the profes-

sion in the future. But again, it is important to note that in Germany,
historians and humanities scholars in general are held in high esteem
not just among the political Left, as is the case in the United States,
but also by conservative politicians. So far at least, they have not
been accused of pursuing an esoteric agenda of political correctness
that would alienate them from one half of society, or rather, alienate
the representatives of that half from the humanities.

IV.
The friendly reception that historians often experience in the public
and political arenas is not something just to be basked in, but a
double-edged sword. By way of conclusion, I would like to summa-
rize some of the tensions, conflicts, and ambivalences in the com-
communicative space that this paper hints at throughout. Tensions are
sometimes produced within the historical profession between those
who engage as public intellectuals or in policy advising, and those
who prefer to stick with “pure scholarship,” with the tacit suspicion,
and sometimes very explicit allegation, that leaving the ivory tower
and producing and representing historical knowledge in modes dif-
ferent from the classroom or the academic journal corrupts academic
standards. The wider reputation that may be gained from participat-
ing in a governmental body or by being invited to speak to a political
party convention hence can easily be at odds with the reputation, or
social capital, accumulated within the profession.

More important, however, are the tensions that emerge in the tran-
sitional space between academia and politics. There may be at least
three, although they are closely related to one another: (1) the ten-
sion between loyalism and criticism. Scholars in the humanities are
usually proud of their intellectual independence and of their critical
attitude towards power and privilege. And yet their role in policy
advising will be different as soon as they enter the system of politics,
with its different rules of the game. To be sure, there is a difference
between political engagement on behalf of the party in government
or in support of the opposition in terms of the balance of affirmative
and critical modes of thought. Still, a critical scholar would want to
be critical not just of power, but of any political stance that appears all too streamlined in her view. (2) The role conflict between “expert” and “public intellectual”: historians, much like sociologists or physicists, are addressed as experts, as holders of a highly specialized, and potentially objective knowledge. And yet they often aim at giving more general meaning to contemporary situations, doing so by expressing their own opinion, as public intellectuals — which by definition includes the transgression of expertise, and exposing oneself as an opinionated citizen.8 From this arises (3), the tension between hard data and soft knowledge, between expectation and delivery: historians in the policy arena are constantly maneuvering between the expectation of delivering hard facts, hard data, as scientists do, or at least of offering an unambiguous statement: “Now tell me, what was it like?” In a post-factual age, when the very essence of objective knowledge is being contested in the political arena, it may become more difficult for historians to speak persuasively in more complicated modes of knowledge and truth: grounded in the sources, and yet transcending a simple linearity of meaning. Historians will never fall into the trap of the positivist illusion that facts may immediately and conclusively be converted into policy. What historians can offer is of a different nature, as they are delivering soft knowledge, and pride themselves in the production of ambivalence.

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GERMAN JEWISH “ENEMY ALIENS” IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Anne Schenderlein
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It can only lead to confusion among our American friends when we—refugees from Nazi Germany—are branded enemies of the American people, when the term “Jewish refugee” is increasingly associated with “enemy,” and when soon there will be those who behave anti-Semitically toward Jewish refugees without having their anti-Semitism put them at risk of identification as Nazis and fifth columnists. They will surely be instructed by their masters [Lehrmeister] to agitate against us not as Jews, for a change, but as enemy aliens. And everything that creates confusion and discord helps the Nazis.¹

These words were spoken by Felix Guggenheim, president of the Jewish Club of 1933 in Los Angeles, the second largest German Jewish refugee organization in the United States, when he addressed his fellow club members in 1942. Guggenheim was referring to a phenomenon that the refugees had been facing for almost a decade. Certain groups—including government officials—projected onto German Jews their fears of intrusion by foreign and ostensibly dangerous elements. It had happened in Germany, and now it was happening in the United States, albeit under different circumstances. As Guggenheim pointed out, people were applying labels and prejudices that could take on lives of their own and affect not only the image of refugees in the United States, but have far-reaching consequences for the ongoing war against the Nazis. This article focuses on the government-imposed classification of German Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany as “enemy aliens” in the United States during the Second World War.² It examines how different actors—German Jewish refugees themselves, U.S. government officials, and representatives of various American organizations—employed the categories “enemy alien” and “German Jewish refugee” at different times, in various circumstances, for diverse reasons and ends. It explores the baggage and meaning that came with using these terms and how such designations affected the everyday lives of people. Much of what is described in this historical case study has current corollaries across

¹ Undated Document, Felix Guggenheim Collection, Box 108, Felix Guggenheim Papers, Correspondence 1942-1944, National Defense Migration Hearings and German Aliens.

² This article is based on my dissertation: Anne C. Schenderlein, “‘Germany on their Minds’? German Jewish Refugees in the United States and Relationships to Germany, 1938-1988,” PhD Dissertation, (University of California, 2014).
the globe as well as historical antecedents. Each case is different and complex in its own right, yet this type of categorizing and stereotyping frequently has analogous, usually contradictory consequences.

Between 1933 and 1945, approximately 90,000 Jews who had fled Nazi Germany arrived in the United States. For many of the emigrants and refugees from Germany, the United States was the preferred country of immigration, often because of pre-existing family connections and also because it seemed to promise a life somewhat more similar to that in Germany, at least in comparison to what they imagined awaited them in Palestine or South America. Getting into the United States was extremely difficult, however.

In the 1930s, U.S. immigration policy was based on the National Origins Immigration Act of 1924, enacted under the Hoover administration as a continuation and revision of earlier immigration restrictions, particularly the 1921 Immigration Act. Its purpose was to preserve a white, Protestant majority in the United States by limiting the number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe—with an eye specifically to Italians, Slavs, and Jews. For that reason, the Act limited the number of people allowed to immigrate to two percent of each nationality that had been present in the United States by 1890, a time before a great number of the aforementioned immigrant groups had arrived in the United States. Meanwhile, the Act completely excluded immigrants from Japan.3 Franklin D. Roosevelt upheld the Hoover administration policy of maintaining low levels of immigration and only slightly relieved the restrictions in 1938 in reaction to the deterioration of conditions for Jews and others in the German Reich. However, the Roosevelt administration began tightening the restrictions again in the summer of 1939, now ostensibly in response to fears of subversive elements among the immigrants. A combination of widespread public sentiments of nativism and anti-Semitism in the U.S.—partly a reaction to the failure of Roosevelt’s New Deal programs to bring the nation out of the Depression—as well as a “bureaucratic indifference to moral or humanitarian concerns” led to a situation in which, despite massive demands for visas to the United States, the annual quota for these immigrants from Europe was never filled.4 By 1941, two years into the war in Europe, it had become almost impossible to gain legal entrance to the United States, a bureaucratically induced situation further complicated by the war.5

In this restrictive immigration situation, the refugees who made it to the United States were the lucky ones. Still, the pervasive

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3 Bat-Ami Zucker, “American Immigration Policy in the 1930s,” in Frank Caestecker and Bob Moore, eds., Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Liberal European States (New York, 2010), 154.


5 There is ample literature on the difficulties Jewish refugees faced in gaining entry to the United States. Besides Breitman/Kraut and Zucker, see for example David S. Wyman, Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941 (Amherst, 1968); David S. Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945 (New York, 1984).
anti-immigrant mood in the country made them feel, as one refugee remembered, “not especially welcome.” In 1938–39, at the height of the influx of German Jewish refugees into the United States, propaganda by anti-immigration and anti-Semitic groups—of which there were over one hundred operating in the U.S.—blamed Jews for the country’s economic problems and agitated against the arrival of Jewish immigrants. Besides homegrown nativist, racist movements like the Ku Klux Klan, there was the German American Bund, the American Nazi movement under the leadership of German American Fritz Kuhn, which had about 25,000 followers. The most influential anti-Semitic groups were led by fundamentalist Christian leaders, both Protestant and Catholic. Father Charles E. Coughlin’s rants against “Communist Jews,” whom he held responsible for all economic problems, were broadcast by forty-seven radio stations that reached more than three and a half million listeners in the U.S. As the leader of the “National Union for Social Justice and the Christian Front,” Coughlin also published the magazine Social Justice, which had a print run of one million copies and was sold in every major city in the U.S. His media outlets agitated particularly against Jewish immigrants, who were depicted as the greatest competition in an already distressed U.S. job market.

Anti-Jewish sentiment was not only directed at potential immigrants, but also against Jewish Americans, whose share in the overall population was just under five million or about 3.7 percent of the U.S. population at the time. A March 1938 survey revealed that forty-one percent of those surveyed believed that Jews had “too much power in the United States.” Another poll from May 1938 showed that one-fifth of those interviewed wanted to “drive Jews out” of the country and twenty-five percent responded that Jews should not hold offices in politics or government.

The reactions of American Jews to this increase in anti-Semitism and anti-immigration sentiment varied from open protest to reservation and accommodation. The American Jewish Committee, whose membership and following were mostly Jews of German extraction who had been in the country since before the 1880s, had historically taken a position of accommodation within American society. In response to the refugee crisis, they focused their efforts on working behind the scenes, trying to convince important individuals in political office to improve immigration policies for Jewish refugees from Europe. Open protest and agitation on behalf of Jews in Europe, they believed, would only worsen anti-Semitism in the U.S. The American Jewish Congress, on the other hand, dominated by more recent eastern

7 Ibid., Wyman, Abandonment of the Jews, Sff.
9 Breiman and Kraut, 86.
10 Ibid., 88.
European immigrants, did not shy away from open protest to reach the same goal. One measure intended to weaken the German state was the launching of a boycott movement targeting German products and services, for example. Ultimately, the efforts of the American Jewish community were unsuccessful in actually influencing government policy with a view to Germany’s and Europe’s Jews and the refugees. While the division of the community has often been cited as a reason for this failure, American Jews accounted for only about three percent of American voters and thus their influence was naturally limited. However, different organizations in the United States undertook efforts to assist those Jews from Germany who had made it to the United States, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and the National Council of Jewish Women.

Non-Jewish organizations also lent support to the new arrivals and organized against nativist, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant groups. Organizations such as the Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees, the Committee for Catholic Refugees, and even Chambers of Commerce or Better Business Bureaus in various cities published statistical information about the refugees to rebut the notion that they were exacerbating the economic crisis. The American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization, published a widely circulated pamphlet entitled *Refugee Facts*, for example, with a total print run of 250,000. Of these, 100,000 copies were distributed to Protestant clergy, and the rest went to writers, editors, congressmen, and public officials. In addition, more than a hundred newspapers covered the publication in one way or another.

This pamphlet sought to correct the notion of a particularly high number of immigrants entering the country at the time. It stated that more people left the U.S. than entered during the period from 1932 to 1938, when many of the refugees arrived. For the year 1938, which had seen the highest number of refugees since 1932, the brochure stressed that net immigration in relation to the U.S. population of 130,000,000 “represented less than 4/100 of one per cent.” Besides addressing concerns over the sheer numbers of new immigrants, the writers of the pamphlet also commented on their ethnic and religious identity. Playing on the fact that in the eyes of some Americans, Germans had historically been seen as more desirable immigrants than Jews, the writers of the pamphlet downplayed their Jewish identity and presented the refugees as Germans, even Christians. They pointed out that many of the refugees who were now coming into the

14 Ibid. 7.
country had lived in Germany for centuries, were highly assimilated, and “had intermarried with the Gentile Germans extensively.”

Explaining that Nazi racial laws defined anybody who “has even as little as 25% Jewish blood in his veins” as a Jew, regardless of religion, the brochure contended that among the refugees were many who actually had been “Christian for generations.” Apparently conceiving of this detail as particularly helpful, this point was emphasized again in a concluding paragraph: “It is necessary to stress once more a fact which the American public has even yet not understood sufficiently, namely, that these refugees from Germany are not all Jews by religion—far from it. In 1938, about one-third (31%) of all refugees from Germany were Christians.”

Though written to combat negative sentiments against the refugees, the content of this Friends brochure on “Refugee Facts” was in part not just exaggerated, but in itself at least passively anti-Semitic, whether intrinsically or in its pandering to the anti-Semitism of its audience. By presenting the refugees as not of the Jewish religion and by stressing their high skill and education levels, the writers of the brochure clearly attempted to differentiate these refugees from the previous wave of Jewish immigrants, who had come from the shtetls and towns of eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The stereotypes of these Eastern immigrants as deeply religious—often portrayed as mysterious and devious—poor, unskilled, and dirty fundamentally fueled anti-Semitism. Meanwhile emphasizing familiar traits such as “Germanness” and Christian-ity made the refugees look less foreign and more “adaptable.” The downside of such arguments was that Judaism as a religion appeared negative by implication.

One may expect that this type of portrayal must have rubbed many refugees the wrong way. However, Aufbau, the most important German Jewish refugee publication in the United States, ignored the apparent distaste for Jews the brochure implied and supported its distribution. Under the headline “Spread the Truth!,” a small article stated that the refugees should know about this resource and distribute it because it “contained all the arguments and counter-arguments about the immigration of German and other Central European refugees.”

