

German Historical Institute
London



BULLETIN

ISSN 0269-8552

Stefan Kreuzberger, Dominik Geppert, and Dierk Hoffmann:
How to Write the History of a Divided Nation: Germany, 1945–1990
German Historical Institute London Bulletin, Vol 41, No. 1
(May 2019), pp3-18

HOW TO WRITE THE HISTORY OF A DIVIDED NATION: GERMANY, 1945–1990

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It is more than twenty-five years since the division of Germany came to an end, but the historiographies of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) still run on largely separate tracks. The Cold War is far from over in the historiography of post-1945 Germany. The introduction to this special themed issue of the *GHIL Bulletin* sets out to provide a brief overview. It will start by reviewing the research before examining possible research perspectives. In order to explain why more German–German entangled history has not been written, it will then look at the formative influence of the various generations of historians. Finally, this introduction will present seven questions which we believe need to be looked at by current research, and discuss the problems that are associated with them.

The many dimensions hinted at here of the history of a divided yet still in various ways connected Germany between 1945 and 1990 cannot be exhaustively explored in the essays that make up this special themed issue of the *Bulletin*. Christoph Classen looking at media history, Jutta Braun writing on the history of sport, and Franz-Josef Meiers examining the common responsibility of the two German states in foreign and security policy merely cast spotlights on the large complex of demarcation, entanglement, and contrast in the German–German historiography of the East–West conflict. They present three strands of a larger project which, thanks to the generosity of the Gerda Henkel Foundation, the German Historical Institute London, and the London School of Economics and Political Science, was first discussed and conceptually honed at a workshop held in London at the beginning of June 2017.¹ The results will be published from 2019/20 by

Trans. Angela Davies (GHIL)

¹ Workshop ‘Die geteilte Nation: Deutsch-deutsche Geschichte 1945–1990’, organized by the German Historical Institute London in co-operation with

be.bra-Verlag in a series planned to run to twenty volumes, ‘Geteilte Nation: Deutsch-deutsche Geschichte 1945/49–1990’.

I. *Omissions: Spotlights on Current Research*

A number of histories of the Federal Republic were published around the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the state in 1949. These presented West German developments over sixty years up to the present, but included East German history only for the years after 1990.² Even the relatively few accounts conceived as histories of the whole of Germany often, in their internal structure, treated East and West German history separately.³

By contrast, the numerous connections and interactions that continue to exist between the two German states and societies, but also the rejections and demarcations, have been much less systematically studied. Christoph Kleßmann’s pioneering studies from the 1980s have found few imitators.⁴ While there have been a number of preliminary methodological and programmatic considerations,⁵ these

the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the London School of Economics and Political Science, and held at the GHIL, 1-2 June 2017. For the conference report see <<https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-7232?title=die-geteilte-nation-deutsch-deutsche-geschichte-1945-1990&recno=3&q=geteilte%20nation%20london&sort=newestPublished&fq=&total=41>>, accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

² E.g. Eckart Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich, 2009); Marie-Luise Recker, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich, 2009); Hans-Peter Schwarz (ed.), *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Eine Bilanz nach 60 Jahren* (Cologne, 2008); Edgar Wolfrum, *Die geglückte Demokratie: Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart, 2006); id., *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949–1990* (Stuttgart, 2003).

³ Peter Graf Kielmansegg, *Nach der Katastrophe: Geschichte des geteilten Deutschland* (Berlin, 2000); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 5 vols. (Munich, 1987–2008), vol. v: *Bundesrepublik und DDR 1949–1990* (2008); Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2014).

⁴ Christoph Kleßmann, *Die doppelte Staatsgründung: Deutsche Geschichte 1945–1955* (Bonn, 1982); id., *Zwei Staaten, eine Nation: Deutsche Geschichte 1955–1970* (Bonn, 1988).

