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(cont.)

LIVING THROUGH THE *WENDE*

INTRODUCTION

MIRJAM BRUSIUS

It has long been commonly held that state socialism and private life at home were at odds in East Germany. For GDR citizens and the regime, however, housing and the home had an important political valence that was ambiguous from the very outset, as this Special Issue on experiences of the *Wende*[1] and the ensuing transformations will show, building on the work of earlier historians. Housing created an opportunity for people to retreat from the state to a place where citizens could literally 'allow themselves room' for private activities. The term *Nischengesellschaft* (niche society), coined in 1983, implied that in the GDR, the home was a space where citizens could escape from the regime to carve out their own slice of happiness.[2] After the fall of the Berlin Wall, this idea was often used to explain the political functionality of the East German state. Paul Betts, for example, suggests that

[1] *Die Wende* ('the turning point') refers to the historical period around German reunification, 1989–90.

[2] Günter Gaus, the Permanent Representative of the FRG in the GDR, spoke of 'individuelles Glück im Winkel'—of people finding individual happiness in quiet corners. Id., *Wo Deutschland liegt: Eine Ortsbestimmung* (Hamburg, 1983). For *Nischengesellschaft* and early oral history approaches in the GDR, see Dorothee Wierling, *Geboren im Jahr Eins: Der Jahrgang 1949 in der DDR – Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie* (Berlin, 2002). Wierling's examination of everyday life in the GDR managed to bring to light East German citizens' 'tacit accommodations' with the political system. Another oral history project that is also particularly relevant in this context is Lutz Niethammer, Alexander von Plato, and Dorothee Wierling (eds.), *Die volkseigene Erfahrung: Eine Archäologie des Lebens in der Industrieprovinz der DDR. 30 biographische Eröffnungen* (Berlin, 1991). For this 1987 project, a group of West German researchers was granted access—for the very first time—to undertake field work in the GDR, during which they conducted interviews with citizens.

a new social contract was struck after 1971 following the leadership transition to Erich Honecker, allowing GDR citizens more latitude in the private sphere in return for outward compliance.[3] Yet the private sphere could hardly be detached from regulated day-to-day life in a dictatorship. Rather, the two interacted in myriad ways. Sometimes, for example, the state did not passively tolerate citizens' housing practices, but challenged or took advantage of them. Nor did the home and the inner life it apparently protected necessarily destabilize political power; sometimes they were even a stabilizing factor.

In 1989–90, when the people's 'home'—in this case, I refer to the GDR state, not housing—ceased to exist, what did this mean for the private homes and housing practices of GDR citizens? How did East Germans navigate the politics of the socialist home at a time when socialism was crumbling?

Thirty years after German unification, we asked two historians—Kerstin Brückweh and Udo Grashoff—and the artist Sonya Schönberger to explore the theme of housing and home before, during, and after the *Wende*. They each show that housing and the home in

[3] Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford, 2010). Several historians have studied emancipatory practices in the GDR and contrasted them with the repressive structure of the state. Konrad Jarausch coined the neologism 'welfare dictatorship' (*Fürsorgediktatur*) to describe the GDR's paradoxical regime, which was clearly repressive while at the same time allowing its citizens to lead fairly ordinary lives. See Konrad H. Jarausch, 'Realer Sozialismus als Fürsorgediktatur: Zur begrifflichen Einordnung der DDR', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B20 (1998), 33–46. Others have described the GDR as 'a society steeped in authority' (*durchherrschte Gesellschaft*) characterized by a dictatorship that determined social structures, but also refrained from interfering in certain activities, and have argued that this led in part to the failure of the state. See the contributions by Alf Lüdtke and Jürgen Kocka in Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, and Hartmut Zwahr (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart, 1994), 188–216 and 547–53. Mary Fulbrook has examined the insistence of many former East Germans that they led 'perfectly ordinary lives' and spoken of the 'people's paradox', which she takes as the starting point for her social history of East Germany. See ead., *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, 2005). For an overview of various concepts in GDR historiography, see Mary Fulbrook, 'Approaches to German Contemporary History since 1945: Politics and Paradigms', *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, Online-Ausgabe, 1 (2004), 31–50, at [https://doi.org/10.14765/zzf.dok-2096].

socialism, built on the assertion that they were superior to those in the West, were contested spaces. Peeking behind the curtains of private homes, the answers our contributors found are not straightforward. Rather, their findings encapsulate the tensions between housing, the home, and the state during the *Wende*. Housing and the home, in other words, were never isolated and detached from their socio-economic environment. They were where the private and the public, possession and dispossession, and the inside and the outside intersected. The contributions do not refer simply to the metaphorical and often slippery concept of 'home' as an analytical framework. Nor do they focus solely on the practical, material, or legal aspects of 'housing'. Instead, they present the home as a highly politicized and emotive space. When looking at housing practices and the politics of housing, what was at stake, in fact, was a sense of belonging. Can a house be a home when the state starts to crumble and is shaken to its core?

After the end of the GDR, it was almost twenty years before historians discovered housing in East Germany as a research topic. Back then, authors stepped on to mostly uncharted historiographical territory, which has expanded since.[4] In some cases, they researched practices that did not even officially exist, such as illegal squatting. In these cases, the lack of archival sources was a challenge. While the scarcity of official sources made it difficult to tap into research topics, the documents, official letters, and copies of Stasi files that were accessible were by no means untainted and unbiased. While this is true of any historical source, the context of the GDR dictatorship and the 'power structures and violences . . . upon which the archive is built',[5] make the lack of archival neutrality more apparent and reading against the grain more difficult.

All our authors therefore chose to work with private eyewitness accounts articulating an experience that contrasted with the official documents—either exclusively, like Schönberger, or in addition to archival research. Since interviews were a fundamental part of their

[4] See the individual articles for further literature.