On one level, being German was indeed the identity many Jews from Germany had possessed for the longest time and deeply identified with. The great majority of the 530,000 Jews who lived in Weimar

15 Ibid. 15.
16 Ibid. 12f.
17 Ibid., 13.
18 “Verbreitet die Wahrheit!” Aufbau 5 (September 1, 1939).
Germany viewed themselves primarily as German citizens, as integral to the German nation and culture. At the same time, they had commitments and ties of differing degrees and intensities to the Jewish faith, Jewish cultural traditions, and a Jewish heritage.\(^9\) By no means a homogenous group, Jews in Germany were diverse in regard to economic, social, political, and cultural aspects and also identified with their Jewishness in different ways. Most had shed much of their traditional Jewishness in appearance and lifestyle, but the early years of the Weimar Republic also saw a “renaissance of Jewish culture” during which many showed a heightened interest and undertook to develop community and cultural projects that carried and purveyed a distinct Jewish identity.\(^20\) The Nazi takeover ended this possibility of being able to be as German and Jewish as one liked. A myriad of anti-Jewish laws and measures, passed gradually and at times abruptly, and based on pseudo-scientific racial categories of Jewishness, affected even those who had only tenuous ties to the Jewish religion or did not identify as Jewish at all. Asked about their experiences, some refugees remembered that it had been Hitler and the Nazis who had “made” them Jewish. In the years before arriving in the United States, German Jews experienced a tumultuous time, including a fundamental shake-up of their self-understanding as Germans and Jews. Their reactions ranged from clinging to their German identities, even in the face of social exclusion, to a new embrace of their Jewishness and a search for special meaning in it, to a complete rejection of anything related to Germany.

In the face of this history and once again confronted with anti-Semitism, it probably seemed wise for the refugees or anybody who wanted to advocate for them to emphasize their “Germanness,” even though it disregarded their complicated relationship to this part of their identity. Taking a pragmatic view and focusing on the brochure’s attempt to foster a more accepting environment, they accepted its dubious method of doing so, perhaps seeing it as the price to be paid.

Indeed, conscious of public sentiment in the U.S., the refugees themselves carefully crafted their public image as well. They did this, for example, through their publications, which provided not only significant resources for the refugees but also a representation to the outside. Besides the New York–based newspaper *Aufbau*, which had a readership that spread beyond the United States to South America, Palestine, and most other places where Jewish refugees had found a haven, there were similar smaller papers published by so-called German-Jewish Clubs all over the United States.\(^21\) In Los Angeles,
which became the second largest center of German Jewish immigration during the 1930s and 1940s, the local publication was called Neue Welt (New World). Its 1939 five-year anniversary edition was a case in point for the refugees’ efforts at crafting a positive image of themselves. While the magazine’s title and much of its content were in German, the front page was printed in English and featured a large, bold-typed heading of “God Bless America.” The accompanying article was an ode to the United States, the country “which has always given refuge and protection to the persecuted and oppressed” and to California, where, as the author stated, it was a privilege to live.22 Painting a glowing picture of the United States and its people, the article’s author, implying she or he spoke for all refugees, expressed great gratitude for having been accepted into the country and vowed that the refugees would pay back a “small debt of gratitude” by fulfilling their “duty to become the best citizens possible of this wonderful country.” To learn, honor, and follow “the correct lines of Americanization” would be one of the first tasks in this endeavor.23 The author strategically omitted any reference to American anti-immigration sentiments and anti-Semitism, not to mention worries about family members not allowed into the country. In fact, the word “Jew” did not appear once in the text. Neither did “German” or “Germany.” Instead, this front-page article left the specifics of the German Jewish refugee story nebulous by likening it to the story of the thousands of others who had come as immigrants to the United States before.

In the early years after their arrival, then, the German Jewish refugee community attempted to divert public attention away from their specific German Jewish heritage, as they let themselves be characterized as Germans by some, like the Quakers, and framed themselves very generally as immigrants. Whereas in public perception the “German-ness” of the refugees appeared to be a familiar, less anxiety-invoking category than their Jewishness, the refugees themselves had a more difficult attitude toward that part of their identity given their recent and brutal exclusion from all areas of life in Germany. In internal debates, they constantly questioned and re-evaluated their relationship to their former home country, to its—and their—language and culture. Americanization, besides its practical necessity, in many ways seemed to promise a way to escape this dilemma of identification.

War

While signs in Europe were pointing increasingly toward war, refugees in the United States were learning English, finding jobs, 22 “America,” Neue Welt (September 1939): 1.
23 The concept of Americanization originated as a response among native-born U.S. citizens to the recurring waves of mass immigration between 1880 and 1917. It initially encapsulated the call for immigrants to abandon the customs and values of their homelands entirely in favor of putatively “American” ways. By the 1930s, “Americanization” had come to mean the process of adjustment to socio-economic and cultural conditions in the U.S. German Jewish refugees understood Americanization in the latter sense, and the term was omnipresent in their publications. I use the term in the sense the refugees did.
applying for naturalization, and learning about baseball. Although they still valued and enjoyed works by Bach, Beethoven, Mann, and Schiller and they frequently held social gatherings in the German language—cultural markers they could mostly agree upon—refugee organizations never failed to present their group as comprising aspiring and proud future Americans. When war broke out in Europe in September 1939, however, the refugees’ efforts and enthusiasm for “Americanization” ultimately did not protect them from renewed suspicion. At this point, the American government, while officially maintaining neutrality, became concerned about infiltration by Nazi spies and other第五 columnists in the United States, both Fascist and Communist. In public perception, German Jewish refugees were among those who could potentially serve both causes, as prejudices about Jews generally linked them to radicalism and subversion. In this situation the refugees’ perceived undesirable Jewishness could not be overcome by emphasizing their German origin. Both designations were viewed with suspicion, if for different reasons. At a press conference in June 1940, President Roosevelt explained:

Now, of course, the refugee has got to be checked because, unfortunately, among the refugees there are some spies, as has been found in other countries. And not all of them are voluntary spies—it is rather a horrible story but in some of the other countries that refugees out of Germany have gone to, especially Jewish refugees, they have found a number of definitely proven spies.

The idea that Jews who had been persecuted by the Nazis would then in turn work for them seems far-fetched, but the president claimed that in some cases Jews had been blackmailed by the Nazis: “your father and mother will be taken out and shot.” If the number of such cases was extremely low, Roosevelt nonetheless maintained that the possibility was nevertheless “something we have got to watch.”

These concerns over fifth columnists in the United States resulted in the passing of the Alien Registration Act of 1940, also known as the Smith Act, which required all foreign-born persons who were not U.S. citizens or who held only their initial papers for the naturalization process to register with the U.S. Post Office. The U.S. government promoted the Act as a measure protecting loyal aliens, and as such it received much publicity and overall support in the media, including the German Jewish refugee press. One author of an article

24 See Breitman and Kraut, 113.
25 This is from Roosevelt’s response to the question what should be done to avoid imposing suffering on the refugees already in the United States who were unjustifiably perceived as potential spies. Ibid., 212f.
26 Ibid. On the debates and conflicts over this topic within the government, see works cited under footnote 5 and Richard Breitman, Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).
28 While some critical voices were concerned about the potential creation of a totalitarian surveillance system and also warned of the futility of this legislation, its reception was largely affirmative.
in *Aufbau* remarked, for instance, that the government’s increased efforts to control who entered the country, allowing only those who were clearly nonsubversive, would help fight xenophobia in the U.S. and thus have positive reverberations for the refugees.\(^{29}\) This outcome, however, did not materialize. In fact, the Smith Act became the basis for the refugees’ classification as enemy aliens after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States’ entry into the war on December 7, 1941.

On December 7, Roosevelt issued Presidential Proclamation 2525, which classified all natives, citizens, denizens, or subjects of Japan to be “alien enemies.”\(^{30}\) Enemy aliens, as they were commonly called, were subject to restrictions on movement, travel, and change of occupation.\(^{31}\) In addition, they were not allowed to possess or use firearms, ammunition, bombs, explosives (or materials that could be used in such), short-wave radios, transmitting sets, signal devices, codes, cameras, or any materials, such as books, pictures, documents, and maps, that might reveal information about United States defenses.\(^{32}\) Moreover, enemy aliens were “liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed ...”\(^{33}\) The government’s initial promises to carefully investigate potentially dangerous aliens to avoid condemning entire groups were broken when the FBI detained 736 Japanese immigrant leaders within days of the attack on Pearl Harbor.\(^{34}\) By February 1942, this number had risen to 2,912 people and on February 19, President Roosevelt authorized the removal and detention of all Japanese and American citizens of Japanese descent living on the Pacific Coast of the United States.\(^{35}\) Eventually, 119,803 individuals of Japanese descent were detained in camps, sixty-five percent of whom were American citizens.\(^{36}\) The policies against the Japanese and Japanese-American citizens on the West Coast were rooted in racism and politics and had little to do with actual military necessity.\(^{37}\)

German Jewish refugees, by contrast, did not suffer what the Japanese had to endure. However, on December 8, 1941, they were also classified as enemy aliens along with all other natives, citizens, denizens, and subjects of Germany and Italy, and the regulations announced were the same as those for the Japanese. With the experience of persecution fresh in memory and the example of the Japanese in plain sight, the refugees were greatly distressed at being classified as enemy aliens and began to have fears about their future in the U.S.
Once again, a government had placed a legally binding and restrictive label on them. Whereas the Nazis had robbed them of their status as (full) German citizens, the American enemy alien classification reduced them to their German origins, completely disregarding their Jewish backgrounds and persecution by the Nazis. While many other people of German origin in the U.S. were classified as enemy aliens without having any ties to the Nazi regime or interest in its ideology, for those who had been persecuted by the Nazis to be classified as quasi Nazis was naturally particularly upsetting. The reaction of the refugee community was not only shock but confusion as many of the rules and regulations that came with the classification were changed repeatedly in the weeks and months after their announcement. Although the practical effects for the Jewish refugees were initially not that grave, the lack of knowledge and certainty about what might happen created great anxiety, especially because they had seen the government arrest, incarcerate, and deport Japanese, German, and Italian enemy aliens under the provisions of the proclamation.\footnote{See Presidential Proclamation 2525 of Dec. 7, 1941, U.S. Code Congressional Service, 77 Cong., 1st Sess., 885. On the internment of Germans, see Timothy Shouldian, The German-Americans and World War II (New York, 1998). For Italians, see Stephen Fox, The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans during World War II, (Boston, 1990).}

The refugee paper Aufbau served as the main source of information on the classification issue for the refugees. Its journalists offered advice on how they ought to behave in the face of their new status in the U.S. by, for instance, abstaining from speaking German in public, carrying one’s registration card (issued during the Alien Registration one year prior) at all times, and participating in blood donations or other patriotic activities.\footnote{“An Alle! Wichtige Mitteilungen für die Leser des Aufbaus,” Aufbau 7, no. 50 (December 12, 1941). On January 14, 1942, as a supplement to the Smith Act, another Presidential Proclamation required mandatory registration with the government for enemy aliens, with which the vast majority complied. The registration took place at U.S. post offices and required answers to questions by the Department of Justice and the FBI. Enemy aliens were then required to carry the Certificate of Identification they received at all times. John Eric Schmitz, “Enemies Among Us: The Relocation, Internment, and Repatriation of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans During the Second World War.” (PhD diss., American University, 2007). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (UMI 3273603).}

At the same time, Aufbau tried to calm the general anxiety by encouraging trust in the democratic government of the United States. Indeed, officials such as Attorney General Francis Biddle repeatedly declared that the government would differentiate between “real” enemy aliens and those “loyal” aliens to whom the classification applied “in the technical sense of the word only,” and whom the government would “protect ... from discrimination or abuse.”\footnote{“Loyal Non-Citizens Safe: No Wholesale Distraction,” Aufbau 7, no. 51 (December 19, 1941). Special Assistant to the Attorney General, Earl G. Harrison, repeated this wording after new registration regulations were introduced. See “Warum diese Verordnung? Aus der Radioansprache von Earl G. Harrison,” Aufbau 8 (January 30, 1942).}

The journalists writing these reports in Aufbau were based in New York City. The sense of a merely “technical” classification did not prevail for those German Jewish refugees residing on the West Coast of the United States, however. Especially in California, with its concentration of defense industries, military sites, and a large Japanese population, the term “enemy alien” had become “a headline slogan,” used repeatedly by the press to point out the danger of
enemy aliens, real or imagined. The tension over people of Japanese
descent reached at times hysterical dimensions, with reports about
alleged sabotage and other subversive activities. Even though the
term “enemy alien” was mainly employed to refer to Japanese (with
no distinction as to their citizenship status) and rarely to German or
Italian “aliens,” some German Jewish refugees feared for their own
safety, concerned that people might not make the necessary distinc-
tions. After all, one refugee representative wrote, “if somebody is
obviously treated as an enemy, then there must be something to it.”
Signs in restaurants saying “enemy aliens keep out” lent credence to
these fears, creating situations disturbingly reminiscent of what the
refugees had experienced in Germany, when their countrymen had
posted signs saying “non-Aryans keep out.”

In early March 1943, the situation became even more worrisome
for the refugees on the West Coast. At that time Western Defense
Commander Lieutenant General John L. De Witt announced that
all enemy aliens—making no exemptions for German and Italian
aliens—would be gradually removed from an area declared Military
Zone No. 1, which included the coasts of California, Washington, and
Oregon as well as the southern sections of California and Arizona
along the Mexican border. This announcement and the possibility
that refugees from Germany might be moved like the Japanese and,
as they understood it, “as if they were Nazis” created great “panic
and distress” among the refugee community.

Refugees pushed back against the enemy alien classification with a
series of such appeals to local and federal authorities by individu-
als and organizations alike. In their arguments for exemption from
the enemy alien classification, the main line of reasoning centered
around the refugees’ “true identity” as victims of the Nazis. Whereas
they had previously described themselves simply as immigrants or

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41 “‘Enemy aliens’ is a term
which is not a mere tech-
nical concept, but has
become a vital problem
for those concerned.”
Document from Felix
Guggenheim Papers,
Correspondence
1942–43, Box 108,
1, Felix
Guggenheim Collection,
USC Specialized Libraries
and Archival Collections.