⁵ See e.g. Konrad Jarausch, “Die Teile als Ganzes erkennen”: Zur Integration

conceptual exercises have rarely resulted in any empirical work.⁶ The Institute of Contemporary History (Munich–Berlin) took a step in this direction when, more than ten years ago, it published an edited volume on ‘double Germany’.⁷ Seven years later the Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam followed up with a volume on the ‘divided history’ of East and West Germany. It concentrated mainly on the time after the 1970s, and included the period of transformation from the re-unification of the state to the turn of the millennium.⁸

Few of the many historians’ commissions that for some years have been reappraising the impact of the Nazi period on German ministries and government departments pay any heed to the German–German perspective. Only recently has the German–German dimension of ‘offices and their past’ been noted as an appropriate research topic.⁹ These historians’ commissions mostly concentrate on the connections between Nazi Germany and the FRG. This applies to work on the German Foreign Office,¹⁰ on the transition from the Nazi Ministry of Labour (Reichsarbeitsministerium) to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales),¹¹ from the Nazi Finance Ministry (Reichsfinanzministerium) to the

der beiden deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichten’, *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, 1 (2004), 10–30; Christoph Kleßmann, ‘Spaltung und Verflechtung: Ein Konzept zur integrierten Nachkriegsgeschichte 1945 bis 1990’, in id. and Peter Lautzas (eds.), *Teilung und Integration: Die doppelte deutsche Nachkriegsgeschichte als wissenschaftliches und didaktisches Problem* (Bonn, 2005), 20–37; Hermann Wentker, ‘Zwischen Abgrenzung und Verflechtung: Deutsch-deutsche Geschichte nach 1945’, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 55 (2005), 10–17; Horst Möller ‘Demokratie und Diktatur’, *ibid.* 57 (2007), 3–7.

⁶ As an exception see Rolf Badstübner, *Vom ‘Reich’ zum doppelten Deutschland: Gesellschaft und Politik im Umbruch* (Berlin, 1999).

⁷ Udo Wengst and Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Das doppelte Deutschland: 40 Jahre Systemkonkurrenz* (Berlin, 2008).

⁸ Frank Bösch (ed.), *Geteilte Geschichte: Ost- und Westdeutschland 1970–2000* (Göttingen, 2015).

⁹ Stefan Creuzberger and Dominik Geppert (eds.), *Die Ämter und ihre Vergangenheit: Ministerien und Behörden im geteilten Deutschland 1949–1972* (Paderborn, 2018).

¹⁰ Eckart Conze, Norbert Frei, Peter Hayes, and Moshe Zimmermann, *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Munich, 2010).

¹¹ Alexander Nützenadel (ed.), *Das Reichsarbeitsministerium im National-*

Federal Ministry of Finance (Bundesministerium der Finanzen),¹² and on the Federal Ministry of Justice (Bundesministerium der Justiz) and its earlier incarnations.¹³ It is a similar story with research on the Gehlen Organization and the German Federal Intelligence Service.¹⁴ The only exception is an investigation of the confrontation between the GDR state security (Stasi) and the Gehlen Organization in the autumn of 1953.¹⁵

The historians' commissions on the Ministry of the Interior (Innenministerium) and the Ministry of the Economy (Wirtschaftsministerium) are the only ones so far to have systematically explored a German–German perspective.¹⁶ Further research projects, for example, on the Ministries of Transport and Agriculture, are planned. In addition, a history of medicine research project on the German–German Health Agreement of 1974 is starting at Berlin's Charité univer-

sozialismus: Verwaltung – Politik – Verbrechen (Göttingen, 2017) has so far been published. For an update see <<http://doku.bmas.de/die-historikerkommission#105005>>, accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

¹² Christiane Kuller, *Bürokratie und Verbrechen: Antisemitische Finanzpolitik und Verwaltungspraxis im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland*, Das Reichsfinanzministerium im Nationalsozialismus, 1 (Munich, 2013); For an update see <<http://www.reichsfinanzministerium-geschichte.de/>>, accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

¹³ Manfred Görtemaker and Christoph Safferling, *Die Akte Rosenberg: Das Bundesministerium der Justiz und die NS-Zeit* (Munich, 2016). For the final report see <http://www.bmjv.de/SharedDocs/Publikationen/DE/Akte_Rosenburg.html>, accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

¹⁴ The following titles have so far been published: Christoph Rass, *Das Sozialprofil des Bundesnachrichtendienstes: Von den Anfängen bis 1968* (Berlin, 2016); Gerhard Sälter, *Phantome des Kalten Krieges: Die Organisation Gehlen und die Wiederbelebung des Gestapo-Feindbildes 'Rote Kapelle'* (Berlin, 2016); Sabrina Nowack, *Sicherheitsrisiko NS-Belastung: Personalüberprüfungen im Bundesnachrichtendienst in den 1960er Jahren* (Berlin, 2016); Armin Müller, *Wellenkrieg: Agentenfunk und Funkaufklärung des Bundesnachrichtendienstes 1945–1968* (Berlin, 2017). For an update see <<http://www.uhk-bnd.de>>, accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

¹⁵ Ronny Heidenreich, Daniela Munkel, and Elke Stadelmann-Wenz, *Geheimdienstkrieg in Deutschland: Die Konfrontation von DDR-Staatssicherheit und Organisation Gehlen 1953* (Berlin, 2016).