[5] Jane Freeland reflected on this aspect recently in relation to her research into gender-based violence in socialist East Germany, at [https://ghil.hypotheses.org/251#more-251], accessed 8 Feb. 2021. I thank her and Christina von Hodenberg for their comments on this introduction.

projects, two of our authors (Brückweh and Grashoff) additionally had to embrace discrepancies between the pragmatic language and expressions used in the official archive, and the often emotional and lively descriptions given by eyewitnesses. Given the tensions this created for historical enquiry itself, we asked all our contributors to reflect on the particular methodological challenges of researching contemporary histories, especially in dictatorships. How useful are official sources and state archives if any insights they can give into peoples' living realities are biased? How can they be reconciled with clashing oral histories and eyewitness accounts? Can memory simply become a historical source for events that happened almost yesterday?[6]

Although the *Wende* is still very present in current memory, the years 1989 and 1990 have long been seen by the German public as years of rupture. Yet history is not an isolated accumulation of events. The *Wende*, like all events, falls into a period of continuity—in this case, one that was dominated by experiences before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. 'Like all revolutions', Paul Betts has recently argued, '1989 brought in its train a mixed bag of dreams and disappointments, stark ruptures and stubborn continuities.'[7] Hence, what further unites our contributions is their refusal to subscribe to the notion that 1989 was a historical *Stunde Null*, or zero hour. Looking at the *Wende* as an event embedded in the context of long-term developments, the authors do not assume that peoples' lives changed immediately. Instead, they are interested in aspects of transition during the last phase of the GDR, the peaceful revolution of 1989, and the ensuing transformation. To what extent did certain housing practices persist when surrounding circumstances changed? What strategies of self-preservation and self-organization existed within communities in order to keep their homes

[6] Portelli highlights how these kinds of contradictions can be productive for historians. See Alessandro Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', *History Workshop*, 12/1 (1981), 96–107; also reprinted in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1998). See also Niethammer et al. (eds.), *Die volkseigene Erfahrung*.

[7] Paul Betts, '1989 at Thirty: A Recast Legacy', *Past & Present*, 244/1 (2019), 271–305, at 274, at [https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtz016]. See also his recent *Ruin and Renewal: Civilising Europe after World War II* (New York, 2020), and Marcus Böick, Constantin Goschler, and Ralph Jessen (eds.), *Jahrbuch Deutsche Einheit* (Berlin, 2020).

and housing, and what conflicts developed over time? The authors question the master narrative which presents the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification as a clear-cut event and a liberating triumph. Transitions in the GDR rarely happened in regulated, organized, and channelled ways. Instead, they were often the product of anarchic and random serendipities, short-term solutions, and chance.

This Special Issue is inspired by an event with Sonya Schönberger that the GHIL organized in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut London in 2019.[8] Schönberger's interviews, which she conducted personally and were subsequently read by actors at events held in Germany and London, were initially recorded in Neu-Hohenschönhausen, the largest housing development project ever built in East Berlin. To address the urgent need for living space, the GDR government focused on the industrial construction of housing from prefabricated concrete slabs. These so-called *Plattenbauten* were erected on the outskirts of cities from the mid 1950s onwards. Their modern amenities made these apartments quite popular.[9] Erich Honecker personally laid the foundation stone at Neu-Hohenschönhausen in 1984, and the high-rise at Zingster Straße 25 was part of the estate. Three years later, in 1987—only two years before the *Wende*—most of these apartment buildings were complete and eager tenants were able to move in.

Three decades later, Schönberger interviewed the original tenants of Zingster Straße 25. What happened to the excitement of the 1980s? How do people see the estate now? How many people left? Who decided to stay, and why? The interviews she conducted in person, extracts of which are published here in English for the first time, offer a unique glimpse into different everyday realities. It was in their homes, where Schönberger had the privilege of conducting these interviews, that the interviewees shared details of their day-to-day lives in the GDR, their hopes and disappointments under a political system many believed in, and reflections on their present lives in reunified

[8] Sonya Schönberger, *Zingster Straße 25* (Berlin, 2017). For details of the event, see [https://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/en/ver.cfm?event_id=21536581&fuseaction=events.detail&], accessed 19 Feb. 2021.

[9] Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics and Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2008), and id., *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space, and Memory in East Germany* (Oxford, 2016).

Germany. As different as these accounts are, they are all linked by history and by the interviewees' experiences in their home, the *Platte*.

The *Platte*, which, after the *Wende*, was quickly dismissed by many as a hideous addition to the urban landscape, became *the* symbol of the GDR housing experience. Today, *Plattenbauten* are coveted by hipsters, strangely replicating the experience of the former GDR citizens who once desired them as attractive alternatives to the often run-down, sometimes Wilhelmine city centre tenements that Udo Grashoff discusses in his article. Thousands of East Germans made these tenements their homes, occupying them without official permission from the state. This practice of *Schwarzwohnen* was not comparable with western European squatting.[10] Grashoff looks at the motivations for *Schwarzwohnen* in the GDR and also the factors that enabled it. Contrary to most assumptions about dictatorships, the GDR often tolerated or even tacitly supported these acts of occupation, deliberately obscuring the boundaries between formal and informal practices. The Socialist Unity Party (SED), in other words, bent the rules if circumstances demanded it. The result was ambiguous. On the one hand, it undermined governmental authority, but on the other, it helped solve the problem of a severe housing shortage, thus stabilizing and legitimizing state power. Even after the Berlin Wall came down, illicit accommodation continued.

Schönberger's and Grashoff's interviews and research highlight strategies, negotiation processes, and permitted latitudes not just from above, from the perspective of the state, but mainly from below, from that of the actors.[11] Kerstin Brückweh takes this approach further. The last item in this Special Issue, an interview with Brückweh on a book she has recently published with her project partners,[12] highlights that ordinary citizens can become active agents in history-making itself.

[10] See the discussion of this term in Udo Grashoff's Article in this *Bulletin*.

[11] Mary Fulbrook argues that the GDR should not only be studied top-down, from the perspective of the regime, but also bottom-up. See *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989* (Oxford, 1997) and her documentary *Behind the Wall: Perfectly Normal Lives in the GDR?* at [https://vimeo.com/113996074], accessed 19 Feb. 2021.

[12] Kerstin Brückweh, Clemens Villinger, and Kathrin Zöller (eds.), *Die Lange Geschichte der 'Wende': Geschichtswissenschaft im Dialog* (Berlin, 2020).

Brückweh has researched the theme of home ownership and property between expropriation, appropriation, and new modes of organization around 1989. From the 1970s onwards, when older buildings were deteriorating and the state began to provide *Plattenbau* estates, property titles were loosened by means of political privilege, and informal ownership arrangements held sway. Purchases and conveyances were carried out even before new regulations on restitution were passed in the official unification treaty. How could this not pose a significant challenge for occupants or current and previous homeowners after the *Wende*?