42 Ellen Eisenberg, The First
to Cry Down Injustice:
Western Jews and Japanese
Removal During WWII
(Lanham, 2008), 112.

43 Undated document from
Felix Guggenheim Papers,
Correspondence 1942–43,
Box 108, 1, Felix
Guggenheim Collection,
USC Specialized Libraries
and Archival Collections.

44 Thomas Mann points this
out in a letter he wrote to
Agnes Meyer, publisher of
the Washington Post, on
February 6, 1942. English
translation by Erich Frey
from unpublished letter,
Beinecke Library, Yale
University; Erich A. Frey,
“Thomas Mann and His
Friends before the Tolan
Committee (1942),” in
John M. Spalek and
Robert F. Bell, eds., Exile:
The Writer’s Experience
(Chapel Hill, 1982), 203f.

45 “Proklamation No. 1,”
Aufbau, no. 10 (March 6,

46 Felix Guggenheim Papers,
Correspondence, Enemy
Alien Issues incl. Tolan
House Committee 102,
Box 107, Felix Guggen-
heim Collection.

47 Ibid.
refugees, *Aufbau* reporters now frequently used the terms “refugee-immigrants” and “anti-Hitler refugees” in an attempt to leave no room for doubt about their anti-German, loyal, and pro-American attitude. As evidence of having severed their ties to Germany, the refugees referred to the Nazi government’s decree of November 25, 1941, expatriating and expropriating all Jews formerly of Germany now residing outside of the Reich.\(^4\) Accordingly, all refugees in the U.S. were not only legally stateless but they had no reason to remain loyal to Germany or maintain an interest in the country because of property that they had left behind. Paradoxically, Nazi legislation became a useful rhetorical tool against discriminatory American legislation. Thus, representatives of the refugee community referenced their treatment under the Nazi regime when they appeared in front of the Tolan Committee. This Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration held hearings in San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Los Angeles in late February and early March 1942 to address rumors regarding the possible evacuation of enemy aliens. Refugees spoke before it in each of these cities in the hopes that their pleas might bring about an exemption from evacuation in particular and the enemy alien classification more generally. One line of argumentation was to connect and compare their suffering under the Nazis to an ongoing story of suffering in the democratically governed United States. Also, one representative from the Los Angeles Refugee Club remarked that the wrongful treatment of Jewish refugees would constitute a victory for the Nazis. At the same time, the speakers were quick to point out that surely the U.S. would not actually allow policies that treated the refugees like the Nazis did.\(^4\) The refugees’ pleas received sympathetic responses from the Tolan Committee as well as from some influential officials such as California Governor Culbert Olson and Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron. Ultimately, no removal of German and Italian aliens was carried out. While this decision had much to do with the absence of pronounced racism against the European “aliens” in contrast to that against the Japanese, the official conclusion was instead that it would not be realistic to relocate and intern all German and Italian enemy aliens if one wanted to win the war.\(^5\)

**Continuing Troubles**

Though sparing German Jewish refugees removal from their places of residence, the Tolan Committee hearings did not result in the exemption of refugees from enemy alien status. For refugees on the

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West Coast, this circumstance continued to have troubling practical consequences. On March 24, 1942, only a few weeks after announcing the removal plans that ultimately did not come to pass for Italian and German refugees, Lieutenant General De Witt declared all aliens in Military Zone 1 subject to a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. as well as a limitation on travel to five miles. The last measure meant that refugees could initially not go to work, to school, to the hospital, or to their temple, if these places were located more than five miles away from their home. In a city like Los Angeles, where the majority of German Jewish refugees lived, such distances were quite common. For those trying to find work, the classification created a great disadvantage as well, since employers, though not legally allowed to discriminate, were less likely to hire people who were subject to this classification, questioning their “usefulness.”51 Whereas refugee organizations and individual refugees were ultimately able to obtain permits to travel further than five miles for work, school, and places of worship, permits to break the curfew were difficult to obtain, and the restrictions put a great strain on all areas of life and particularly limited the possibility of a social life.

Young refugees felt especially hard hit by these restrictions.52 One boy’s petition explained that he had first suffered from harassment in school in Germany and then in Sweden for being Jewish. When his family finally made it to the U.S., he found school to be “like a paradise.” After the curfew restrictions were passed, this situation was in jeopardy, however, because he was no longer able to socialize with his friends as he wanted, and he felt ashamed to tell people why.53 The young boy’s letter exemplified the long series of hardships that refugees had been through up to this point and their frustration with the injustice, arbitrariness, and lack of control that they faced again and again.

Furthermore, the fact that former Austrian citizens were exempt from the classification was completely incomprehensible to the refugees, as was the exemption of Hungarians, Rumanians, and Bulgarians from the restrictions in July 1942. Refugee organizations continued petitioning the authorities for reclassification, now more often with the argument that the added restrictions only impeded the refugees in reaching their goal of becoming “good Americans,” as naturalization procedures were halted for several months and, under the curfew, it became difficult to attend citizenship classes. The closing sentences of an October 1942 petition to the Justice Department revealed a

51  Letter from Richard Grau to Dean Edwin D. Dickinson, Department of Justice, July 12, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Curfew Restrictions and Richard O. Grau.

52  “Sorrow Comes to the West Coast: The Curfew Regulations and Their Consequences,” Aufbau 8, no. 14 (April 3, 1942). This also includes reprinted excerpts from the Los Angeles newspaper Daily News.

53  Petition to the Department of Justice, Washington D.C., October 1942, Felix Guggenheim Papers, Correspondence, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 10f 2, Box 107, Felix Guggenheim Collection.
despondent, dejected, and disheartened attitude: “Most unwillingly do we waste the time of the authorities and our energy in this arguing for our public legal rehabilitation. We would much prefer to use our efforts directly against Hitlerism. Therefore we most obediently ask for reclassification.”

Refugees turned their classification as quasi Nazis on its head, arguing that not only did their German Jewish background make it a nonsense for them to be considered the “enemy” but that, on the contrary, it was precisely their German Jewish background that could be a strategic advantage to the United States in the war effort against the Nazis. Only in 1943 did one government agency officially recognize this potential, when the U.S. Military and the Office of Strategic Services began recruiting refugees from Germany — both Jews and those who had fled for political reasons — for intelligence work. From then on, Jewish refugees in the military were also exempted from the enemy alien classification, but not their family members. The situation on the West Coast finally improved in late December 1942 with the lifting of the curfew and travel restrictions after the Western Defense Command determined that these were no longer necessary as “other security measures had been provided.”

It is difficult to determine why this was so, even after authorities acknowledged that refugees could contribute to the war effort in unique ways, and even though prominent public figures and government officials like Attorney General Francis Biddle warned against such wrongful classification from the beginning. One main reason was the shift in responsibility for the matter from civilian to military authorities. Originally, enemy alien issues had been under the jurisdiction of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and, above that, the Justice Department, headed by Francis Biddle. With an Executive Order issued on February 19, 1942, this authority shifted to the War Department. Initially there existed a certain degree of confusion over who was actually responsible and who could make decisions on the subject matter. Ultimately, while civilian authorities remained sympathetic to the refugees, they had to concede that West Coast residents classified as enemy aliens were no longer under their jurisdiction.

For the military, the question of “military necessity” was of pre-eminent importance, and in defending an expansive understanding of this point, the Western Defense Command on the
West Coast could be quite cynical. The chief of the Wartime Civil Control Administration, Tom C. Clark, for example, responded to a plea by the Los Angeles refugee organization that it was certainly regrettable that civilians had to endure “incidental inconveniences” resulting from war but that “as past victims of a persecution as terrifying as that from which you have so lately escaped, the present inconveniences of remaining in your house between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. must seem insignificant by comparison.”

Certainly the curfew was not as terrible as what many Jews had endured under the Nazi regime in the 1930s. However, the continuation of discriminatory attitudes and measures caused a great deal of anxiety. After all, Nazi legislation against Jews had also developed in incremental and apparently legal steps, becoming more intense and discriminatory and eventually deadly; a scenario that only very few of Germany’s Jews had been able to imagine, let alone anticipate. In the United States, during the war years, reliable information about what to expect was either lacking or contradictory and created situations that left many refugees, certainly those on the West Coast, afraid and desperate about their future in that country. And while government officials, mostly those in civilian offices, recognized how unfair the “enemy alien” classification was to these refugees, they never felt it to be a significant enough injustice to follow through with change. Instead, it became the government’s tactic to stress the necessity of the classification for reasons of national security not directly related to the refugees, to downplay the effects, and to praise the refugees for their forbearance and compliance.

Conclusion

Even though the history of German Jewish refugees in the United States has received considerable attention, virtually all accounts make only brief mention of the refugees’ classification as enemy aliens, mainly as an injustice. The more intricate story is not well known, probably because it ultimately ended well. The refugees were not subjected to mass internment. They were eventually permitted to participate in the fight against Nazi Germany through home front activities such as the Civilian Defense Corps or as full members of the U.S. military, sometimes even serving in special units. On the West Coast, in fact, refugees actually became Americanized faster than those living on the East Coast because their disadvantageous situation motivated them to actively participate in American public and political life. The Refugee Club in Los Angeles, for example, becomes Americanized faster than those living on the East Coast because their disadvantageous situation motivated them to actively participate in American public and political life.

58 Part of a letter from Tom C. Clark to the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. from March 26, 1942. FGP, B107, Correspondence, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 2012.


60 Schenderlein, “Germany on their Minds?”, 190ff.
created a Political Committee that became a supra-regional entity for dealing with the refugees’ enemy alien status on the West Coast. As such, it developed from an immigrant club providing social and cultural assistance to an organization that engaged with communal and government offices. This example demonstrates that some refugees understood the possibilities that the American democratic system of the time allowed and were able to contest discrimination. However, this case study also shows that not only public support and the good will of certain authorities but also distinctions based on racism played a major part in preventing a worse fate for this group of refugees. After all, they were white and educated.

Why does this story matter? It captures a moment of extreme insecurity and distress in the lives of a very vulnerable segment of the population. It reveals how one group, without specific linkages to actual security threats, military necessity, and disregarding historical facts and reasoning, could be marked as different at different times and for different purposes. At the time, the enemy alien classification brought up traumatic memories of the past for the refugees, creating painful doubt about whether they had indeed found a refuge and whether there was a future for them in United States.

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Conference at the Institute for Contemporary History Munich (IfZ). Co-sponsored by the German Historical Institute, Washington DC. Conveners: Sebastian Voigt (IfZ), Stefan Hördler (Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp Memorial); Co-convener: Howard Brick (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor). Participants: John Alic (consultant, North Carolina), Hartmut Berghoff (University of Göttingen), Eileen Boris (UC Santa Barbara), Frank Bösch (Center for Contemporary History, Potsdam), Jessica Burch (Harvard University), Jörn Eiben (Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg), Timur Ergen (Max-Planck-Institute, Cologne), Sina Fabian (University of Hannover), Michael Kozakowski (University of Colorado, Denver), Nelson Lichtenstein (UC Santa Barbara), Christian Marx (University of Trier), Marjin Molema (Fryske Akademy, Leeuwarden), Francesco Petrini (University of Padova), Franziska Rehlinghaus (Center for Contemporary History, Potsdam), Morten Reitmayer (University of Trier), Karsten Uhl (University of Darmstadt), Andreas Wirsching (IfZ Munich), Johanna Wolf (University of Leipzig), Daniel Wylegala (University of Düsseldorf).

At least in German historiography the 1970s have been (and still are) a flourishing field of research. This is certainly due to the various characterizations of this decade as — to name just a few — a phase of structural change, marking the turning point from boom to “after the boom,” towards a “postindustrial society” or postmodernity. Regardless of the accuracy of these or other diagnoses: the 1970s were an intense and dynamic phase — at least in Western Europe and North America, on which the international conference “Industrial Decline and the Rise of the Service Sector? How Did Western Europe and North America Cope with the Multifaceted Structural Transformations since the 1970s?” at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich concentrated.

In his welcome address, Andreas Wirsching underlined the importance of the topic. From a historiographic as well as from a contemporary perspective, dealing with the significant transformations that occurred both in the economy and society is crucial. Wirsching suggested researchers be mindful of the necessary interplay of broader
diagnoses on the macro level and the often stubborn or downright contradictory cases on the micro level.

After summarizing general trends of and assumptions about the 1970s, such as growing pressure on the middle class, increasing income inequality, or the shrinking share of the “old industries,” Sebastian Voigt took up Wirsching’s considerations for his introduction. Following Wolfgang Streeck, he suggested to take the 1970s as a starting point for an analysis of current crises. In a historiographic sense, he accentuated the importance of the “after-the-boom” hypothesis, from which a fair share of current research emerges. Adding yet another prominent diagnosis of more general trends, namely Daniel Bell’s notion about the rise of a postindustrial society dominated by a strong service sector, he finally argued for more faceted historiographic analyses. There are, Voigt reasoned, several very good and very fitting examples of transformations from industrial to service-based economies both in Germany and the USA. Yet one wonders whether such examples justify the rather broad and general assumptions put forward by some of the grand diagnoses of industrial decline, postindustrial societies or a phase after the boom.

The first panel, moderated by Stefan Hördler, dealt with transnational similarities and differences in economic development. Accordingly, Marijn Molema took up Wirsching’s suggestion to investigate the regional level more closely, following the example of planning processes in northeast Frisia. Even though it had its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s, planning never left the political realm, but was transformed from spatial to economic planning. Due to these planning processes, a new economic geography emerged in the region, with just a few industrial centers. Here, he argued, the majority of the region’s people found employment up until the early noughties. Hence, Molema concluded, the narrative of industrial decline is not adequate at all for this particular region. In her paper on the ship building crisis’ effects on the workforce, Johanna Wolf investigated debates within the various international, national, regional, and local union networks. Even though she pointed out that they made many reasonable and well-conceived proposals for solutions, Wolf painted a fairly disillusionsing picture of the unions’ impact on solving the problems the industry faced. In short: next to none of their suggestions were adopted by their respective governments. Among other things, Stefan Hördler pointed out that neither paper had addressed the important conceptual question about what we mean exactly when
we speak about industrial decline or crisis — a conceptual challenge that would resurface frequently in the following panels.