¹⁶ Werner Abelshäuser, Stefan Fisch, Dierk Hoffmann, Carl-Ludwig Holtfrerich, and Albrecht Ritschl (eds.), *Wirtschaftspolitik in Deutschland 1917–1990*,

sity hospital.¹⁷ And in the history department of Rostock University, a monograph investigating German-German communal responsibility in foreign and security policy is being written within the framework of a project funded by the German Research Foundation.¹⁸

II. *Research Perspectives and Gaps*

All this is strange because there is no lack of topics that require investigation in German-German entangled history, especially if we think beyond high politics and the symbolic and representative substance of German-German summits and state visits. For example, relations between the military and society, and militarism and pacifism in Germany after 1945 cannot be understood except in a German-German context, if only because the two German states were primarily arming themselves against each other, and because they would have been the main battlefield in the event of a nuclear war in Europe. The topography of a divided country also had a direct impact on the energy industry, for example, and on the challenges with which it presented East and West Germany: shortages of raw materials after the Second World War, the oil crisis, and, in general, the problem of securing energy supplies. If we look at gender relations, the role of women in East and West German society as housewives, mothers, and/or workers can only be understood with reference to the other side of the debate. Similarly, grand policy initiatives for historical commemorations (from the Hohenstaufen dynasty to Martin Luther and Frederick the Great) and plans to establish museums (such as the German Historical Museum in Berlin and the House of History in Bonn) all had an implicitly or explicitly German-German thrust. Even in relatively arcane areas, such as the structure and culture of state administration, the division of Germany left behind traces—in

4 vols. (Berlin, 2016); Frank Bösch and Andreas Wirsching (eds.), *Hüter der Ordnung: Die Innenministerien in Bonn und Ost-Berlin nach dem Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen, 2018).

¹⁷ Online at <https://medizingeschichte.charite.de/forschung/deutsch_deutsches_gesundheitsabkommen_1974/>, accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

¹⁸ Online at <<https://www.geschichte.uni-rostock.de/arbeitsbereiche/zeitgeschichte/lehrstuhl/laufende-forschungsprojekte-und-publikationsvorhaben/>>, accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

remaining commonalities as well as in deliberate differentiations.¹⁹ In future, we need to look more comparatively at forms of communication in East and West German internal administrations. For instance, recent research has revealed that oral discourse gained significance in internal communication in the GDR's Interior Ministry.²⁰

Many other examples could be cited: escapes and migration movements from East to West (and, to a lesser extent, vice versa); mutual infiltration of secret services and an almost obsessive fear of the activity of hostile agents; the rivalry between the two German states, both wooing young people as the hope of the future; the bitter issue of the survival of a German nation of culture (*Kulturnation*); dealing with social difference and lives lived 'beyond the norm'; the role of religion and the churches in divided Germany; meetings, either continuing or resumed after being broken off, at family reunions, on holidays, or on business trips at border crossing points, transit motorways, or holiday resorts in Hungary and Bulgaria; and, finally, the media of everyday contacts such as the traffic in parcels (mostly from West to East, but also vice versa),²¹ telephone conversations, radio, and television. The rivalry between the GDR and the FRG for influence over the 'Third World' had as much of an impact on the foreign relations of the two German states during the Cold War as did coping with state debt in Bonn and East Berlin. The question of how the personal and ideological legacy of the Nazi dictatorship was to be dealt with also impacted both German states equally and shaped their relations with each other (*Braunbücher, Die Rote Gestapo*).²² The German-German antagonism took place in the shadow of the Third Reich.

III. *The Influence of Generations*

If we ask why all these topics have not already long been dealt with, we quickly come up against the impact of generations on the frame-

¹⁹ All examples are drawn from the workshop 'Die geteilte Nation: Deutsch-deutsche Geschichte 1945-1990' (see n. 1).