Looking at the relationship between a changing political system and day-to-day life, Brückweh has explored the experiences, emotions, hopes, and disappointments of people in relation to their homes, where tenants and owners were forced to carve out spaces for self-determination. Linking archival sources with oral histories and hitherto lesser-known research methods, her project also followed an unusual path. Interview partners were asked to comment on the research results, thereby evening out the hierarchies between those who study and those who are studied, as well as between residents of the former East and West German states. This marks a noteworthy shift in historical research approaches. A widespread fear among historians is that popular views, driven by emotions, affect, and dim memories, might undermine the very notion of scholarly enquiry. The witness to history as the historian's enemy ('der Zeitzeuge als Feind des Historikers')[13] has become a common trope in scholarship on contemporary history. Instead of succumbing to anxiety, the authors in this Special Issue embrace eyewitness accounts. This is a welcome development. For a long time, former GDR citizens, including professional historians, were under-represented in shaping the GDR's historical narrative. 'Never before has so much human capital been thrown on the scrapheap', one historian from the former GDR asserted

[13] See Martin Sabrow and Norbert Frei (eds.), *Die Geburt des Zeitzeugen nach 1945* (Göttingen, 2012), especially the contribution by Martin Sabrow ('Der Zeitzeuge als Wanderer zwischen zwei Welten', 13–32); also Konrad Jarausch, 'Zeitgeschichte und Erinnerung: Deutungskonkurrenz oder Interdependenz?', in Konrad Jarausch and Martin Sabrow (eds.), *Verletztes Gedächtnis: Erinnerungskultur und Zeitgeschichte im Konflikt* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), 9–37.

in an essay last year.[14] By taking their interview partners seriously and not treating them only as historical sources, our contributors turn them into equal partners on a par with official records or historical analysis (and artistic enquiry) itself, and in the process reach a wider public.

These approaches also represent the beginning of a transition to a new generation of authors who question their own backgrounds, acknowledging the biased views they might bring into their field of enquiry. As we venture into this new phase, the next chapters will come from the 'Dritte Generation Ost' ('Third Generation East'). Recent interviews suggest that these younger generations—including those born after the *Wende*—often still identify as 'Ossis'.[15] How will they embrace the history of the GDR? How will the new voices of Jewish East Germans and the descendants of immigrant families—partly inspired by recent literary works—change future narratives?[16]

Not least to reflect the value of the interviews and unconventional approaches taken by our authors, this Special Issue has itself taken an unconventional approach. Schönberger's artistic project makes the

[14] Ulrich van der Heyden, 'Nie zuvor wurde so viel Humankapital auf den Müll geworfen', *Berliner Zeitung*, 12 Aug. 2020, at [https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/zeitenwende/ddr-geisteswissenschaft-nie-zuvor-wurde-so-viel-humankapital-auf-den-muell-geworfen-li.97869], accessed 19 Feb. 2021. See also the recent event held by the Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands on 17 Feb. 2021 under the title 'Zwischen Katerstimmung und Neuorientierung: Der VHD und die Vereinigung der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaften in den 1990er Jahren', which asked how far GDR historians were marginalized after the *Wende*. See [https://www.historikerverband.de//mitteilungen/mitteilungs-details/article/125-jahre-vhd-ankuendigung-zum-ersten-podium-der-diskussionsreihe-zur-geschichte-und-gegenwart-des.html], accessed 19 Feb. 2021.

[15] An excellent and diverse collection of memories and points of views can be found in the 'Zeitenwende' series published by the *Berliner Zeitung* at [https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/zeitenwende], accessed 19 Feb. 2021.

[16] Olivia Wenzel, *1000 Serpentinen Angst* (Frankfurt, 2020); Khuê Pham, Özlem Topçu, and Alice Bota, *Wir neuen Deutschen: Wer wir sind, was wir wollen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 2012). See also the panel 'Minoritized Voices: Decolonizing the East German Experience' at the 45th Annual German Studies Association Conference in Indianapolis, 30 Sept.–3 Oct. 2021 (panel sponsored by the Black German Diaspora Network, the Socialism Network, and Third Generation Ost). For details, see [thirdgenerationost.com/cfp-minoritized-voices-decolonizing-the-east-german-experience/], accessed 19 Feb. 2021.

point that art can offer a valuable contribution to historical discourse. Even if art is never impartial or free from ideology, the mostly unedited eyewitness responses are testament to a conversation whose goal was to represent an authentic and unanalysed experience; not a scholarly extraction. The interview I conducted with Brückweh reflects the *Schriftgespräch* method that Brückweh herself uses in her research project in order to make research results more accessible to a wider audience.

During a pandemic when many readers are forced to stay at home, the idea of housing and the home might stir a range of divergent emotions. However private, homes are not neutral or apolitical. Touching on the private and the public, gender, sexuality, family, ownership, design, and urban planning, the home can be described as the centre of everyone's life circle.[17] What does housing mean when we are trapped indoors, and the outside world is dramatically changing? How will the changes outside affect our lives inside?

Looking at the life changes experienced during and after 1989 through the lens of housing and the home allows us to understand how the changing outside world also impacted on the inner lives of people in their own, supposedly private spheres. This, in turn, gives us greater insight into identities and everyday practices in order to understand where people were coming from, what their homes and surroundings meant to them, what it meant to be East German, and whether and how this changed once the outside world ceased to be the same. All contributions take a long perspective on society at a time of upheaval, concentrating on moments when traditions, politics, and practices were far from regulated. For some, the home might have been one of the stable factors in this period of upheaval. Nevertheless, it was as fragile as everything else around it.

[17] Karl Schlögel, *In Space We Read Time: On the History of Civilization and Geopolitics*, trans. by Gerrit Jackson (New York, 2017), 262. Historian Karl Schlögel saw the house as '*the* scene and junction of all the events that shape a life'. See also my *Schriftgespräch* with Kerstin Brückweh, where this quotation is cited. Books in English on the theme of home and design in the GDR include Betts, *Within Walls*; Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge, 2011); Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism*; id., *Amnesiopolis*; Emily Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin* (Pittsburgh, 2014); and Katrin Schreiter, *Designing one Nation: The Politics of Economic Culture and Trade in Divided Germany* (Oxford, 2020).

ZINGSTER STRASSE 25: LIFE WITH ALL MOD CONS IN 2017

SONYA SCHÖNBERGER

At the Eighth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, or SED) in 1971, Erich Honecker, the General Secretary of the party's Central Committee and the Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, announced the government's intention to raise the people's standard of living both culturally and materially through the unity of economic and social policy.

This included a homebuilding scheme designed to create appropriate living space for every citizen of the GDR by 1990. Industrial technologies such as prefabricated *Plattenbau* construction methods provided improved materials for higher building quality, and the necessary social infrastructure for the newly built neighbourhoods was planned from the very beginning.

The planning process led to the construction of Neu-Hohenschönhausen, now part of the district of Lichtenberg in Berlin. On 9 February 1984, at Barther Straße 3, Honecker laid the cornerstone of the new housing estate. Back then, this neighbourhood—which lay between the northern villages of Falkenberg, Malchow, and Wartenberg and the district of Alt-Hohenschönhausen to the south—was an area of sewage farms that offered plenty of space for the government's promised efforts to tackle the housing shortage. Around 30,000 homes for 90,000 people were built over the next five years.