Chaired by Frank Bösch, the second panel dealt with the ways in which collective and individual actors coped with change. Karsten Uhl presented the findings of his new research project on the printing industry — an industry with a workforce deeply devoted to and interested in technological progress. In combination with their firm belief in being part of an irreplaceable aristocracy of workers, the technological process eventually overtook the workers and endangered their jobs. As this process as well as the cooperation amongst the unions became increasingly global phenomena, Uhl called for research to focus on the interconnections of computerization and globalization. In his paper, Francesco Petrini took a closer look at deindustrialization processes. Against those who favor exogenous factors, for example the rising oil price, he argued that the breach of the post-World War II social contract was the main cause for industrial decline and the resulting phenomena of crises. Following this contractual hypothesis, Petrini investigated the ensuing attempts and failures at re-establishing a similar binding framework. Michael Kožakowski then took a closer look at the role of migration as a result of industrialization in Western Europe. Focusing on France, he showed how migrants faced a twofold problem, namely their politically and legally unclear status as well as the lack of jobs brought about by industrial decline. For migrant workers, Kožakowski concluded, the rise of the service sector created alternative job opportunities — opportunities, however, with significantly lower wages than the industrial sector had provided before.

Howard Brick chaired the third panel, which focused on state responses to these challenges. Interestingly, this panel was entirely composed of speakers from outside the narrow margins of historiography, that is, from the fields of political science and sociology. The first speaker, Timur Ergen, provided some profound insights into American debates about industrial policy and future economy. Unfolding mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, these debates revolved around the question whether or not the United States needed a concerted industrial policy in order to cope with contemporary problems. While the debates did not lead to any concrete results and had ended by the mid-1980s, they are of interest for the study of the epistemic realms of American economic policy. Using the example of the August Thyssen Hütte, Daniel Wylegala investigated
changes in research and development (R&D) policies in the West German steel industry. While Ergen reconstructed his findings following the debates among economic experts, Wylegala based his argument on the continuous rise in expenditure for research and development. As the proponents of a strong R&D policy construed the recession of 1974 as an economic crisis (as opposed to a structural crisis), they had fairly solid arguments for suggesting a positive stance towards the future, if the company made the necessary technological innovations. Finally, John Alic provided a perspective on U.S. industrial policy of the 1970s and beyond. Unlike the case of the German steel industry, Alic indicated, overall spending on R&D in the U.S. declined since 1969 and rose to a comparative level only in 1977, before it began to decline once more as the economy gained momentum again.

The second day began with a panel on transformations of the labor market and consumer behavior chaired by Andreas Wirsching. In her paper, Eileen Boris investigated the topic of household workers. She identified the 1970s as a turning point in the participation of women in the labor market. One of the consequences was an enormous increase in the “outsourcing” of reproductive labor: that is, child care and domestic work. Especially (comparatively) well-earning women turned their houses into workplaces for other women. While Boris’s focus was on the transformations of the labor market, Sina Fabian emphasized the importance of investigating consumption. Following the examples of car purchases and holidays, she demonstrated that widespread diagnoses of crisis did not have significant effects on consumption — at least in the U.K. and Germany. Even though the 1970s were hence in keeping with general trends since the end of World War II, economic recessions and mass dismissals did have an effect: using the British example, Fabian showed how consumption patterns differed, depending on the respective social strata. The panel’s final paper combined the foci of the previous papers. Jessica Burch presented her findings about the direct sales business in the United States in the 1970s. In stark contrast to diagnoses of economic crises, this mode of selling and consuming (predominantly) household goods was booming. Accordingly, Amway, one of the market’s most successful companies, made “opportunity in crisis” their slogan. Convincingly, Burch argued that the story of direct selling allows us to look at coping strategies of Americans in economic turmoil and provides a glance at the much larger picture of flexible employment and jobs.
Hartmut Berghoff chaired the conference’s last panel, which dealt with business strategies in the 1970s. In their paper, Christian Marx and Morten Reitmayer used the chemical industries of France, Germany, and the U.K. to analyze whether and how their respective national economies dealt with the economic challenges of the 1970s and the following decades. By investigating business strategies, industrial relations, and corporate governance and inter-company relations, they elaborated on national similarities and differences. Nelson Lichtenstein then took a closer look at a particular and very important business strategy: vertical integration, a model which dissolved in the 1970s. Discussing this model and its dissolution, Lichtenstein showed how transformations of the corporate form complicate or even impede state regulations as well as the organization of the workforce. The conference’s final paper was presented by Franziska Rehlinghaus, who analyzed another business strategy, vocational training. Although vocational training programs were not a new phenomenon in the 1970s, Rehlinghaus demonstrated how the (actual or alleged) crises of the 1970s contributed to changing the program’s rationale from an individual surplus towards a necessity for everyone’s CV.

The conference’s organizers succeeded in creating an opportunity for intense discussion. Both question marks contained in the conference’s title fostered debate. The suggestion of general trends described as “industrial decline” or “rise of the service sector” and the coping strategies born from such changes created sufficient bases for discussion. Yet most papers concentrated on the problems these changes caused and the coping strategies brought about by these very changes. The first challenge, namely questioning the very diagnoses of a declining industrial and a rising service sector, was not confronted directly. Even though some papers, notably Molema’s or Fabian’s, dealt with these diagnoses in a critical manner, Hörderler’s question about the categorical or analytical status of characterizations such as “decline,” “rise” or “crisis” was not answered, but ran through all discussions. This seems to be a promising outlook for a potential (and strongly encouraged) follow-up meeting.

Jörn Eiben (Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg)
Panel Series at the 40th Annual Conference of the German Studies Association in San Diego, September 29 — October 2, 2016, sponsored by the German Historical Institute Washington. Conveners: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Swen Steinberg (University of California, Los Angeles, and University of Dresden). Participants: Daniel Bessner (University of Washington), Lisa Gerlach (University of Braunschweig), Deniz Göktürk (University of California, Berkeley), Jan Logemann (Gottingen University), Rebekka von Mallinckrodt (University of Bremen), Caitlin Murdock (California State University, Long Beach), H. Glenn Penny (University of Iowa), Kristina Poznan (College of William & Mary), Miriam Rürup (Institute for the History of the German Jews, Hamburg), Anne Schenderlein (GHI Washington), Allison Schmidt (University of Kansas), Philipp Strobl (Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne), Konrad Sziedat (University of Munich), Anna Vallye (University of Pennsylvania), Brian Van Wyck (Michigan State University).

This panel series focused on a field of research that is emerging at the intersection of the history of knowledge and the history of migration. This dynamic field, as series organizer Simone Lässig emphasized in her opening remarks, offers potential not only for historians but also for scholars from other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Up to this point, the historiographies of migration and of knowledge have not had much to say to each other. State, NGO, and academic actors have produced knowledge about migration and migrants, and the production of this knowledge is sometimes studied. We know little, however, about how knowledge was used, produced, and mediated by the migrants themselves. We can fill this gap, we can shed new light on migrants as actors, Lässig argued, by linking the two research fields. In this way, we can learn how migrants acted as bearers, translators, and producers of knowledge in their old and new homelands. It is also possible to investigate how and the degree to which migrants were able to convert the knowledge they brought with them into usable cultural capital in new social, economic, and cultural contexts.

Of course, there is also much more to learn about the production and distribution of governmental knowledge in the face of migration processes. This topic was the focus of the first panel, entitled “Knowledge and Trans-Migrants in the Late Holy Roman and Habsburg Empire.” In the first paper, Rebekka von Mallinckrodt investigated
the history of trafficked persons within the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation in the eighteenth century and how this forced migration changed legal concepts within the state. German individuals such as soldiers, seamen, missionaries, and merchants actively participated in colonization and slave trading, trafficking people back to the empire. Consequently, German courts and administrations eventually had to take a stance on the issue of slavery. In order to find a solution, they looked to their own past and that of their European neighbors — mostly France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands. But it took time for the empire to establish its own system — much of the eighteenth century, in fact. According to Mallinckrodt, “the otherwise eloquent parties” involved in these discussions were “relatively laconic” when it came to differentiating between terms such as “slavery” and “serfdom.” She showed that the Holy Roman Empire was not looking for a debate about slavery as such but rather trying to find practical solutions that served its own purposes at the time.

Moving to the next century and in part beyond the German-speaking lands, Kristina Poznan focused on the influence that migration had on governmental knowledge and the challenges Austria-Hungary faced as a Dual Monarchy. Concentrating on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Poznan investigated a timespan that was shaped by transatlantic migration from Europe to the United States. She showed that governmental institutions in the Austro-Hungarian Empire had a strong interest in gathering knowledge about how and why their residents migrated and what happened to them overseas. This interest was rooted in the contradictory circumstance that the Dual Monarchy was able to profit from emigration monetarily because of remittances but at the cost of losing a significant portion of its population. In the particular case of Austria-Hungary, some aspects of governmental supervision over migration fell to the Empire’s joint foreign ministry while others fell into the jurisdiction of Austria’s and Hungary’s respective “national” governments, which controlled domestic policy. This situation evinced both advantages and disadvantages for the stability and outreach of their administrative networks as well as for the flow of information. Changing perspectives at the end of her presentation, Poznan also shed light on the considerably lower interest displayed by American authorities in the new migrants’ countries of origin.

In the last paper on this panel, Allison Schmidt investigated the “German and Austro-Hungarian Surveillance of Transmigrants in the Age of Open Borders,” using the example of Josef Gärtz, a Transylvanian Saxon who migrated to the United States in 1910. For this case study,
Schmidt drew on Gärtz’s diary, which she supplemented with documents produced by steamship companies and government health officials on the millions of eastern Europeans who traveled by train from Austrian–Hungarian territories to the northwestern ports of departure in Germany. In this way she was able to connect institutional perspectives with individual experience. At the individual level, the protagonist found himself forced to ride atop two trains to avoid migrant inspectors when he crossed the Austrian and the German border. At the institutional level, Schmidt convincingly argued that there was strong governmental interest in monitoring and policing the travelers. In this way, her research confirms recent scholarly findings on the existence of state border controls even before the First World War.

Caitlin Murdock’s comment on the first panel spoke to the broader project of linking the historiographies of migration and knowledge. She characterized migration as a process that — by its very nature — requires the active construction, interpretation, and appropriation of knowledge by a variety of historical actors. Murdock suggested that the people and institutions mentioned in these papers created knowledge about migration through the lenses of their own circumstances and in this way were acting on strategic choice and/or selective ignorance. The main challenge for historians is to approach migration and knowledge as a multivalent conversation in which they have to look for the subtext of underground knowledge intertwined with official understandings — and in which they have to consider not just what information people had but what they chose to embrace or discount.

The second panel, “Transfers and Disconnects,” considered transatlantic migration since the 1930s and the transfer and cultural translation of knowledge. In his paper, “Lost in Translation,” Jan Logemann shifted the focus from stories of “successful” transfers of knowledge and the positive influence of migration on home and host countries to knowledge transfers that led to conflicts or failure. Concentrating on European emigrants rooted in industrial design and marketing who came to the United States between 1930 and 1950, he demonstrated that translation is not a question of language but of culture. He also made clear that successful translation efforts depended not only on émigrés as cultural brokers open to adapting their knowledge to new contexts. These brokers also needed to find “receiving partners” interested in their new perspectives.

How and why the “Ghosts of Weimar” were present in the thoughts of émigrés from the 1930s to the 1960s was the topic of Daniel Bessner’s
paper. He argued that some German intellectuals who immigrated to the United States between 1933 and 1939 were influential in shaping the Cold War and U.S. foreign relations. Focusing on Hans Speier, who became a propaganda specialist and then a Germany expert for the U.S. government, Bessner showed that some exiles saw their fate as an opportunity to combat the regime that had forced them to migrate. As a counterpoint to Speier’s efforts to adapt to and integrate himself into the American intellectual and governmental establishment, Bessner turned to Max Horkheimer and his circle, who continued to see themselves as German scholars and thus isolated themselves from their American colleagues. Bessner’s talk also spoke to the larger question of the role personal trauma can play in shaping political and cultural knowledge and thought.

In the last paper of this panel, Miriam Rürup focused on the translation of migrant experiences into law, showing how the fates of stateless migrants shaped the human rights discourse of the United Nations. Emphasizing the rising influence of supranational institutions and discourses after the Second World War, Rürup focused on events and discussions that lead to the 1954 U.N. convention on the status of stateless persons. She showed that stateless Jews and émigrés played a significant role in shaping the human rights discourse, as for example in the work of Hannah Arendt, Stéphane Hessel, Hans Kelsen, and Hersch Lauterpach. Their knowledge and experience manifested itself in three important ways — as legal knowledge from the past, as biographical experience through their own migration experience, and sometimes as personal encounters regarding the situation in the Displaced Persons camps. In addition, she showed that the post-World War Two right of belonging — and therefore the right to be granted citizenship that had been revoked — in its consequences did not always comport with the intentions of the displaced persons themselves.

In her comment, Anna Vallye summed up some things the papers had in common. All three emphasized the role of individuals. Working within and against institutional structures or philosophical systems, these people shaped the discourse as social actors vested with certain kinds of social and political agency. This circumstance made Vallye wonder about what kinds of social actors the papers in this panel were actually dealing with, positing in Foucauldian terms that they resembled more “specific” and not “universal intellectuals.” She also pointed out the pitfalls of the notion of “Germany” itself, asking how German sovereignty as a historical problem framed the
German diaspora as paradigmatic for the study of twentieth-century transnational processes.