²⁰ Bösch and Wirsching (eds.), *Hüter der Ordnung*.

²¹ On this see the recently published work by Konstanze Soch, *Eine große Freude? Der innerdeutsche Paketverkehr im Kalten Krieg (1949-1989)* (Frankfurt am Main, 2018).

²² From the 1950s both German states published various collections on Nazi

work within which historians interpret German–German history. The first (but by no means new) generation of historians to write German history after the Second World War held fast to the idea of the unity of the German nation until well into the 1960s, but for various reasons did not deal with the period immediately preceding their own (for example, because documents were not released in the archives until a certain time had elapsed, but also because, as professional historians, they traditionally preferred to avoid writing history ‘while it is still smoking’).²³

A younger generation, which included centre right leaning scholars such as Hans-Peter Schwarz and Peter Graf Kielmansegg and centre left leaning historians such as Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Heinrich August Winkler, and Konrad Jarausch, supported the notion that the FRG should self-identify, intellectually and historically, as a state with its own history.²⁴ The liberal conservative representatives of this generation described West Germany’s successful stabilization after 1945. The history they wrote focused on the economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*) and the election miracle (*Wahlwunder*) of the 1950s, the consolidation of democratic institutions, and the achievement of foreign security through European integration and the conclusion of a transatlantic alliance. In their view the history of the FRG was first the ‘history of its stabilization, then of its stability’.²⁵ The main emphasis was on the successful modernization of the 1950s, which was all the more conspicuous in comparison with the instability and crisis-ridden years of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi dictatorship with their dynamic of destruction and self-destruction. Both the latter and the GDR were held up as a negative foil in these narratives.

crimes under titles of this sort. They were intended to demonstrate the complicity of the current elites of the respective other state in these crimes.

²³ ‘The recent prevalence of these hot histories on publishers’ lists raises the question: Should – or perhaps can – history be written while it is still smoking?’ Barbara W. Tuchman, *Practicing History: Selected Essays* (London, 1982), 25.

²⁴ See Dominik Geppert, ‘Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Zur Geschichte’, in Görres-Gesellschaft and Herder Verlag (eds.), *Staatslexikon: Recht – Wirtschaft – Gesellschaft* (8th rev. edn. Freiburg, 2017), cols. 844–55.

²⁵ Thus Hans-Peter Schwarz, ‘Die ausgebliebene Katastrophe: Eine Problemskizze zur Geschichte der Bundesrepublik’, in Hermann Rudolph (ed.), *Den*

The left liberal members of this generation were less interested in the state and the nation than in civil society. They focused not on the Adenauer era, but on that of Brandt. Their discussion was less about the stabilization of the state than about its pluralization, expanding chances for participation, the development of social security, and the dismantling of hierarchies. They wrote the history of post-war Germany as a sort of historical novel of psychological and moral growth (*Bildungsroman*): a history of the liberalizing, civilizing, and Westernizing of the post-war Germans, which mirrored their own life experience.²⁶ For them the GDR was not really a negative foil; rather, it more or less disappeared from view altogether, becoming, in Wehler's famous words, a 'footnote to world history'.²⁷

For the next generation of historians, what had held the older generation together across political and ideological differences faded, that is, the interpretative pattern imposed by seeing the West German state, starting in 1945/49, as a success story. Amazement at the stabilization and liberalization of the Federal Republic gave way to questions about how present-day problems had come about. Current confusions could hardly be explained solely in terms of Germany's progressive anchoring in the West, or the increasing civilization of the Germans. They pointed to wear and tear, change, persistence, and adaptability of institutions and social arrangements, and to some extent still do.²⁸

Thus on the one hand more attention was paid to the European and global dimensions of present problems, with an unmistakable shift in current scholarly interest in research on contemporary histo-

Staat denken: Theodor Eschenburg zum Fünfundachtzigsten (Berlin, 1990), 151–74, at 160. On this see also Hans Günter Hockerts, 'Integration der Gesellschaft: Gründungskrise und Sozialpolitik in der frühen Bundesrepublik', *Zeitschrift für Sozialreform*, 32 (1986), 25–41; Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek (eds.), *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre* (Bonn, 1993).

²⁶ See e.g. Konrad Jarausch, *Die Umkehr: Deutsche Wandlungen 1945–1995* (Munich, 2004).