The tower block at Zingster Straße 25 forms part of the estate and was ready by the summer of 1987 for new residents to move in. The building's architecture corresponds to the high-rise design WHH GT 84/85, which was created in 1984–85 for the estate overlooking the Ernst-Thälmann-Park in Prenzlauer Berg in preparation for Berlin's 750-year jubilee. It has twenty storeys with a total of 144 apartments, and is 61.6 m tall. The design was innovative in that it has a stepped footprint rather than being a straightforward cuboid. Floors one to

Trans. by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL)

eighteen each contain eight residential units with one to four bedrooms. Two of the units on each floor are one-bedroom apartments measuring 34.08 m²; four of them are two-bed units, of which two measure 54.80 m² and two 62.92 m²; and the remaining units are a 67.24 m² three-bed apartment and an 83.13 m² four-bed apartment. There are two lifts, a stairwell, and a rubbish chute. Bathrooms and kitchens (the latter with service hatches) are windowless and fully internal. All units apart from the one-bed apartments feature triangular balconies, which further break up the building's stepped exterior.

The balustrades were finished with exposed, vertically textured concrete and tiling; however, a refurbishment of the housing stock in Neu-Hohenschönhausen was begun in the mid 1990s, during which the facades received insulated cladding. This also altered their visual appearance from grey concrete to white with pastel colours.

Glimpses into a Plattenbau

An apartment block brings together the people who live inside it through its outer shell. It weaves their stories together, since people live alongside, under, and on top of one another; they influence each other and are influenced in turn, although they do not experience this as a conscious process. In her 1982 book *Berliner Mietshaus*, the journalist and author Irina Liebmann writes, 'What we can learn about a tenement is underwritten by the history of the country, city, and district, and incorporates the life stories of the people who temporarily occupy it. Past, present, public, and private realities—both lived and narrated—constantly interweave.'[1] Liebmann focused on older tenements known as *Altbau* in East Berlin during the early 1980s, and thus on the dreams and experiences of people cohabiting in a different era and in a completely different type of housing; whereas I, as an artist, wanted to explore the lives of people nowadays who had moved out of traditional tenements and into apartments with 'all mod cons' (*Vollkomfort*). Ravaged post-war Berlin offered grey house fronts, outdoor toilets, and coal-burning stoves. Neu-Hohenschönhausen

[1] Irina Liebmann, *Berliner Mietshaus* (Halle, 1982), 5.

was different: 'hot water on tap, light from the ceiling', and plenty of green space around it.

In summer 2017, I conducted twenty-five interviews with residents of the high-rise block Zingster Straße 25. The building features a communal gallery, which offered a useful starting point for the collaboration as I could base myself there and approach people by the entrance to the tower. Irina Liebmann simply knocked on the doors of the tenement she studied on Pappelallee in the East Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg and was almost always welcomed inside. Thirty-five years later, this method of establishing contact with people seems unthinkable in unified Berlin, and perhaps in the rest of Germany too. To me, this simple fact reflects the enormous changes of the last three decades, which have profoundly affected each and every one of us. Those residents who eventually agreed to talk to me told me of their past and their present, their hopes and fears. I never took their openness towards me for granted, as I encountered distrust and dismissiveness often enough too.

How do people live today in a building that once stood in a different country, and that was built to meet the needs of the past? The equality that this form of housing sought to promote ceased to be relevant just three years after its apartments were first occupied. In other words, there was only a very brief test period of cohabitation under the oversight of a centrally planned system. 'Mod-con living' suddenly became a functional concept that was seen as backwards and outdated in the capitalist West. Furthermore, its external conditions—the social and cultural facilities that helped structure everyday life in a society with full employment—were initially rendered obsolete by the upheavals and social fractures that came with the *Wende*. In the immediate aftermath, people had to plan their own survival under the new system, or wait to see what role they would be allowed or obliged to take in the future.

Conversations with people on the ground reveal that they were not left untouched by either the rupture in individual biographies caused by the *Wende* or the invalidation of the morals and values of the GDR era. One conclusion we can draw from the interviews is that people still enjoy living on Zingster Straße, and that they cannot really imagine living anywhere else. Yet when I spoke to residents about

their current fears and concerns, I heard a good deal of criticism of how the living environment has changed. People have grown deeply mistrustful; they do not open their doors unless they are expecting visitors; they know very few of their neighbours and tell horror stories of things that have happened to some of them; and they seem appalled by the arrival of apparently non-German residents. It was also clear that people prefer to look to themselves rather than the common good, and that they do not primarily see themselves as part of the latter. Everything used to be better. Only one interviewee suggested that residents might lack the personal initiative required to develop a positive sense of community inside such a large tower block.

Yet somehow this observation left me at a loss, since at the same time, the interviewees all stressed how good their lives are and that they want for nothing. Perhaps the architecture of Zingster Straße provides a sense of ostensible security. Residents sit in their tower—their castle—and scrutinize their surroundings and the distant city without having to come near them. Throughout the project, I have constantly questioned whether residents' fears and concerns are truly justified.

But how can I really judge, with my outsider's perspective?

Postscript

After some (but not all) of the interviewees read the texts in the finished book, they were overwhelmed by their own openness towards me. They realized that their voices had been taken very seriously in the context of the project, which seemed to surprise them, since they had previously only spoken among themselves—doubtless under a form of general consensus. Now, they began to wonder who might read their story and draw conclusions about them from it. The fact that the texts were anonymized was irrelevant to them, since they could still recognize themselves. I realized that the act of bearing witness often comes with a heavy burden, and that it is essential to become aware of this and to recognize the value of one's own voice in a given context. I fervently hope that the residents whose voices feature in my book will, with time and distance, be able to see the importance of their stories.

ZINGSTER STRASSE 25

Fig. 1: Zingster Straße 25 soon after completion. © Ulrich Dießner (1987)/ Christof Zwiener (2017)

Trans. by Emily Richards (GHIL)

Herr and Frau B. (p. 149)[1]

Frau B: My husband was with the police for thirty years, I was with them for twenty.

Well, after the *Wende* . . . yes, they kept my husband on. Go on, you tell them.

Herr B: Of course we already knew something was going to happen. They had those secret meetings at the churches, people would gather there and we were told to keep an eye on them. So we knew things were about to change, no two ways about it. And once the border was open, some of them came to us and some of us went over to join a unit there, so there was contact between us. I went over there sometimes as well. The head of my station phoned me, here at home, because I was on leave at the time, and he said I should get over to the office. When I got there he said to me—there was another bloke there, a West Berliner—he said to me, 'You can stay on or you can stop work, it's up to you. When you're 52 you're entitled to . . .'—what did they call it, early retirement?—'and a 2,000-mark redundancy payment.' So I thought to myself, why should I bother learning *their* laws on top of ours? When I'm 52, I can draw my pension. So I said adieu. I didn't get my full pension until I turned 60, though.