The last panel focused on the role of knowledge as profession, network, and experience in processes of migration from and to Europe. H. Glenn Penny’s paper investigated “German Migrants and the Production of Knowledge in Latin America, 1880s–1960s.” Focusing on Guatemala, while also taking Argentina and Chile into account, Penny looked at a variety of German communities with German schools, communities that took part in shaping the knowledge of these countries. Those communities, he argues, drew on global pedagogical networks. Furthermore, they contributed not just to the knowledge of children with German heritage because the children of local elites also attended the schools. Investigating textbooks produced in Germany with knowledge of mostly German researchers for German schools abroad, Penny showed how mindsets of race and nationalism challenged those transnational communities.

Philipp Strobl’s paper examined the case of Anton Charles William, who migrated to Australia in 1938, the year of Austria’s Anschluss to Germany. Strobl showed how the knowledge William accumulated in the interwar years in Austria traveled with him and gave him the idea to bring Austrian skiing to the Australian mountains. He founded the Australian Alpine Club in the 1950s, drawing on his knowledge of Austrian and German Alpine Clubs and maintaining contact with Austrian experts. This knowledge needed to be adapted when skiing was transformed from an elitist sport to a leisure activity for the masses. Consequently, William, who had rejected mass tourism before 1938, accepted the new circumstances and opened a chain of ski lodges. In this way, he can be seen as a textbook social agent who transferred ideas between two countries.

Turning to West Germany between 1972 and 1992, Brian Van Wyck examined the history of Turkish teachers’ “dual responsibility.” German education officials entrusted Turkish teachers — chosen by the Turkish education ministry — with instructing children of Turkish “guest workers” in Turkish language, culture and history in Germany. These teachers were tasked with ensuring the integration of Turkish children in West Germany. On the other hand, and more contested, they were responsible for preparing students for a planned return to Turkey, preventing their alienation from their Turkish cultural heritage, or, according to some, helping them come to grips with their bifurcated identities. Showing how the priorities of integrating and
reintegrating differed not only over time but also across regions, van Wyck made clear that this phenomenon was more complex, fluid, and diverse than recent research would have it.

In the final paper, Konrad Sziedat highlighted the importance of “biographical capital,” showing how not only academic expertise and overlapping opinions and ideals but also the migration experience of the Listy Group (leaders from the Prague Spring) influenced political discourse on the West German left in the 1980s. Characterizing this group of experts as “managers of collective expectations,” Sziedat outlined their major impact in the late 1980s on ideas about future political change in Eastern Europe. Thus, he illustrated how exiled experts helped shape both the Ostpolitik of the SPD and the foreign policy stances of the Greens in the late so-called Bonn Republic — with implications for the latter party’s attitude toward NATO collaboration with the United States outside the borders of the alliance’s member countries.

Summing up the different types of “migrant knowledge” in her comment, Deniz Göktürk argued that it is useful to distinguish three types of knowledge: knowledge produced and carried by migrants, knowledge about or for migrants produced by state institutions, and migrating knowledge. Scholars have to ask who produced, stored, and disseminated this knowledge and to what end. Which positions, intersections, and interests mattered in the circulation of knowledge? How did knowledge as cultural capital relate to the consolidation of elites and the hardening of class distinctions? One of the main challenges scholars face, according to Göktürk, is to understand knowledge as situated and moving.

At the end of the last panel, series co-organizer Swen Steinberg identified two key fields for further research at the intersection of migration and knowledge. On the one hand, many papers highlighted the potential of focusing work on concrete actors, both individuals and groups, in order to analyze processes of knowledge modification, translation, or adoption. This perspective is promising for migrant groups such as families and their intergenerational relationships. On the other hand, the intersection of migration and knowledge also reveals the role of ignorance as well as the various relationships of “knowledge in the plural,” such as tacit knowledge or situated knowledge, in the process of migration and integration (e.g.). This perspective also deserves to be given greater attention in the future.

Lisa Gerlach (University of Braunschweig)
CREATING SPATIAL HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE: NEW APPROACHES, OPPORTUNITIES AND EPISODEMOLYCAL IMPLICATIONS OF MAPPING HISTORY DIGITALLY

Conference at the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI). Co-organized by the GHI, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM), and Digital Humanities at Berkeley. Made possible by support from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Conveners: Matthew Hiebert (GHI) and Simone LäsDig (GHI). Participants: Robert C. Allen (University of North Carolina), Dan Bailey (University of Maryland), Ralph Barczok (University of Konstanz), Waitman Wade Beorn (University of Virginia), Cameron Blevins (Northeastern University), Pim van Bree (LAB1100), Alex Christie (Centre for Digital Humanities, Brock University), David Eltis (University of British Columbia), Elisabeth Engel (GHI), David Hochfelder (SUNY Albany), Paul Jaskot (DePaul University), Geert Kessels (LAB1100), Randa El Khatib (University of Victoria), Steffen Koch (University of Stuttgart), Mareike König (GHI Paris), Habbo Knoch (University of Cologne), Anne Knowles (University of Maine), Katherine McDonough (Western Sydney University), Trevor Muñoz (MITH, University of Marylo), Jana Moser (Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography), Robert Nelson (University of Richmond), Michael Newton (Digital Innovation Lab, University of North Carolina), Joe Nugent (Boston College), Atiba Pertilla (GHI), Stephen Robertson (RRCHNM), Eric Rodenbeck (Stamen Design, San Francisco, CA), Anne Sarah Rubin (University of Maryland, Baltimore County), Diana Roig Sanz (Open University of Catalonia/KU Leuven), Ute Schneider (University of Duisburg-Essen), Franziska Seraphim (Boston College), Jennifer Serventi (National Endowment for the Humanities), Helmut Walser Smith (Vanderbilt University), Werner Stangl (University of Graz), John Theibault (independent scholar), Matthew Unangst (Temple University), Paul Vierthaler (Leiden University), Jon Voss (Historypin), David Wrisley (American University of Beirut).

This event brought together forty historians from North America, Germany, and beyond to comparatively examine emerging digital approaches, new research questions, and implications for the discipline of history and its understanding for those using or producing digital maps and other spatial methods to create spatial historical knowledge. For centuries, historians have provided maps within their work to visualize complex information. With the increasing awareness of spatial dimensions in history and the invention of Geographical Information Systems (GIS), historical research granted mapping a greater
methodological role in processes of research and scientific discovery. In introducing the keynote lecture by workshop co-convener Stephen Robertson entitled “Toward a Spatial Narrative of the 1935 Harlem Riot: Mapping and Storytelling after the Geospatial Turn,” Simone Lässig observed that maps are research objects all historians use at one point or another, and asserted the importance of engaging critically with the new varieties of maps that digital technology makes possible. In the keynote, drawing upon his work to create a narrative of the 1935 Harlem Riot based on Year of the Riot (a map developed as an extension of his award-winning Digital Harlem project), Robertson presented spatial narrative as a form of digital scholarship, showing how interpretations and arguments that advance historiography can be developed from maps that combine and display diverse sources.

The first conference panel, “Charting New Methods” chaired by Jennifer Serventi, questioned whether digital mapping methodologies signal an epistemological shift within historiography, are continuations of longstanding uses of cartography by historians, or are potentially incongruous with the disciplinary aims of history. In her paper “Visual Ways of Knowing the Past,” Anne Knowles argued that the use of digital cartography and geographic information systems (GIS) since the 1990s have changed maps in historical research from suggestive illustrations of the past to means of contending with complexity, for reconstruction of past landscapes, and showing change over time. Drawing on her research on the U.S. iron industry and the European Holocaust, Knowles showed how translating historical sources into spatio-temporal databases may facilitate new questions and answers, stressing the capacity of iterative data visualizations in multiple modes to reveal patterns, dynamics, and facets of complex stories. In “What Gets Lost: Method, Theory, and Spatial History’s Disciplinary Shores,” Cameron Blevins reflected on inconsistencies between the digital spatial methods in the social sciences and the disciplinary aims of history. In the context of his project “The Postal West,” which involved the creation of a database to map over 166,000 U.S. post offices, Blevins argued that an interdisciplinary adoption of geographic methods without sensitivity to the specificities of historiography risks positivistic reductionism and loss of complexity. By using digital maps to visualize large-scale proliferation and patterns of post office distribution in the integration of the western U.S., Blevins ultimately returned to “old-fashioned disciplinary questions about American history,” approached from a greater scale, and called for a disciplinary turn within the digital humanities. Helmut
Walser Smith’s paper “Mere Illustration” distilled his experience of creating fifty maps with ARC-GIS for his forthcoming book, *Finding Germany: Nation Before, During, and After Nationalism, 1500–2000*. Smith classified his map-making into four sorts: plotting where a phenomenon occurred; translating historical text-based descriptions of place; mapping imagined or counterfactual geographies; and layering points and shapes to determine geopolitical dispersion and containment. Smith suggested that this fourth form of mapping may move beyond “mere illustration” to reveal new congruence and correlations, however, such a method is predicated on rich data sets largely unavailable outside of contemporary history and difficult in approaching nation-states with historically varying borders. The rich discussion that ensued explored the question as to whether the power digital mapping grants historians involves the creation or conveyance of knowledge, with participants pointing to mapping’s capacity to foster new questions, see data in new ways, and approach history at much greater scales.

The second panel, “Transformations in Historical Inquiry,” chaired by Atiba Pertiilla, explored how emerging database-driven spatial infrastructure projects may reshape how historical research is undertaken and the ways in which past historiography may be built upon or challenged in this methodological shift. The panel commenced with a presentation on “Mapping Print, Charting Enlightenment” by Katherine McDonough, introducing her project of the same name (MPCE). MPCE constructs a database with information on the production, sales, dissemination, policing, and reception of early modern French books. McDonough envisions the project as automating tasks associated with locating places in historical texts, facilitating links between projects through place, and connecting to other gazetteers in an interoperable network of place-name directories. John Theibault, in “Mapping a Historiography: The Local Social Histories of Early Modern Germany,” presented his work to recover and revive an earlier period of historiography in early modern studies through database design and mapping. Theibault noted the decline in the 1970s of local social histories dependent upon quantification and social structural analysis and the ascendance of microhistories influenced by the cultural turn. His project, the Early Modern European Social History Geospatial Bibliography (EMESHGB) seeks to offer a “deeply annotated” census of the work done for early modern local social histories. In “Analyzing Multi-religious Spaces in the Medieval Muslim World,” Ralph Barczok and Steffen Koch presented their use of spatial
infrastructure approaches as an intervention into the historiography of medieval Asia and North Africa. A multi-religious reality persisted in this region and period, but the diachronic and synchronic complexity of populations remains understudied. The project visualizes the multi-religious demographics of 300 to 350 cities in Asia and North Africa in a geo-temporal, multi-view interface and interactive map. By providing the city-specific composition of religious communities over time through user-generated views, the project will assist historians in assessing the neglected temporal and spatial trends in denominational composition. Discussion treated the methodological differences in how historians and geographers create gazetteers, the differences between visualization and illustration, contested origins of microhistory, the role of space in the historicization of knowledge, and digital project sustainability.

