

## PREFACE

This issue of the *Bulletin* begins with the German Historical Institute's 32nd annual lecture, delivered last November by the distinguished historian Paul Nolte (Freie Universität Berlin). In his lecture, titled "A Different Sort of Neoliberalism? Making Sense of German History Since the 1970s," Nolte grapples with the question of how to characterize the current era — the decades since the 1970s — in German history. Seeking to move beyond characterizations of the era as "post"-something, Nolte argues that German history since the late 1970s has been characterized by a German variant of neoliberalism. This German variant, he argues, differed from the better-known British and American versions associated with Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in three crucial ways. First, German neoliberalism is "soft": its modifications of the German welfare state and economy have been made incrementally. Second, it is "governmental": far from pushing for complete deregulation, German neoliberalism has drawn on state regulation to implement its agenda. Finally, German neoliberalism is "ecological," that is, committed to environmental protection and sustainability. Nolte closes by pondering the thought-provoking question of whether recent advances in individual rights — especially for women and minorities — have been connected to the advance of neoliberalism or taken place in spite of it.

Our second feature article, "Berlin's Grand Hotels and the Crisis of German Democracy," presents the research of the winner of the 2018 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which is awarded annually by the Friends of the German Historical Institute for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university. In this article, Adam Bisno, who wrote his prize-winning dissertation at Johns Hopkins University, takes an innovative approach to the history of Berlin's luxury hotels during the Weimar Republic. Instead of writing a cultural history of Berlin's grand hotels as glamorous places where high-society guests gathered, Bisno examines the business history of these establishments — and uses business history as a method for addressing questions of political history. Drawing on board meeting minutes, annual reports, and other business records, Bisno demonstrates that even though Berlin's luxury hotels were controlled by men who thought of themselves as liberals, the luxury hospitality industry quickly got in the habit

of blaming its economic problems on the Weimar Republic, turning against the Republic long before the Great Depression.

A different aspect of the Weimar Republic forms the subject of our third article, “Images of the Collective: Shapes, Types, and Bodies in Interwar Germany.” In this article, GHI postdoctoral visiting fellow Simon Unger seeks to understand the appeal of Nazi propaganda calling for a new German *Volksgemeinschaft* by demonstrating that interwar intellectuals from the right and the left shared a focus on collective typologies as a means of defining the individual via the collective. Moving from Weimar photography to psychological and psychiatric debates, Unger shows how both democrats and anti-Republicans, including the Nazis, shared an obsession with biological and psychological human “types.” Nazism, he argues, should be understood as “one possible pathway resulting from Weimar’s images of the collective.”

The last two feature articles present GHI research in the fields of global and transatlantic history. GHI research fellow Sören Urbansky’s article “A Chinese Plague” examines anti-Chinese discourses in a comparative and transnational study of Vladivostok, San Francisco, and Singapore in order to compare discriminatory strategies in these three locations of the Chinese diaspora. Arguing that the late nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of the “yellow peril” as a global discourse, Urbansky shows how in each of these cities debates over health, hygiene, and housing revealed widespread suspicions that the local Chinese communities were riddled with undetected infectious diseases. Instead of addressing the social factors that caused overcrowding and a lack of hygiene, the host societies attributed filth and squalor to Chinese national character.

Claudia Roesch’s article “Love without Fear” analyzes the role that different knowledge networks played in family planning initiatives targeting immigrant families in the postwar era. Drawing on the history of knowledge as a heuristic device, Roesch’s comparative study of the West German and American cases analyzes the roles of four different knowledge networks in providing immigrant women’s access to reproductive knowledge. Because paternalistic attitudes, language barriers, and structural racism made it difficult for immigrant women to access formal medical knowledge networks in their host countries, most immigrant women relied primarily on semi-formal networks comprised of family planners and women’s

rights groups as well as informal networks consisting of family and friends. With the rise of satellite television and more affordable international travel, immigrant women also increasingly drew on formal knowledge networks in their home countries.

The conference reports in this issue reflect the Institute's current focus on the history of migration, Jewish history, and digital history. Recent conferences on the history of migration included the 2018 Bucerius Young Scholars Forum, which was devoted to "Histories of Migration — Transatlantic and Global Perspectives," the GHI's 2018 GSA panel series on "The Nexus of Migration, Youth, and Knowledge," as well as conferences on "Exile and Emigration in an Age of War and Revolutions, 1750-1830" and on "Knowledge and Society in Times of Upheaval." In addition, we report on the concluding conference of a major collaborative research project, "Agents of Cultural Change: Jewish and Other Responses to Modernity, 1750-1900," and on the GHI's most recent digital history conference, on the topic "Reconstructing Historical Networks Digitally: New Approaches, Opportunities and Epistemological Implications of Social Network Analysis." Please turn to our news section for recent GHI news. For up-to-date information on upcoming events, publications, fellowships, and calls for papers, please also consult our website — <http://www.ghi-dc.org> — as well as our Facebook page.

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