Frau B: But it was only for eight years. And I was still working.

Herr B: The other ABVs[2] all marched straight over into the West. That was how it was. I said, I'm 52. If I'd been ten years younger, I'd have done the same, why not?

***

Frau B: I just carried on as usual. At first I was doing the checks on foreigners. They stopped that later on. I registered the foreigners who came over when they arrived and when they had to leave the country. I was responsible for anything to do with foreign workers. We had a

[1] The following interviews are translated from Sonya Schönberger, *Zingster Straße 25* (Berlin, 2017).

[2] *Abschnittsbevollmächtigte*—community police officers in the GDR who carried out conventional policing duties, but also played a part in state surveillance.

lot of them here, from fifty-three different countries, there was always something that had to be done. Or the Germans who were leaving the country or coming back from abroad. Anything to do with that.

Once, my husband said to me, 'I'm going out for dinner with a couple of colleagues. You can come and join us when you get off work.' So I went along. I get to the restaurant, sit down, and before I know it everything goes black. The restaurant was full of Mozambicans; they all knew me from work. They all came over to say hello and sat down next to me while I was having my dinner. And everyone in the restaurant was staring at me, I felt really strange. They were like children. None of them had ever been abroad before. They were looking to make a connection with someone, they wanted contact with other people, someone to talk to. I understood that, but a lot of the population didn't. Most of the Mozambicans worked in the slaughterhouse on Landsberger Allee. They would tell me that they wanted to go to South Africa; there are really big slaughterhouses there where you can earn good money. Sometimes it was hilarious—they were so ignorant. They would stand in front of the toilet and not know what to do with it. They'd try and drink out of it. Well, it's understandable. I always used to say that they come from 'Bush 7'. They'd never been anywhere and then they were suddenly here.

HERR B: But there was never any trouble. They even wanted to keep them on at the slaughterhouse.

FRAU B: No, there was never any trouble. They'd have liked to keep a lot of them on because they were such good workers. But they had to go back after five years. They weren't allowed to mix, they had to stay with their own kind. And I don't think they really wanted to mix, they wanted to go home. Nowadays it would be different, but back then they were happy to go home, even if they were doing well here. Nowadays it would be different, they'd look for a German woman to marry so they could stay. But back then, they had to go back after five years and they all knew that, they knew there was no getting out of it. I couldn't change it and neither could anyone else, we had no say in it. We were just little cogs in a big machine.

Frau P. (p. 118)

We moved into this flat when it had just been built, in September 1987—nearly thirty years ago now. But there aren't many of the original tenants left; young people are moving in to replace them. That's the way of the world. We've got 140 flats here, so naturally you don't have much contact with your neighbours. You might bump into each other in the lift and that's it. Otherwise, we still know the old-timers here, we look out for each other, we help each other out.

In the old days there were what we called 'house books'. You knew who lived on each floor. But that changed after the *Wende*. There's no record of who lives here anymore. The books had the details of all the tenants and their families, how many children they had, and so on. You knew exactly who lived in each flat. One person on each floor kept the book up to date, but everyone was allowed to see it. Whoever looked after the book would keep an eye on things to make sure the details were still correct. They would ask, 'Do your children still live with you, or have they moved out?' Today it's different. If there was a fire somewhere and they found a body, no one would have any idea who it was. Back then, things were properly taken care of. I thought it was a good idea. These days, new tenants don't introduce themselves when they move in.

When I was younger, I used to live in one of those old tenements, but otherwise I've always lived on these 'nasty' high rise estates. People say these tower blocks are nasty, but I'm very happy with them. They got a bad reputation because in the Federal Republic—I mean the old Federal Republic, West Germany, I should say—they built estates for the Turks and the Greeks that came to work there after the war, and those were as shoddy as anything. I heard that from my nephew, he saw it in his daughter's flat in Buxtehude. He says the corners aren't squared off properly and the windows leak. Those tower blocks are bad, and so people assume it's the same here. But these blocks are better.

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Otherwise, the GDR is over and done with. When I see people here still getting all het up about it, yelling '*Rotfront*'[3] and what have you, I find it unnatural. All right, so there wasn't much choice when it came to fruit and vegetables. Apples and red cabbage, that was it. But there were lots of things we didn't miss. We had a good life. And people were—well, these days they're even fatter, but we weren't lacking in fat people either. So we had a good life. It was cheap, so nobody really worried about money; people cut a lot of corners. My mother always said, 'What goes up must come down,' and that describes the GDR in a nutshell. When you think of the low rents—how could anyone afford to renovate the housing if no rent was coming in? They couldn't. Even when the new private owners came in later, they couldn't do anything with the houses because people were still paying pre-war rents. And it just wasn't sustainable—that was how the state destroyed itself. Like the way food was subsidized. It was cheaper to buy bread than wheat, and so people bought bread and fed it to their rabbits and pigs. Everyone knew what was going on, but it was a problem, no state could carry on in that way. And a lot of people tried to stop it. But they were obsessed with this idea, 'We're creating a Socialist state,' even though it wasn't really a Socialist state. The people with sense, the ordinary people, could see it wasn't working. No state can afford that kind of economy. Lots of things were far too subsidized. They wanted to keep the people quiet and happy. And some people didn't pay their rent—even in newbuilds—but they still weren't evicted. The class enemy might have said, 'Look at the East Germans, they throw people out of their homes.' And so people just brushed it under the carpet and lived with the consequences.

One thing you have to say for the Stasi. They might have written everything down by hand, but they knew everything. Not like German intelligence today with its amazing technology where no one actually knows what's going on. It's only six months after an attack that they find out how many passports the terrorist had. The Stasi knew everything. I mean, there was a lot of nonsense going on. But

[3] This word, in combination with a raised fist, was the greeting used by members of the Roter Frontkämpferbund (RFB), a paramilitary organization founded in 1924 and affiliated with the Communist Party of Germany during the Weimar Republic.

they had eyes everywhere. And today you have that huge intelligence headquarters, which still isn't finished, and the building site gets flooded despite all the security. It beggars belief. Things like that weren't allowed to happen. Or you have someone who might get up to no good, but you can't deport him because he has no papers. Why doesn't he have any papers? They should have followed the American example from back when all the German emigrants turned up there. Everyone had to have a passport, people were put in quarantine, and sick people were put on the next boat back. Things were done properly. People with no papers weren't allowed in. All these unaccompanied children—what kind of parents send their children off into the unknown? It's all planned in advance. They save up enough money for one child to go, and then once he's here, his parents, and, I don't know, his six brothers and sisters, they're on the next plane, because the first one can't be here without his parents. I say sometimes, the Green party and all these other charities, they're mad. The way they think, it's not normal.