The third panel, “Mapping Power,” chaired by Elisabeth Engel, explored the powerful role maps and other spatial representations played in the achievement and preservation of geopolitical power regimes and the capacity of digital spatial methods to provide historical understanding and critique. Werner Stangl’s project “HGIS de las Indias: A Dynamic Reconstruction of Colonial Spanish America,” constructs a dynamic Historical Geographical Information System for Spanish America at the end of the colonial period. Stangl presented the technical manifestation of his project as undermining the oft-avaled dichotomy between GIS and new digital humanities techniques perceived as more qualitative and participatory in their associations with neogeography. Perennially criticized as a positivistic science in mathematically integrating geometric abstractions of the world for spatial analytic systems, GIS seem at odds with traditional humanities methodologies. Stangl argued that his source material — which includes administrative descriptions and maps, census data, episcopal visits — reenacts the colonialist narrative but does not seek to legitimize its perspective. Matthew Unangst argued in “Mapping Imperial Geographies in East Africa” that the use of GIS software and related digital tools tacitly reinforces colonial geographies. Inherently, Western cartographic frameworks cannot represent African conceptualizations of space and instead maintain the borders contemporary historical geographers challenge. For imperialists, early maps of stateless Africa served as juridico-political tools, subsequent maps visualized empire prior to conquests, and later maps, today the basis of postcolonial African states, rationalized colonialism and claims to sovereignty through a scientific planetary
grid of distance. Unangst called for increased digital “counter mapping” projects, pointing to the promise of network analysis and new modes of mapping to visualize multiple layers of sovereignty and meanings attributed to landscapes. Robert Nelson in his paper “Slavery on the Move: Counter-mapping the Domestic Slave Trade” presented “The Forced Migration of Enslaved People, 1810–1860,” a data-rich web project that offers an animated and interactive map of the domestic slave trade and its forced migration during the fifty years prior to the Civil War. Utilizing statistical modeling and areal interpolation, the map shows for the first time in detail areas where enslaved people were moved from and into, addressing the lack of census bureau data about the enslaved population from efforts by Southern leaders to obfuscate the extent of the slave trade and the forced distant migration it entailed. Areas of intense importation to distant areas of exportation over a twenty-year period are displayed, showing the slave trade’s cyclical and traumatic generational nature, while illustrating also the economic and demographic pressures in their spatial logic upon slaveholders to aggressively expand in the 1840s and 1850s and seek supportive policies leading to the sectional crisis. In his presentation “Spatializing Mass Violence: Immersive Digital Environments for Holocaust Memorial Museums,” Habbo Knoch presented “Memostory 3.0,” a project to develop immersive digital environments for Holocaust research and education. While stressing the need for ethical criteria in developing digital representations, Knoch argued that the prevalent commemorative approach to generating knowledge about the Holocaust, with its ethic of strongly limiting representation, has severely underestimated the spatial dimension of violence in its structure, dynamics, and experience at Nazi crime sites. Concealing this spatial logic, museum and on-site presentations have conveyed knowledge about the Holocaust using chronological and systematic based explanations, disregarding place, space, and topographies. “Memostory 3.0” integrates a full 3D-virtual reconstruction of the Bergen-Belsen camp with GPS-based geo-referencing and embedded historical sources, including photos, drawings, diary entries, and eyewitness reports. Access is provided on-site via an augmented reality tablet application or off-site by means of digital exhibitions. The resulting discussion included explorations of the user’s role in creating historical knowledge versus traditional conceptions of the public as consumers of historical facts; ethical considerations in digitally modelling the Holocaust; and the relationship between research and pedagogical aims in the construction of digital environments.
The fourth panel, “Digitally Remediating Spatial Source Materials,” chaired by Trevor Muñoz, presented some of the exemplary cases in the digitization of spatial source materials to investigate the effects remediating processes may have in the construction of knowledge. Waitman Wade Beorn in his paper “Spaces of Life and Death: Mapping the Holocaust Experience in the Janowska Camp” presented his web project built using the Map Scholar platform to combine spatial archival evidence in creating a narrative, geographically based portrayal of camp life at Janowska. Users are offered a partially guided and curated route through a wide range of oral, textual, and visual source material of perpetrators and survivors overlaid onto places where they originated. Anne Sarah Rubin and Dan Bailey in their presentation of “Visualizing Early Baltimore: Mapping Social History from Harbor to High Ground (1812-1820)” showcased the detailed, three-dimensional digital model of the topographical and visual landscape of the city circa 1815 modelled on print-based sources. Framing the project as “Google Maps street view for the nineteenth century,” the site strives to be both an accurate and publically resonant representation. Ongoing development of the project includes using the map as a staging environment for presenting historical data (e.g. population, labor market, spread of disease) and the inclusion of historical actors and themes within a variety of historically illuminating narrative paths. In her paper “Materiality and Time Layers: Cadastral Maps Between Paper and Digitization,” Ute Schneider investigated the effects of the remediation of cadastral maps, used from the beginning of the nineteenth century by European states to survey and visualize resources and properties for tax collection purposes, into digitized form from the 1970s. While new technologies such as lithography facilitated the reproduction of cadastral maps during the period of their use, corrections and other emendations were layered upon the originals over time. Schneider explored this unique materiality of cadastral maps and traced the implications changes accompanying their digitization had for users as well as perceptions about land ownership in Germany. Topics of discussion included: questioning the depth and detail needed for an effective map or visualization; losses in historical accuracy in digital modeling; issues related to the use of printed maps and other defunct data expressions for producing new source data; the distinction between space and place; the relationship between argument and visualization; copyright and restrictions in the creation and publication of maps; a deeper inquiry into the ethics surrounding map making; and the importance of preserving data in preserving cultural memory.
The fifth panel, “Spatial Approaches in Cultural and Literary History,” chaired by Paul Jaskot, attended to research areas associated in recent years with highly innovative methodological use of spatial techniques and analysis beyond traditional cartographical frameworks and imperatives. David Wrisley explored the question “What Is Spatial Literary Historical Knowledge?” in the context of his online project “Visualizing Medieval Places” (VMP), a gazetteer created from a large corpus of medieval French texts. The project indexes mention of places within these texts and maps their total occurrences, visualizing frequency and adding layers that include data from environmental history (e.g. agroecosystems, disease, climate). What emerges is a picture of the named world by writers of the language and time significantly distinct both from cartographic representations of space during the period and contemporary historical understandings of medieval literature in its relation to place. Diana Roig Sanz in her paper “Digital Mapping in Literary History: Multipolar Transfers and Complexity in the Mapping of Hispanic International Modernity,” discussed her work in examining the entangled and neglected history of Hispanic modernism. The project maps multipolar connections between cultural mediators (critics, publishers, and translators) and their productions (chiefly journals) within Hispanic transnational modernist networks between 1909 and the end of the Spanish civil war. Focusing on the transatlantic region rather than nations to reflect the true mobility of people, texts and ideas, the aim of Sanz’s digital mapping efforts is to analyze the socio-biography of cultural mediators, their social networks, differences between transferred products and sources, the multiple discursive modes of dissemination, and their inter-artistic activities. Alex Christie in his paper “Prototyping Spaces: Warped Cartography and Affective Maps” presented the Z-Axis tool, a geospatial mapping method and an online environment designed for scholars to rapidly produce three-dimensional maps that may advance theoretical, historical, or political arguments about source texts. Robert C. Allen (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) reflected upon the last ten years of his digital history research in his paper “From Moviegoers to Mill Workers: A Decade of Developing Tools and Approaches to Digital Spatial History.” Allen recounted the development, beginning in 2006, of the online resource for researching and teaching about early cinema, “Going to the Show,” which involved digitizing and georectifying original 1896 to 1923 Sanborn Maps (used for assessing fire insurance liability) from North Carolina University Collections to document hundreds of early cinema venues. The project expanded into “Main Street, Carolina,” a large-scale digital mapping project that provides temporal layers for
towns for examining the evolution of urban spaces and includes household data, revealing, for instance, the social and racial construction of Charlotte following the Jim Crow policies. Building on the papers, discussion brought to light theoretical issues behind “distant reading” practices in literary history; the challenge of categorizing real versus imagined places within texts; the connections between literary and social history; issues in ontology construction; and practical problems surrounding the classification of texts.

The sixth panel, “Public History Online and Spatial Social Knowledge Creation,” chaired by Mareike König, attended to concerns and implications for scholarly and general knowledge creation in bringing spatial research processes and its productions to the online public. David Eltis in his paper “Mapping the Transatlantic Slave Trade” discussed his collaborative web project “Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database” which has attracted over one million visits since it began in 2008 and has been remarkably productive in the generation of scholarly knowledge about the slave trade. The site provides a database of 34,938 transatlantic slave voyages, a searchable sample of personal information about 67,000 Africans carried on them, and a separate interactive database of numbers and routes. In its geospatial rendition, Eltis pointed to five major new insights on the slave trade the mapping project has revealed: the central effect of winds and ocean currents on its geo-structure; the vastness of the south Atlantic trade system; its wide geographic distribution; its direction from the Americas rather than from Europe; connections between the growth and size of merchant communities and slave trading; and the geographic pattern of slave resistances on voyages. Jana Moser in her paper “Special Conditions of Webmaps to be Regarded for Creating Spatial Historical Knowledge” considered five dimensions in the creation of spatial historical knowledge by a map: theme or content; temporality; spatiality; the medium or output format; and the worldviews of actors interpreting the map. Maps, Moser argued, must be understood as biased constructed models of the world, involving selection, reduction, and summarization. As such, maps are powerful instruments for communicating a singular statement or position about events, conditions, and developments. With colleague Tom Hoyer, Moser analyzed a collection of 217 interactive and collaborative web maps to determine specific features of online cartographic representations. They observed that while Web 2.0 communication processes often allow for collaborative production of content and comment, discussing visualization methods, data
quality, data origin, and inclusion of system affordances for critical assessment of design is very rare. David Hochfelder in his paper “Using Digital Tools to Create a Social and Public History of Urban Development” explored how digital tools can be used for the history of urban redevelopment in ways that incorporate social memory. His web-based project, “98 Acres in Albany” digitally reconstructs an area of downtown Albany, New York, that was demolished in 1962 to construct a futuristic state capitol complex. Lost streetscapes and buildings are being recreated on the basis of extensive archival and photographic record to provide accurate depiction of the area, while attention is paid to the people displaced in an effort to honor their memories and anchor them to the historical record.

In concluding remarks that highlighted salient critical questions raised during the conference in initiating a final discussion, Simone Lässig noted the rich variety of spatial digital history projects the event brought together and the new horizons it opened, including an argument-based turn in digital history. Lässig stressed that digital methodological developments remain connected to existing historical practices and emphasized the need to establish standards and a culture of respect around digital scholarship to ensure work in digital history and the collaborative authorship so often accompanying it are granted academic accreditation. In this context, ensuring a high quality of data and digitized source material for historians to analyze and contextualize through mapping and other digital methods is of great importance, while contending with issues of copyright and the necessity for sustainable digital infrastructure remains integral to that process. Crucial, Lässig asserted, is further developing traditional methods of historical scholarship for the digital age towards providing a Quellenkritik for digitized and born digital sources, and to determine how we must meet, secure, and create disciplinary standards while calling for big data, large digital corpora, and the use of digital tools. These questions are closely related to new forms of corpus creation and analysis via crowd sourcing and citizen/community science, and Lässig indicated this will be the main focus of the GHI’s second Annual Digital History Conference planned for October 2017. The fruitful discussions during the first conference and the often articulated desire for a forum that fosters international academic exchange about digital history and its place within the discipline have encouraged the GHI to move forward with organizing a digital history conference with a unique focus every year.

Matthew Hiebert (GHI)
RESTRICTING KNOWLEDGE: CHANNELING SECURITY IN RECENT HISTORY

Workshop at the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI) and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS), December 8-9, 2016. Conveners: Keith R. Allen (University of Gießen), Simone Lässig (GHI), and Christian Ostermann (WWICS). Participants: Florian Altenhöner (Humboldt University, Berlin), Astrid Eckert (Emory University), Michael Gordin (Princeton University), Rebecca Lemov (Harvard University), Eva Jobs (University of Marburg), Oxana Kosenko (Saxon Academy of the Sciences), Kristie Macrakis (Georgia Institute of Technology), Derrick Mallett (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College), Sönke Neitzel (University of Potsdam), Tim Nenninger (National Archives and Records Administration), Kathryn Olesko (Georgetown University), Dominik Rigoll (Center for Contemporary History, Potsdam), Patrick S. Roberts (Virginia Tech), Robert P. Saldin (University of Montana), Douglas Selvage (Stasi Records Agency, BStU), Jean-Michael Turcotte, (L'Université Laval), Heidi Tworek (University of British Columbia).

In a 2004 essay entitled “Removing Knowledge,” Harvard historian of science Peter Galison observed that while we do not know how much information the U.S. government keeps classified, the amount may well exceed two hundred Libraries of Congress. Not only are we uninformed about the scope of this vast empire of classified information — Galison claimed that the universe of files very probably widely surpasses what is publicly accessible — we understand little about how thousands of U.S. government Original Classifiers mark so-called National Security Information classified, secret, and top secret.

How government agencies block, obfuscate, and channel knowledge still remains understudied more than a dozen years after the publication of Galison’s essay. Our workshop’s objective was to bring together scholars to explore how vast reservoirs of learning were tagged, pigeonholed, and impeded from circulation during the recent history of the U.S. and other nations. Galison points out that suppressing insights from all but a handful of experts and security officials took on new dimensions during the intercontinental scramble to acquire and hide knowledge about nuclear weapons. For this reason, we asked Michael Gordin, distinguished historian of science at Princeton University, to share with us his insights into how the secrets of the nucleus were obtained and shrouded from German-speaking
technical experts. In his keynote lecture at the GHI, “Kernwissen: Nuclear Information and the Germans, 1939-1949,” Gordin pointed out that scholarship on nuclear history too often disconnects the quest to obtain highly sought after technical advice from the guarding of security information. Scholars also tend to situate the flow of people and information central to this extraordinary story in national histories and historiographies. And yet, as Gordin convincingly demonstrated, science during the first nuclear decade easily crossed professional and political boundaries. To acquire a nuanced understanding of how this formative era unfolded in different nations competing to obtain access to the world’s most coveted secrets, Gordin encourages us to analyze how networks of knowledge creation and restriction spanned professional and national frontiers.

Held at the Wilson Center, our workshop addressed a broad range of questions about the non-transmission and targeted circulation of information, including but not limited to those put forward by Peter Galison’s essay and Michael Gordin’s lecture. Sessions were devoted to three topics: archives, prisoners of war, and states.

Oxana Kosenko’s presentation examined the appropriation of seized German archives by Soviet security agencies. Kosenko demonstrated how such “trophy” records served as ammunition in internal struggles to curry favor with Soviet leader Josef Stalin. Concurrently, Kosenko explored how captured German documents provided a basis for cooperation with security agencies among states in east-central Europe occupied by Soviet forces. As Douglas Selvage noted, the foreign intelligence branch of East Germany’s Ministry of State Security (Stasi) faced the challenge of managing a deluge of new surveillance following the country’s international recognition in 1972. A steep increase in information acquisition appears to have prompted an uptick in information exchange with the security agencies of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and especially the Soviet Union. According to Selvage, the KGB’s ability to enlist the Stasi’s unofficial collaborators and spies in the West demonstrated that the Stasi was not a foreign intelligence agency of a sovereign state, but rather essentially a branch office of the KGB. Whereas Selvage’s account is based on evaluation of foreign intelligence records today available (after a three-year waiting period) at the Stasi Records Agency, historians of the East German foreign intelligence service doing research only a decade ago, such as Kristie Macrakis, faced the challenge of glean- ing insights from former intelligence officers, defectors, and agents.
As Macrakis discovered, domestic intelligence records of the East German regime, and especially declassified material from Britain and the U.S., serve as a partial corrective to the often unverifiable assertions of former espionage provocateurs.