²⁷ 'Fußnote der Weltgeschichte', Wehler, *Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, vol. v. pp. xv–xvi, 424–5.

²⁸ Klaus Naumann, 'Die Historisierung der Bonner Republik: Zeitgeschichtsschreibung in zeitdiagnostischer Absicht', *Mittelweg*, 36 (2000), 53–66; Andreas Rödter, *21.0: Eine kurze Geschichte der Gegenwart* (Munich, 2015).

ry towards European, transnational, and global history.²⁹ On the other hand, however, new perspectives opened up on the history of the whole of Germany leading up to the present. It was asked what legacies of the past East and West Germany shared across national borders, and what was owed to the specific conditions of a Communist party dictatorship or a pluralist democracy respectively.

In addition, since German unification in 1989–90, the question of a German national history going beyond a post-national self-perception harboured by the old FRG and the GDR has arisen anew. Reunified Germany is no longer a frontline state between the two Cold War blocs. Rather, it sees itself as the ‘power in the middle’ of the European continent,³⁰ a position that both poses challenges to notions of political balance, and invites reminiscences of past constellations from the perspective of the *longue durée* of the twentieth century or the period of high modernism since the 1880s.³¹

IV. *Current Tasks for Research: Seven Questions*

A multi-faceted history of divided Germany can therefore both pick up on current research trends and help to fill a gap in the present-day research landscape. In the selection of individual themes, preference will be given to material in which elements of a history of contrast and delimitation (of political systems) can be combined with a parallel history (two industrial societies with many similar characteristics and facing similar challenges) on the one hand, and a history of entanglement (of Germans on both sides of the Iron Curtain, who continued to be connected in many different ways) on the other.

The following research questions, which cut across the individual themes examined in the context of a history of German–German contrast, parallel histories, and entangled histories, seem especially important and potentially enlightening.

²⁹ Alexander Gallus, Axel Schildt, and Detlef Siegfried, *Deutsche Zeitgeschichte – transnational* (Göttingen, 2015).

³⁰ Herfried Münkler, *Macht in der Mitte: Die neuen Aufgaben Deutschlands in Europa* (Hamburg, 2015).

³¹ Andreas Rödter, *Wer hat Angst vor Deutschland? Geschichte eines europäischen Problems* (Frankfurt am Main, 2018).

First, there is the question of the tension between the inherent momentum of division on the one hand, and the continued existence of national connections on the other. Where did the two German states influence each other? When can we establish that the influence was one-sided? When and where did delimitation prevail?

Second, the question of the differences between democracy and dictatorship is important. In what areas can we find parallel developments despite systemic contrasts? In what areas did differences in the systems exclude analogous developments?

Third, the relationship between heteronomy and autonomy must be questioned. Where and when did influences from outside dominate (for example, the Sovietization of the Soviet Zone of Occupation/GDR, or the 'Americanization', 'Westernization', and 'Europeanization' of the FRG)? When and where were national path dependencies particularly well developed?

Fourth, there is the question about the consequences of Nazi rule and the Second World War. In what ways did this past continue to impact on the present? What material problems did it create? To what extent did dealing with it shape intellectual debates?

Fifth, a question arises as to the relationship between structure and agency. What significance did individual people and decisions have for the course of history? To what extent did political, social, and economic conditions dictate developments?

Sixth, the significance of generations is revealing. Can specific processes of change in German history between 1945 and 1990 be explained in terms of the history of generations? When and where do generation-specific behavioural traits come into effect historically? When and where can generational commonalities be observed in East and West? What role was played by the need for generational distinction, and what were the motives behind delimitation processes that contributed to the formation of generations? Was there a gender aspect in the formation of generations?

Finally, the seventh question asks about the topography of a divided Germany. To what extent did the division of the country change its infrastructure and settlement patterns? When and where did the need to express ideological distinctions dominate in architecture and town planning; when and where can similar forms of expression and construction methods be found in East and West?

V. *Problems of Research:*
Embedding, Periodization, International References

One conceptual challenge remains: how does the German-German theme fit into established patterns of interpreting post-war German history? It cannot be a matter simply of overlaying various themes to create a particular master narrative of German-German history. But we must be aware of any overarching patterns of interpretation that are inscribed in the various topics of German-German history.