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And then there are lots of Russians, Polish people, German Russians. You get one old granny arriving, then suddenly thirty people come to join her who perhaps have nothing to do with her. When they started letting the German Russians in, they didn't really check properly if they had any German relatives. Some of them maybe only had a German shepherd, is what we always say. Well, never mind, I'd better shut up now.

Herr D. (p. 22)

Socially speaking, in this kind of area, in this kind of house, it used to be a mix. Today things are different. Having a mix is to some extent about income, after all. Income and property. And the guiding principle in a capitalist society is property. That's the main thing. But for one class of people, it's about survival, and for another, it's about getting richer or having a nice lifestyle. That's just a fact. But in the GDR, income was pretty much the same across the board. So when you first started out as an architect or an engineer, you earned less than a builder on a building site. Because a builder works hard, from dawn till dusk, and so on and so forth. As a research assistant at engineering college I only earned 550 East German marks—and you have to remember that I got a First in my studies, otherwise they would never have employed me as an assistant at another college. My salary went up a step each year. I was there for five years, which is the time you were given to do your Ph.D., and eventually I was getting 650 marks. And even when I got a big pay rise after I finished my Ph.D. in 1968, it was only 750 marks. So it really wasn't that much considering a builder on a construction site got 1,000 marks or more a month. So it wasn't great. But even so, we didn't really worry about it. I was stupid enough to get married in my second year at university. It's probably more accurate to say that someone married me. I'm not proud of it. I was brought up in a very traditional way, and I thought that if you slept with a woman, you had to marry her. I was 22. We were on the tram, and suddenly, she says, 'Don't you want to marry me?' It was a girl I knew from university. But in those days, in the GDR, you got married young. Food was cheap, rents were cheap, so why not have a family as soon as you can? That's how it was.

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There was absolutely no differentiation in terms of class. There were no classes as such. There was competition—people competed at work, within their particular department—but not socially. You weren't trying to prove that you were better than anyone else. You had friends who were workers, too, because you worked closely together. It really

was a balanced society, an equal society. Sometimes too equal, because, as I said, your pay had nothing to do with your performance. That also meant there was no incentive to do better—though there was a moral incentive, in that people wanted to achieve more. So that's how things were, but today it's different. Today society is becoming more unequal, like in America. You can see that here if you look at how for the last twenty years people have had to rely on benefits in the suburbs—in Spandau for example or even here on the outer edges of Lichtenberg . . . There was a big article last year in the *Berliner Zeitung* about a study that showed how in the last few years, the proportion of people who can only survive with support from the state has gone up to nearly 25 per cent here in Hohenschönhausen. That means certain sections of our population are being excluded from society. That's wrong. And you can see it happening here. It's not as if it isn't a political issue, that there's a huge problem with poverty. Including here, lately. And poor people get channelled towards areas where living conditions aren't so good and where rents are cheap precisely because the conditions aren't good. Things have changed here because the original tenants were all on the same level in terms of wealth, but those people are literally dying out now. It's been twenty-seven years since the *Wende*, and even back then, some of the residents here were older people. There are only a few left like me, or there are a few other families still here too, but they're all over 70. And when flats become available, they're given to younger people, families, who can't afford to rent anywhere else.

I'd have liked to stay in the city centre, I have to say. Though I've always liked this area too. The Linden-Center is a really nice, big shopping centre, with all the big high-street shops, boutiques, department stores, a supermarket—they're all in the Linden-Center now. And then we have Lidl here too and another little shopping centre down the road. So food-wise we are fully self-sufficient.

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The one problem here is the lack of social contact. Sometimes I try to get to know people, say hello and so on. But you don't always get a reply.

Frau W. (p. 12)

I'm a German teacher. Berlin was looking for teachers, Berlin needed teachers. But I didn't choose what school to work in, I was assigned to one. It was in Berlin Mitte, the Heine School—it's still called that—next to the Wall. I mean right next to it; the border checkpoint was on Heinrich-Heine-Straße. When I first went there in 1972, there were border guards standing at the door to our gym. Whenever I looked out of the classroom window—all the windows faced west—we could see the guards patrolling up and down with their dogs, until they built the inner wall later on.

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The children who went to school there were mainly from the residential area around Sebastianstraße. They'd never known any different, they'd grown up with the Wall. Most of the people who lived there were part of the state machinery. Not necessarily part of the State Security, though we wouldn't have known if they were. You were never told exactly where people worked. The school generally just had the parents down as 'employees'. That was the usual way of describing it.

Overall, you can't compare how children were brought up, how they were taught, or even how they spent their free time, with how things are today. People brought up their children properly.

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I was made headteacher at the 15th EOS[4] in Fürstenberg. That meant people thought I was a good teacher, that I was good at my job.

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I was a class teacher for ten years. Then from 1979 to 1985, so for six years, I was the head of school inspections. Then I was on the school board. And then the *Wende* put an end to everything.

[4] *Erweiterte Oberschule*—East German secondary school where students could eventually take the exams that would permit them to enter higher education.

They said I couldn't work in the public sector any more. I was dismissed. Just like that, no beating around the bush. It was one of the terms of the unification treaty. There were certain senior cadres, they were dismissed, just like that. Their deputies were generally kept on if they weren't directly linked to the Stasi, just so the wheels could keep turning. For me personally, it was terrible.

Up until the first elections in 1990 I was on the school board. But then I realized that was all over for me. Because the 1990 elections meant you were basically voted out. But East German law was still in force at the time, so they offered me a job at a school. Of course I knew how the schools in Hohenschönhausen were staffed. That was my job. So during the interview, I said, 'I'll go to the school, but I'm not going to take another German teacher's job.' I wouldn't have made another teacher redundant just so I could get in. It was against my morals. And at that point, they needed people to supervise the after-school club. So I said, 'I've never done it before, but I'm a qualified teacher, so put me in the after-school club.' That worked out until 3 October. They gave me another employment contract straightaway—well, an amended contract, of course. That was always considered important in Germany—I only left the school board because I'd been voted off. So I had a contract with the education ministry to work in an after-school club. Then came unification day on 3 October, and on 5 October I was summoned and dismissed on the spot—put on gardening leave. I could see perfectly well what was coming. I wasn't a fool. But when people call you in and dismiss you just like that, when people you used to respect turn around and stab you in the back—that did upset me, but it didn't take away my pride.