The means and terms by which captured German documents were shuttled between vanquished nations and victors and the Stasi’s instrumentalization of Nazi pasts also figured prominently in Dominik Rigoll’s presentation. A Berlin-based historian who works for the Forschungsgruppe zur Geschichte der Innenministerien in Bonn und Ost-Berlin (Research Group on the History of the Interior Ministries in Bonn and East Berlin), he documents the means federal officials employed to withhold incriminating information from public circulation; these include security classifications still very much in place in 2017. Rigoll noted that threats posed by select exposures of knowledge about Nazi pasts emerged from communist, later East German, propagandists, but also from background checks requested by the American National Security Agency. Nazi pasts were not a significant obstacle to West German-American cooperation in intelligence circles, however. As Eva Jobs, formerly a researcher to the commission funded by the German Foreign Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst, or BND), makes clear, after Germany’s defeat the taint of Nazism was quickly tempered by the shared experience of warfare and an avowed commitment to mid-century heterosexual norms.

Another antecedent of German-Anglo-American accord was the humane treatment of foreign detainees: British and American coercion of human intelligence sources, especially German POWs, even during the Second World War, appears to have been unusual. During their incarceration, Americans and their most important allies (as Sönke Neitzel’s groundbreaking research on Britain’s Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centers makes clear) were often solicitous toward German internees. As Derek Mallett’s study of U.S. questioning conducted at the secret interrogation center at Fort Hunt in Virginia illustrates, extracting information through interrogation and eavesdropping of over three thousand German POWs between 1942 and 1945 succeeded by developing working relationships with detainees. Extracted from German-speaking foreigners and circulated in published form to English-speaking allies, the documents crafted by Germans and their English-speaking captors nonetheless appeared to have had no meaningful impact on postwar American
military policy. Mallett’s assessment should not obscure the fact that the exploitation of German prisoners played a significant role in drawing together American, British, and also Canadian intelligence officials in extensive forms of inter-allied cooperation, as Jean-Michel Turcotte’s survey of the hundreds of camps sprinkled across North America made clear.

Just as the presenters confirmed that the concealment and circulation of security information in earlier eras was more of a multinational enterprise than one might imagine, our workshop demonstrated that current understandings of information retrieval and denial are drawn too narrowly from the experiences of the Second World War and the cold war in Europe and North America. The relative absence of knowledge from earlier eras should pique the curiosity of scholars: as Florian Altenhöner illustrated, the small if influential intelligence apparatus of the Weimar Republic sufficed to investigate communist subversion and its links to the Soviet Union while at the same time cooperating with Soviet intelligence services in addressing the perceived threat of a country regarded by both defeated powers as a new shared enemy: Poland. The Abwehr’s flexibility extended further. Weimar security officials bestowed favors to Ukrainian counterparts insofar as they assisted German military intelligence in fending off threats, perceived or real, poised by the interwar Polish state.

Overall, the workshop’s presentations offered insights into the essential challenge described by Peter Galison: explaining how various types of documents become classified as “secret” in the first place. Prompted by thoughtful commentaries from Astrid Eckert, Rebecca Lemov, and Sönke Neitzel, our discussions provided windows into behind-the-scenes struggles to ensure how classified knowledge was steadfastly — if by no means always successfully — denied broader circulation. A shared topic of all three sessions — one absent from Galison’s essay — was the means by which clandestine information held by security agencies in one nation were transferred to, or withheld from, foreign powers, occupiers-cum-allies regarded with wariness, and sworn ideological enemies. A related phenomenon highlighted by the presenters was the persistent influence of jockeying within vast security organizations on the largely unseen, day-to-day operations of extraction, dissemination, and analysis. Future scholars might be encouraged to take up these and other dimensions of secrecy’s infrastructure in earlier historical eras (an approach worthy of emulation is University of Southern California historian Jacob
Soll’s biography of Jean-Baptiste Colbert). Accounts that acknowledge what Michael Gordin described as the constant blur between technical and security information, cast as a narrative situated not so much within but between nations, also remain largely unwritten.

The workshop’s last panel brought us closer to the concerns of America’s fraught political present, as well as another dimension of information retention unaddressed by Galison: the conscious neglect of intelligence insights by the highest-ranking government officials. Patrick S. Roberts and Robert P. Saldin’s paper showcased how U.S. presidents misuse and purposefully ignore insights compiled by intelligence organizations. Rather than seek ways in which intelligence may have succeeded in informing policymaking, the two political scientists presented case studies of presidents and their closest advisers putting forward various rationales to ignore or discount intelligence dossiers compiled by security and intelligence analysts. Among their examples for the nonuse of intelligence information was knowledge of what American government officials regarded as a secret Israeli-South African nuclear test in the South Atlantic in 1979, an incident that continues to generate differences of opinion (especially among non-experts). Roberts and Saldin explained how the collection of airborne radiological evidence and evaluation of satellite imagery detecting double flashes consistent with nuclear explosions were insufficient to resolve all doubts. In the absence of frank acknowledgement by the two governments presumably involved, Israel and South Africa, U.S. President Carter’s decision to appoint a panel of experts to study the events in question may very well have been motivated by a desire to increase ambiguity about the alleged test rather than to clarify what had actually occurred near the Prince Edward Islands off Antarctica.

As our workshop drew to a close, less than three blocks away another U.S. president was taking the extraordinary step of ordering the director of national intelligence to conduct a formal investigation of clandestine meddling by foreign hackers with the support of the Russian government in the November 2016 presidential election campaign. Whether this particular limited disclosure of concealed security insights yields greater understanding, or still further opacity, remains unknown. What can be said is that the selective release of fact and interpretation by intelligence officials and the elected officials they ostensibly serve seems likely to gain still greater relevance in the months to come.
Secrecy’s tenacious hold on myriad forms of information extends beyond the purview of America’s sprawling intelligence and security bureaucracies. Trade law, as Galison observed, is in select cases nearly as vigorously defended as nuclear secrets. As our wrap-up discussion made clear, themes we identified with reference to the classification, diversion, and non-transmission of information should be applicable to many other domains of human inquiry. Anti-epistemological histories of medicine, the environment, and accountancy await their narrators.

Keith R. Allen (Institut für Zeitgeschichte München – Berlin)
2016 FRITZ STERN DISSERTATION PRIZE

The 2016 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize was awarded to Katharina Matro (Stanford University). The award ceremony took place at the 25th Annual Symposium of the Friends of the German Historical Institute on November 11, 2016. The selection committee was composed of: Monica Black (University of Tennessee-Knoxville), Eva Giloi (Rutgers University-Newark), and James Melton (committee chair, Emory University). The prize winner has contributed an article presenting her dissertation research to this issue of the Bulletin (see “Features”).

The committee’s prize citation for Katharina Matro’s dissertation, “Postwar in No Man’s Land: Germans, Poles, and Soviets in the Rural Communities of Poland’s New Territories” (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2016), read:

“Katharina Matro’s Stanford dissertation, ‘Postwar in No Man’s Land: Germans, Poles, and Soviets in the Rural Communities of Poland’s New Territories, 1945-1948,’ explores the fate of Prussian noble estates after the Second World War. Focusing on Further Pomerania (Hinterpommern), a former German territory assigned to Poland in the wake of Nazi defeat, Matro’s absorbing study shows that population transfer and resettlement did not happen overnight. For more than four years, Soviets, Poles, and Germans lived alongside each other. The rural space they co-habited was to be sure a contested one, and her detailed, compelling account of everyday life in the region underscores the violence and disorder of those years.

Yet Matro’s fascinating dissertation, based on painstaking research in Polish as well as German archives, also yields surprises. Most German villagers, many of them laboring on and attached to land their forbears had worked for generations, chose not to flee out of a conviction they would be allowed to remain. Polish Communist officials, recognizing the need for labor and for local expertise that newly arrived settlers did not yet have, were often at odds with their Soviet counterparts. Poles back east were themselves reluctant to settle in a sandy and remote region some called the ‘Wild West.’ Those who did often suffered the same mistreatment accorded their German neighbors. Faced with uncertainty about their status on the lands they occupied, few ultimately chose to stay. In an evocative and poignant epilogue that brings Further Pomerania up to the present, Matro notes that the region is today one of the most sparsely populated areas of Europe. Much of its stark and sandy landscape, once cultivated as farmland, has reverted to forest.

The selection committee has nothing but praise for this gracefully written and tightly argued study. Beyond making a significant contribution
to the scholarship, ‘Postwar in No Man’s Land’ already reads like a book; the committee is hopeful it will soon become one.”

NEW STAFF PUBLICATIONS

Monographs and Edited Volumes


Book Chapters and Journal Articles


**STAFF CHANGES**

**Heike Friedman** joined the GHI as program coordinator at GHI West in February 2017. She previously was the Director of Development for the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley (2013 — 2017) and for Tehiyah Day School (2006 — 2013). Ms. Friedman has more than twenty years of experience working as a journalist, editor, and press officer. She holds an M.A. in German Literature, Linguistics, and Film from the University of Bochum.

**Kathryn Deschler** joined the GHI as a library associate in March 2017. She is filling in for Elisabeth Mait, who is on leave until December 2017. Ms. Deschler has previously worked in the library of the American Council of Life Insurers and most recently held the position of Head Librarian.
Obituary

Raimund Lammersdorf (1960-2017)

On January 28, 2017, former GHI research fellow Raimund Lammersdorf passed away at the age of 56. From his student days onward, Raimund Lammersdorf was a devoted historian of the United States. He studied at the University of Cologne, at the Free University of Berlin, where he earned his doctorate, and at Stanford University. In 1989 he became a research fellow at the Free University’s John F. Kennedy-Institute, from where he moved on to the Technical University Chemnitz as an assistant professor in 1994. Two years later, he was awarded a fellowship by the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Lammersdorf joined the GHI in 1997 and stayed on until 2002. After leaving the GHI, Lammersdorf returned to Germany and worked in various capacities, including as executive director of the Bayerische Amerika-Akademie and the Bayerisches Amerikahaus. As a scholar, Raimund Lammersdorf is best known for his work on U.S. foreign relations. His book, *Anfänge einer Weltmacht. Theodore Roosevelt und die transatlantischen Beziehungen, 1901-1909*, published in 1994, won him wide recognition. At the GHI, he focused on the transition of West Germany’s political culture from authoritarianism to liberal democracy, a project which was close to his heart and which he pursued with considerable critical energy. His life, full of intellectual pursuits and personal achievement, was sadly cut short by a terminal illness. Lammersdorf is survived by his wife Vera and his two children Miriam and Marcel.

Manfred Berg and Philipp Gassert
GHI FELLOWSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS

German Historical Institute Receives Volkswagen Foundation Grant for Its GHI West Branch Office in Berkeley

The German Historical Institute Washington DC (GHI) has received a generous research grant from the Volkswagen Foundation, one of Germany’s largest non-profit foundations. The grant will finance three “Tandem Fellowships” in the history of knowledge and migration — each of which will pair a scholar from North America with a colleague from Europe. The GHI’s new outpost in California, which officially opened in February, is building a “Knowledge in Transit Research Network” that will bring together scholars working at the intersection of migration history and the history of knowledge. The postdoctoral Tandem Fellows will spend one academic year in Berkeley and will support the GHI West staff in developing the Knowledge in Transit Research Network. In the first year of the program, the fellows will also assist in organizing an exploratory workshop for the network, which is also funded through the Volkswagen Foundation grant.

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

Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships

The GHI awards short-term fellowships to European and North American doctoral students as well as postdoctoral scholars to pursue research projects that draw upon primary sources located in the United States. We are particularly interested in research projects that fit into the following fields: German and European history, the history of German-American relations, and the role of Germany and the USA in international relations. These fellowships are also available to European doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars in the field of American history. The proposed research projects should make use of historical methods and engage with the relevant historiography. 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 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, several new fellowships programs have been introduced: 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 web site at www.ghi-dc.org/internships.