The usual grand interpretations of West German history – the paradigms of stabilization, liberalization, Westernization, and civilization – are not really suitable for this because they relate to the history of the FRG alone and do not apply to the history of the GDR. This is true not only of liberalization and Westernization, but also of stabilization, which was always precarious in the GDR. That is why, in the end, it collapsed like a house of cards. Nor can the historical development of a regime that sealed its borders with a wall and barbed wire, and maintained a huge apparatus to spy on its own citizens, be described as heading for ‘civilization’. And to distinguish between the success story of the FRG and a story of failure on the part of the GDR is, ultimately, unsatisfying.³² But what about deradicalization as a guiding principle? Or the internal and external pacification of the Germans as a leitmotiv? Or could it help us to take recourse to the terms ‘modern’, ‘modernity’, or ‘(capacity for) modernization’ as a red thread running through the narrative?

Added to this is the question of meaningful periodization. The years from the end of the Second World War to German unification on 3 October 1990 cover a self-contained period. The years 1945 and 1990 were turning points, which seems plausible with reference both to the international system of states (the Cold War era) and to the national context (as the period of German division), and they have generally been accepted by historians. But to start in 1945/49 and end in 1989/90, the year of the *Wende*, suggests a double pre-determination that is not entirely unproblematic.

The interpretation from the perspective of a new beginning sees developments in post-1945 Germany as a history ‘after the catastro-

³² Kielmansegg, *Nach der Katastrophe*.

phe' and generally, in good Hegelian fashion, discerns a driving force that was inherent from the start: the first Federal chancellor,³³ or the victors of the Second World War, who left their mark on post-war Germany,³⁴ or the total defeat that triggered a search for a new orientation.³⁵ This approach has been criticized, not unjustifiably, for putting too much emphasis on zero hour (*Stunde Null*) while neglecting many continuities from the period before 1945.³⁶ Instead of simply presupposing a new start, we need to look more carefully in order to distinguish where elements of continuity dominated, and where breaks prevailed. But to take the turning point of 1989/90 as the end of the story suggests a narrative that inscribes a teleology pointing in the direction of reunification. Here, too, we should at least investigate which processes led to the peaceful revolution in the GDR, and which ran counter to it.

In order to avoid the teleological tunnel vision that is associated with these sorts of approaches, the history of divided German should be interpreted neither from the beginning nor from the end. Rather, it should be seen from the middle, as a completed period in its own right, one that did not necessarily start with a 'zero hour' and cannot be adequately explained as leading to the problems of today. This means that the peculiarities of Germany's divided history should be at the centre of the story. While looking at individual topics, we must always ask what specific turning points arose, and what internal structures and periodizations resulted from them.

To narrate a history of Germany's division in this way does not mean writing a *histoire totale* of the years 1945 to 1990. It will be nec-

³³ Arnulf Baring, *Außenpolitik in Adenauers Kanzlerdemokratie: Bonns Beitrag zur Europäischen Verteidigungsgemeinschaft* (Munich, 1969), 1: 'im Anfang war Adenauer' (in the beginning was Adenauer).

³⁴ Helga Haftendorn, *Deutsche Außenpolitik zwischen Selbstbeschränkung und Selbstbehauptung 1945–2000* (Munich, 2001), 17: 'im Anfang waren die Alliierten' (in the beginning were the Allies).

³⁵ Martin H. Geyer, 'Am Anfang war . . . die Niederlage: 1945, historische Kontingenz und die Anfänge der bundesdeutschen Moderne', in Inka Mülder-Bach and Eckhard Schumacher (eds.), *Am Anfang war . . . : Ursprungsfiguren und Anfangskonstruktionen der Moderne* (Munich, 2008), 279–306, at 279: 'im Anfang war die Niederlage' (in the beginning was defeat).

³⁶ Hans Günter Hockerts, 'Zeitgeschichte in Deutschland: Begriff, Methoden, Themenfelder', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 29–30 (1993), 3–19, at 15.

essary to be selective, and leave things out. But by what criteria? The suggestion here is to focus especially on those historical phenomena that distinguished a divided Germany between 1945 and 1990 first from earlier and later periods of German history, and, second, from other countries in the second half of the twentieth century. This approach implies both that a divided Germany is placed into an international perspective, and that it is located within the longer continuities and breaks of German history.