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On a personal level, I wasn't a failure at my job. I set up twenty-five schools in Hohenschönhausen alone—all the preschools, I was responsible for both schools and preschools. The schools were built from scratch and then everything had to be put in place so they could actually work, from the caretaker to the teachers, then the teachers needed somewhere to live and so on . . . They also needed the right teachers, they needed maths and German teachers. So I wasn't a failure.

The district school board was elected too—this was my constituency. People knew who I was, whether I wanted them to or not. There were no remarks, not to my face and not behind my back. People went on saying hello to me when they met me here in the building. That's how it was. On 3 October they put me on leave and then—this was a concession, I had a right to it under German law—they suspended me for six months and then dismissed me without notice. I was 48. And then, like everyone else, I went to court and tried to sue them. The first court decided in my favour. The magistrate said they can't do that. Then of course the employer, the district council, appealed and I had to go to the regional court. And the regional court allowed the appeal and said the dismissal was lawful. They were kind enough to tell me I was an intelligent person, I should have been able to see through the system and the state and there was no need for me to go and work for it. Well, I read what they had to say and then I never looked at it again. That was that.

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Then I went back to school for three years until I qualified as a geriatric carer. There were a lot of Ossis in my class. Mostly women, as you would expect, including middle-aged women from all sorts of backgrounds. There were legal advisers, there were archaeologists, lots of women with university degrees. That was great for the school, because of course all these women were highly motivated. Most of them had men at home who'd lost their jobs or who were about to lose their jobs. And they all knew how to read and write. And because of that, if there was any competition in terms of East and West, it was more when the exam results came out. People would take a peek to see who'd done better, the Ossis or the Wessis, but that was all.

Herr and Frau B. (p. 73)

HERR B.: This is a passion flower, isn't it magnificent? It smells wonderful. It's got buds all over it. It's a fascinating plant. They don't grow wild here, only indoors. But they grow on our balcony because it's glazed. Same goes for this bird of paradise flower. When we lived in Wernigerode, before we came to Berlin, we had our own garden.

I was with the *Kriminalpolizei*[5] in Wernigerode, but I'm actually a Berliner. I was born here, in Charlottenburg, in 1941. I come from an old Berlin family. My grandfather had a job at the Castle under the Kaiser. He was First Trumpeter. Whenever the Kaiser rode out, the way they used to back then, the bloke out front playing the fanfare was my grandfather. We had to leave Berlin because of the war. My mother fled and took me with her, but my father stayed. He was exempted from military service by the Führer as he was needed at Siemens.

Then I joined the police as an apprentice. Though before that, I was with the border troops and I became a proper soldier. But that wasn't here. It was in the Harz Mountains. We called it the green border. It was much better there. You could go off and pick mushrooms while you were at work. You couldn't do that here.

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FRAU B.: I started off working at the Intershop[6] in Wernigerode, and later on, when we moved to Berlin, I was transferred to the Friedrichstraße branch. I wasn't in the Stasi though. You didn't have to be in the Stasi to work there, you could get a job there without that.

But it was difficult for us. Me working at Intershop and him with the police, that didn't add up somehow. They didn't like it. My husband did his twenty-five years with the police, like he'd signed up for, and then we said, 'That's it, we've had enough,' and so we moved to Berlin. No one bothered us here. I worked in the shop on Friedrichstraße, as I said, and he looked around for another job.

[5] Investigative police force, similar to the British C.I.D.

[6] Retail chain operated by the GDR which also sold goods imported from the West; it did not accept GDR currency, but accepted numerous other currencies that could be converted into East German marks.

Hardly anyone said anything to our faces, but you knew what they were thinking. Let's be clear about one thing though: we were paid in our own currency, not with Western money.

HERR B.: Except tips.

FRAU B.: Tips, yes. All the tips went into one big pot and then we divided them up at the end. And of course then you save up a bit of money and other people see what you've been buying—'Aha, so she's got those glasses,' or what have you. You could see where it had all come from, let's not beat about the bush. We were dealing with other currencies, but we accepted them all. You have to remember that. Otherwise, I would say, it was a shop like any other.

The Intershop branch I worked at was in the West. We had to go through the checkpoint. We had direct contact with West Germans. They came to us to do their shopping.

HERR B.: You might say that the train station at Friedrichstraße was cut in half.

FRAU B.: When you went in to work, you had to show your ID. Every single day. The same when you came out. You were always being checked, always. As for the work itself, it was just like working in a normal shop.

HERR B.: But they kept an eye on us anyway. They had to because of my work, in the service. They only let people do that job when they were 100 per cent sure they would stay in this part of Germany.

FRAU B.: It was the same for me. That's why they only ever took on married people to work there. Although some of them made a break for it anyway, married or not. You could just pick up the till and off you went.

HERR B.: They'd put all the cash in their pockets, all the West German money, and off they'd go. No one could stop them.

FRAU B.: You didn't see it as a special privilege. I didn't, anyway; I didn't kid myself. I had to work hard like everyone else. Nothing was handed to me on a plate. Okay, the pay was a bit better, but it was really the tips that made the difference.

From our point of view, there was no need for the Wall to come down, not at all. We've gained nothing from it, not a bean. The only

thing I've liked about it is getting my car more quickly. My God, how long did it take us to get our car?

HERR B.: How long? Fifteen, sixteen years we had to wait. After twenty-five years I simply stopped working. After twenty-five years you had a right to a pension. The time with the border guards counted towards the pension. And then we'd been married twenty-five years as well. She had to cope with everything on her own, I was always on duty. Wherever we were, whether it was on the border or . . . When did I use to come home? Once every two weeks. We had to spend the nights in barracks, it was the rule. You couldn't just go home and then later find out someone tried to escape to West Germany or something. You had to be there. You might say she spent twenty-five years more or less on her own.

FRAU B.: I always had to take care of everything. Work, if one of the children got ill, everything.

HERR B.: Because we were always on duty. You were on duty sometimes twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It was tougher than it is today. Absolute meticulousness was required. I'd never known anything different, I grew up with it, with the parade-ground uniform. The tie and everything, it all had to be perfect. It was the same in the GDR, there was the Guards' Battalion and so on stationed at the war memorial. And when I look at the German army today or the police, who you can see aren't as spick and span with their uniforms, I say to myself: what a shambles. Order is important, order and discipline. The two things belong together. You can't separate them. We were drilled constantly to make sure everything was correct. Nowadays things are just fudged together, people cut corners wherever they can.

FRAU B.: Nothing is done properly. People just let things slide.

HERR B.: Certain people just think it's got nothing to do with them, it's not their responsibility. But oh well. I'm a pensioner now, we're happy with our pension, and that's that. Why should we get ourselves all worked up at our time of life?