**RECIPIENTS OF GHI FELLOWSHIPS**

**Fellowship in the History of Family and Kinship**

Elizabeth Katz, Harvard University  
*Courting American Families: The Creation and Evolution of Courts of Domestic Relations, 1910–1969*

**Fellowship in the History of Knowledge**

Frederik Schulze, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster  
*Staudämme in Lateinamerika: Eine globale Wissensgeschichte im Kalten Krieg*

**Fellowship in the History of Migration**

Sarah Lemmen, Universität Bremen  
*Im Exil: Politische Emigration aus Ostmitteleuropa im „Kalten Krieg“: Akteure — Netzwerke — Kommunikation*

**Fellowship in the History of the Americas**

Jan Hansen, Humboldt Universität Berlin  
*Urban Infrastructure and Everyday Life in Los Angeles, 1860–1930*

**Fellowship in the History of Religion and Religiosity**

Robert Kramm, Universität Konstanz  
*Radical Utopian Communities: A Global History from the Margins, c. 1890–1950*
Doctoral Fellowships

**Björn Blaß**, Freie Universität Berlin/ Max Planck Institute for Human Development
*Environments of Disposal: Moralities, Practices and Localities of Waste* (1880 — 1930)

**Sarah Epping**, Freie Universität Berlin
*‘There’s a Land Long Since Neglected’ — American Missionaries in Iraq, to 1932*

**Lisa Gerlach**, Technische Universität Braunschweig/ Georg-Eckert-Institut, Braunschweig
*With a little help from my ...kin? — Eine Kulturgeschichte der Empfehlung im Spiegel deutsch-jüdischer Netzwerke von der Moderne bis zum Nationalsozialismus*

**Sarah Hagmann**, Georg-Eckert-Institut Braunschweig
*Shanghai als globaler Interaktions- und Kommunikationsraum: Die jüdische Hilfsorganisation HIAS-HICEM 1939–1949*

**Felix A. Jimenez Botta**, Boston College
*West Germany and the Human Rights Revolution: Grassroots Activism and Foreign Policy in the Age of South America’s Military Juntas, 1973–1989*

**Rebekah McMillan**, University of Arkansas
*“The Healing Hand Laid on a Great Wound”: The Elberfeld System and the Transformation of Poverty in Germany, Britain, and the United States*

**James McSpadden**, Harvard University
*More than Ideology: Parliamentary Culture in Interwar Europe*

**Martin Meiske**, Deutsches Museum/Ludwig Maximilians Universität München
*The Birth of Geoengineering: Large-scale Engineering Projects in the Early Stage of the Anthropocene (1850–1950)*

**Philipp Scherzer**, Universität Mannheim

Postdoctoral Fellowships

**Jacob Eder**, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena
*Jewish Solidarity and the Transnational Politics of Humanitarian Aid: American Jewish Relief Organizations in the First Half of the 20th Century*

**Stephan Kieninger**, Berlin Center for Cold War Studies
*The Pipeline for Europe’s Transformation: Natural Gas Trade with the Soviet Union and the End of the Cold War*
Swen Steinberg, Technische Universität Dresden
*Wissen über Berg und Wald: Transnationale Diskurse und Transferpraktiken in den Montan- und Forstwissenschaften — Deutschland und die USA im Vergleich (1760-1960)*

Alexa Stiller, Universität Bern

**GHI RESEARCH SEMINAR AND COLLOQUIUM**

**September 8**

Alexander Schwanebeck (Universität Köln)
The Museumization of Borders: Representations of Postcolonial Minorities in U.S. Borderlands in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Christa Wirth (Universität Zürich)
Understanding the Philippines: Chicago, Manila, and the Creation of Postcolonial Knowledge in the Cold War

**September 14**

Sabina Brevaglieri (GHI Rome and Washington)
Between Atlantic and Pacific Worlds: Missionary Return-travels and the Making of Global Roman Catholicism, 1580-1680

**October 5**

Andrew Demshuk (American University)
Rebuilding after the Reich: Urban Reconstruction as Politics, Protest, and Memory in Frankfurt/Main, Leipzig, and Wrocław, 1945-2015

**October 6**

Tobias Schmitt (Universität Freiburg)
Das verdeckte U.S.-Engagement für eine westdeutsche Wiederbewaffnung, ca. 1948-55

**October 12**

Shana Klein (GHI/University of New Mexico)
The Fruits of Empire: Contextualizing Food in Post-Civil War American Art and Culture

**October 19**

Allison Schmidt (GHI/University of Kansas)
Crossing Germany: Eastern European Transmigrants and Saxon State Surveillance, 1900-1924

**October 26**

Leonard Schmieding (GHI/BMW Center, Georgetown University)
Culinary Labor and the Cultural Work of Food among San Francisco Germans
October 27 Andreas Fuchs (GHI Washington)
Music as Representation of Reform: The Role of Singing in the Jewish Reform Movement of the Nineteenth Century

Clare Kim (MIT)

Annette Karpp (Freie Universität Berlin)
Punk and/or Human Rights? From Antiestablishment Ideology to an Agenda of Political Participation in London’s and New York City’s Punk Scenes, 1970s-2000s

November 17 Philipp Ther (Universität Wien)
Refugees and Refugee Integration in Modern European History

December 1 Adrian Mitter (University of Toronto)
Localism and Transnationalism in the Free City of Danzig (1919/20-1933)

Kaete O’Connell (Temple University)
Feeding the Enemy: Humanitarian Aid and the Power of Hunger in Occupied Germany

December 7 Bernhard Dietz (GHI/Universität Mainz)
New Elites? Managers in the USA and West Germany 1970-1990

December 14 Gabor Toth (GHI/Universität Passau)
Agency and Worlds of Probabilities in the Memory of Holocaust Survivors: The Computer Assisted Analysis of Interviews and Witness Accounts
GHI SPRING LECTURE SERIES 2017

The Making of the Digital World

Organized by Anne Schenderlein and Elisabeth Engel

With their constant promise to make our life easier, computers have become an unquestioned part of our daily routines. Estimates have it that there are two billion devices in use around the world today, with expectations that this number will only increase. Despite their global spread and ever-new fields of application, computers and the extensive digital world they create are not simply a story of technological innovation. As this lecture series proposes, computer-related technologies have played a profound role in social transformations since they left the domains of “nerds” in the military and sciences in the 1960s. Computers have become increasingly perceived as indispensible tools in the office as much as in homes and for personal entertainment. As such, the centrality they claim in almost every dimension of social life deserves historical investigation. How did computers transition from an expert technology to objects of everyday use? How were computers commercially marketed and culturally represented? How did the use of computers change people’s perceptions, routines, and lifestyles? How did the increasing use of computers shape social structures related to international divisions of labor, sex, and age? How did they enable new forms of community? By addressing these questions, the series traces the poorly understood social and cultural history of the “digital” and offers a fresh look at narratives of technological progress in the twentieth century.

March 23

A Social History of the Computer Revolution
Nathan Ensmenger (Indiana University)

April 6

Inclusion, Exclusion, and Computer Technology
Elizabeth Petrick (New Jersey Institute of Technology)

April 20

Dial-up: A Grassroots History of Social Media
Kevin Driscoll (University of Virginia)

May 4

The Rise of the Digital Society: Computers in Socialist and Democratic Cold War Germany
Frank Bösch (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam)
GHI CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2017

For a regularly updated calendar of events, please check out our website at www.ghi-dc.org

February 10 — 12 The United States and World War I: Perspectives and Legacies
39th Annual Conference of the Historians in the DGFA/GAAS in Heidelberg
Conveners: Manfred Berg (Heidelberg University) and Axel Jansen (GHI Washington)

February 10 — 11 Mapping Entanglements: Dynamics of Missionary Knowledge and “Materialities” Across Space and Time (16th — 20th centuries)
Workshop at the GHI Washington
Conveners: Sabina Brevagliari, Elisabeth Engel in collaboration with the History of Knowledge Research Group at the GHI Washington and the GHI Rome

February 10 Mapping Entanglements: Missionary Knowledge in Colonial Times
Keynote Lecture at the GHI
Speaker: Rebekka Habermas (University of Göttingen)

February 15 The Reformation Past and Present
Luncheon Discussion at the GHI
Speaker: Margot Käßmann, Special Envoy for the Reformation Anniversary, Olaf Wassmuth, pastor of the German Lutheran Church, Washington, DC

February 23 — 25 German Past Futures in the 20th Century
Conference at the GHI
Conveners: Arnd Bauerkämper (Free University of Berlin), Frank Biess (University of California, San Diego), Kai Evers (University of California, Irvine), Anne Schenderlein (GHI)

February 28 Germany as an Immigration Country: Labor Migration and the Refugee Influx
Lecture at GHI West (201 Moses Hall, UC Berkeley)
Speaker: Cornelia Schu, Managing Director of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR) and Director of the Expert Council’s Research Unit
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>March 3—4</td>
<td>Observing the Everyday: Journalistic Practices and Knowledge Production in the Modern Era</td>
<td>Workshop at the GHI</td>
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<td>Convener: Kerstin von der Krone (GHI Washington) and Hansjakob Ziemer (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)</td>
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<td>March 30—1</td>
<td>Creating and Challenging the Transatlantic Intelligence Community</td>
<td>Joint Conference at the Woodrow Wilson Center and at the GHI Washington, D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Convener: International Intelligence History Association, GHI, and the History &amp; Public Policy Program of the Woodrow Wilson Center</td>
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<td>March 30—31</td>
<td>Fifth Junior Scholars Conference in Jewish History: Rich and Poor, Jews and Gentiles: Wealth, Poverty and Class in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries</td>
<td>Conference in Bloomington, IN</td>
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<td>Convener: Co-organized by Miriam Rürup (Institute for the History of the German Jews, Hamburg), Anne Schenderlein (GHI Washington), and Mirjam Zadoff (Indiana University, Bloomington), with additional support by the Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts</td>
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<td>April 7—8</td>
<td>Refugee Crises, 1945-2000: Political and Societal Responses in International Comparison</td>
<td>Workshop at the GHI</td>
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<td>Convener: Jan C. Jansen (GHI Washington), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington)</td>
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<td>April 27</td>
<td>Democracy and Its Discontents: The Weimar Republic Revisited</td>
<td>Panel Discussion at the GHI</td>
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<td>Speakers: Kathleen Canning (University of Michigan), Rüdiger Graf (Center for Contemporary History Potsdam), Donna Harsch (Carnegie Mellon University), and Dirk Schumann (University of Göttingen), and moderated by David Clay Large (University of San Francisco/University of California, Berkeley)</td>
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<td>May 05</td>
<td>Workshop on Medieval Germany</td>
<td>Conference at the GHI London</td>
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<td>Organized by the GHI London in co-operation with the GHI Washington and the German History Society</td>
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May 11 — 13
Forever Young: Rejuvenation in Transnational and Transcolonial Perspective, 1900-2000
Conference at the GHI
Conveners: Kristine Alexander (University of Lethbridge), Mischa Honeck (GHI), Isabel Richter (University of Bremen)

May 18
Colonial Germans and Slavery on the Eve of the American Revolution: The Case of Ebenezer
Eighth Gerald Feldman Memorial Lecture at the GHI
Speaker: James Van Horn Melton (Emory University)

June 1 — 3
Beyond Data: Knowledge Production in Bureaucracies across Science, Commerce, and the State
Workshop at the GHI
Conveners: Sebastian Felten (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin), Philipp Lehmann (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin), Christine von Oertzen (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington)

June 7 — 10
23rd Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar: German History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
Seminar at Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden, Hamburg
Conveners: Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University), Miriam Rürup (IGdJ, Hamburg), Richard F. Wetzell (GHI Washington)

July 24 — August 2
GHI Archival Summer School in the United States for Junior Historians
Seminar in the United States
Convener: Atiba Pertilla (GHI Washington)

September 7 — 9
Learning at the Margins: The Creation and Dissemination of Knowledge among African Americans and Jews since the 1880s
Conference at the GHI Washington
Conveners: Elisabeth Engel (GHI Washington) and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson (University of Augsburg), Kierra Crago-Schneider (USHMM), Yvonne Poser (Howard University)

September 14 — 16
Inheritance Practices in the 20th Century
Workshop at the GHI
Conveners: Jürgen Dinkel (University of Gießen), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Vanessa Ogle (University of Pennsylvania)
**September 15 — 16**  
Empires of Knowledge  
Conference at University of British Columbia, Vancouver/Canada  
Conveners: Axel Jansen (GHI Washington), John Krige (Georgia Institute of Technology), and Jessica Wang (UBC)

**September 28 — 30**  
Reeducation Revisited: Strategies, Actors, Institutions in Transnational and Comparative Perspective  
Conference at the GHI  
Conveners: Katharina Gerund (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg), Heike Paul (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg), Tomoyuki Sasaki (College of William & Mary, Williamsburg), and Anne Schenderlein (GHI Washington)

**October 5 — 8**  
Kinship, Knowledge, and Migration  
GHI Panel Series at the GSA in Atlanta, GA  
Organizers: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington) and Swen Steinberg (TU Dresden)

**October 12**  
German Unification Symposium 2017  
German Unification Symposium Lecture at the GHI

**October 26 — 28**  
Creating Historical Knowledge Socially: New Approaches, Opportunities and Epistemological Implications of Undertaking Research with Citizen Scholars  
International Workshop and Conference at the GHI Washington  
Conveners: Sheila Brennan (George Mason University), Matthew Hiebert (GHI Washington), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), and Trevor Muñoz (MITH)

**November 1**  
Bucerius Young Scholars Forum at GHI WEST at UC Berkeley: “Histories of Migration: Transatlantic and Global Perspectives”  
Bucerius Young Scholars Forum at GHI West at UC Berkeley  
Convener: Atiba Pertilla (GHI Washington)

**December 5 — 8**  
Knowledge in Flight: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Scholar Rescue in North America  
Workshop at The New School for Social Research, New York City  
Conveners: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), William Milberg (The New School for Social Research), William Weitzer (Leo Baeck Institute, New York)
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.
Bulletin of the German Historical Institute
Washington DC

Editor: Richard F. Wetzell
Assistant Editor: Insa Kummer

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www.ghi-dc.org/bulletin

To sign up for a subscription or to report an address change please send an email to mlist@ghi-dc.org.

For editorial comments or inquiries, please contact the editor at wetzell@ghi-dc.org or at the address below.

For further information about the GHI, please visit our web site www.ghi-dc.org.

For general inquiries, please send an email to info@ghi-dc.org.

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For further information, please consult our web site: www.ghi-dc.org

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PD Dr. Axel Jansen, Deputy Director
History of the United States; history of science

Stefan Böhm, Administrative Director

Dr. Elisabeth Engel, Research Fellow
North American history; race and empire; modern colonialism; Atlantic and transnational history; postcolonial studies; history of capitalism

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Digital history and digital humanities; transnational intellectual history and literary movements; Canadian social and cultural history; cosmopolitanisms and community; new media, scholarly publishing, and knowledge creation

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Dr. Ines Prodöhl, Research Fellow
Global history, cultural and economic history, civil society

Dr. Anne Clara Schenderlein
German Jewish history; migration and transnationalism; everyday life and consumption; memory and emotion

Dr. Richard F. Wetzell, Research Fellow and Editor
Modern European and German history; intellectual and cultural history; legal history; history of science and medicine; history of sexuality

Dr. Thomas L. Hughes, Senior Visiting Research Fellow
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