Integration into the *longue durée* of German national history also targets, among other things, the legacy of National Socialism and the lead-up to it in the sense of a German *Sonderweg* (special path). Beyond this, it could be interesting to go back to research on German ideas of nation before the establishment of imperial Germany in 1871 and, for example, to look more closely at discourses on nation and the nation-state at a time when a unified German state did not yet exist. It could be asked, for instance, how we can explain why, for long periods of the nineteenth century, there was a national discourse with many voices while the state framework was insecure, whereas for almost forty years after 1949 we observe a divided state establishing itself while the national discourse grew increasingly insecure.

For German–German history to be integrated more strongly into its international context requires the methodology of comparison with other states and nations, but also a clearer emphasis on international relations as the force driving developments, and not only as something derived, ‘as the mere result of domestic and ideological calculations’,³⁷ as it appears in accounts by Ulrich Herbert and Hans Ulrich Wehler.³⁸ The international dimension can help to explain the run-up to 1989/90 better. This cannot be understood without taking account of the tectonic shifts in the international system of states, and it definitely displays parallels with earlier periods of German and European history.

Against this background, three peculiarities of the history of divided Germany stand out. First, it was a product of the Cold War – more than other countries at this time. The two German states were founded as the Cold War entered its first hot phase in the late 1940s.

³⁷ Harold James, ‘Die Nemesis der Einfallslosigkeit’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 Sept. 1990.

³⁸ Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands*; Wehler, *Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, v.

At the beginning of the 1950s the two Germanies were integrated into their respective military and ideological blocs. Whenever the tension between the two superpowers eased, they faced the question of how they should react, that is, shortly after Stalin's death in the mid 1950s, and then, more lastingly, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. And when the East-West conflict came to an end, German unity ensued.

Where the two German states ended was not a German decision; rather, it was a result of the conflict between the USA and the Soviet Union. This also determined the limits of what was socially acceptable and politically possible, and not only in the Communist dictatorship of the GDR but also in the FRG's liberal democracy (although to a different extent, and with less drastic consequences for dissidents). What could be said and done in the two German states at that time clearly depended more on world politics than it had done at other times in German history; and also more than was the case in other regions of the world during the Cold War.

Second, the change in generations was more important in divided Germany than it was in other countries or at other times. The reason lies in the big political breaks that fractured recent German history more deeply than the history of other countries.³⁹ From this it follows, for example, that subsequent generations grew up under social and political conditions that differed clearly, and sometimes fundamentally, from those under which their immediate predecessors had been socialized. This applies especially to the period when Germany was divided, as gaps between the generations were emphasized by the national division.

A number of cohorts (based on age) grew up during phases of the Cold War that were especially conflict ridden, and were shaped by this experience, while other cohorts experienced years of political compromise and a readiness to co-operate between the two power blocs. To be sure, generations in this sense are not objective units that can be stringently defined. We are talking more about subjective perceptions of groups of people whose members, in each case, were born at around the same time, faced similar challenges at about the same age, and dealt with them by interpreting them as a collective experience. In the case of Germany, two world wars and radical shifts

³⁹ See Mark Roseman, 'Introduction: Generation Conflict and German History' in id. (ed.), *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany 1770-1968* (Cambridge, 1995), 1-46, at 2.

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between various political systems in the course of an extremely violent twentieth century cut deeply into the life experience of those who were born during these turbulent times, and this life experience was modelled generationally.⁴⁰

Third, the division was not limited to the sphere of state action and the mental outlook of citizens in the two systems. It also left traces in the landscape and, over the years, shaped the topography of a divided land. The metaphor of an 'Iron Curtain' that had descended on Europe, which Winston Churchill popularized through a speech delivered in Fulton (Missouri) in March 1946,⁴¹ became real and could be physically experienced in divided Germany. The internal German border increasingly became a death strip, secured with barbed wire and equipped with automatic firing systems. It separated families and neighbourhoods. It diverted trade flows and economic relations, or stopped them altogether. It transformed areas that had previously been at the heart of the German nation-state into remote provinces, overshadowed by border defences. Germany's internal division had an especially visible impact on Berlin, imperial Germany's former capital. Berlin was transformed into a divided city, whose eastern half became the capital of the GDR, while the western part was stranded, an isolated island, surrounded by ever more strongly policed borders. And in 1961 it was finally walled in.

⁴⁰ See Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford, 2011), 12.

⁴¹ See Winston Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' Speech, Westminster College, Fulton Missouri, 5 Mar. 1946, online at <<https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace/>>, accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

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