FRAU B.: If it was up to me, the border could have stayed where it was. Just stayed there. And I can tell you straight out, we weren't the

ones out on the streets complaining. You hear people today, moaning and groaning, saying they're out of money, out of work . . .

HERR B.: Unemployed, on benefits . . .

FRAU B.: We always say, well it's your own fault. We didn't ask for it to happen.

HERR B.: Back then, if you look at what a worker really had in his pocket, it was more than it is today. Of course, now people say, 'If I go to work I want a decent wage for it.' But what do they mean by a decent wage? If they earn 1,000, 1,500 or even 2,000 euros but then end up with . . . well, if you stop and think about taxes and what have you . . .

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FRAU B.: Perhaps the GDR couldn't have gone on as it was. But we sold ourselves short. We were good at manufacturing, but we gave it all away to the West. I saw in the shop what we could make. We had tights, we had Meissen porcelain, we had all sorts of things, meat . . .

When I think about what happened up in Schwerin. They had a new carpet factory, brand new, and then it was gone. Just like that.

HERR B.: They shut it down straight away. To get rid of the competition.

FRAU B.: All our lovely big companies, all shut down. That didn't work out well. They picked us apart, took over our lives, or to be more accurate, they trampled all over us.

HERR B.: You can't just forget something like that.

FRAU B.: You can't get it out of your system. It just stays sitting inside you. But the most upsetting thing is *how* they did it. They loved it, they were having a ball.

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HERR B.: I knew the lay of this area from before it was a building site, there was nothing here back then. By then I'd been posted to Berlin for a while, because I was posted more or less everywhere at some point. And when there was anything big coming up—nowadays it would

be something like the G8 meeting they had in Hamburg, but just look at how that went. We handled that sort of thing differently in our state. Things would never have been allowed to get to that point. All the criminal elements, we would have locked them all up in advance. That's how we did it back then. It kept things quiet.

FRAU B.: Let's be clear, the sort of thing you see going on nowadays, that would never have happened in our state.

HERR B.: The way things are, it's not normal. For us it's not normal.

FRAU B.: Riots, we never had riots.

HERR B.: Back then we also had the big youth meetings and all sorts of things in Berlin, but even so, that kind of shameful behaviour was out of the question for us. But that hostile elements were active in our state at that time—that was completely normal. And the fact that in those days there were others who got involved in order to cause a disturbance at political events or what have you—that was normal as well. Because when German unification was going on, hundreds of buses came here with people from West Berlin or West Germany. None of us were out protesting on the streets, so they must have all been Wessis. They all got given fake IDs and the police didn't have a chance, they were all out on the streets so fast.

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FRAU B.: Intershop wasn't closed down until 1990.

HERR B.: They kept it until reunification. Then it wasn't needed any more.

FRAU B.: Everything fell apart after that. My whole team was scattered to the four winds. Like birds. Up to that point we all stuck together, we went through everything together. It was hard to figure out what was true afterwards. Who can you believe after all that? Then living through unification in the way we lived through it—first there's all the excitement, and then . . .

When it happened, I started working for Wertheim straight away, the big department store in the West. It was easy for me because I understood the money.

HERR B.: How many applicants did they get? About seventy. And she was the only one they took on. She understood the sales procedures, the tills, the currency, everything.

FRAU B.: That was a real advantage. And there I stayed, right to the end.

HERR B.: And when she went there to apply for the job, she got up early and left the house at four o'clock in the morning to travel over to West Berlin. The Ossis back then would never have done that. They said to her, 'You must be mad, getting up at four and then travelling all that way.' You got that even from people living on our floor. Some of them just went on and on about how hard everything was. Perhaps they were hoping their new boss would send round a limousine with a chauffeur to pick them up and drive them to work every morning. No, you have to get on with it if you want to get anywhere. And she did, every day.

FRAU B.: But no matter what you did you were always an Ossi. They could treat you like dirt. Let's be clear. The attitude was, 'We're the Wessis, you come to us, you do the dirty work down there, we'll stay up here and keep our hands clean.' And I'll bet you anything that hasn't changed in a lot of places today. That attitude sticks. I had colleagues from our own side who started at the same time as me, that was okay. But you never really got on with the Wessis. You were always seen differently.

HERR B.: So now they're free, they can finally take a holiday wherever they like. So I'll ask the man on benefits if he's likely to be off to Florida this year or maybe to Canada. No, he's not. Of course not. It's all rubbish. People talk utter rubbish. And everything is *multikulti* nowadays, as we say in Germany. I've nothing against other people. As long as everyone does their job, it's all normal.

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FRAU B.: And now the Hottentots are moving in. All us older people who live here, that's what we say, we all see it the same way. In the past things were better. You knew everyone, you chatted to people, you got to know them. You still get that with the older people who

live here. But the new ones, you haven't a clue what they are, you don't know them anymore.

HERR B.: We go into our apartment and shut the door. We aren't interested in what's going on outside our own four walls anymore.

We get on with everyone all right, with all of them, and that's all you need really.

FRAU B.: We respect everyone, and they respect us, at least we think so. But we don't really want anyone creeping about in our home.

HERR B.: What's that saying again? We're happy to see our friends arrive, but we're even happier when they leave.

SONYA SCHÖNBERGER is an artist who draws on anthropological approaches in her work. She is particularly interested in historical subjects, in conjunction with individual memories that are marked by ruptures. Many of her projects have developed from archives that Sonya has either found or created herself, such as an archive of interviews conducted over the last decade with eyewitnesses of the Second World War. She is currently working with the Stadtmuseum Berlin to produce a 100-year video archive in which Berliners talk about their connections with the city in their own words. Sonya works in diverse media, including photography, theatre, film, installation, and audio. See [www.sonyaschoenberger.de] and [www.berliner-zimmer.net].

SQUATTING AND SCHWARZWOHNEN *IN TIMES OF TRANSITION, 1989–1990*

UDO GRASHOFF

This article deals with something that really should not have existed in the German Democratic Republic under the watchful eyes of the Stasi and the *Volkspolizei*.[1] Thousands of East Germans solved their housing problems in the 1970s and 1980s simply by moving into empty flats without the required permission from the state. This socialist version of informal living, which was called 'squatting' in West Germany, operated under different names in the GDR. In Halle, Leipzig, and Rostock it was called *Schwarzwohnen* (lit. 'living on the black'),[2] while in Berlin it was mostly known as *Wohnungsbesetzung* (housing occupation). Many of the young 'occupiers' discovered other people's neglected property offered them an opportunity to show initiative and find fulfilment.

The photographer Andreas Münstermann, for example, moved into an empty flat in the Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg in the early 1980s without official permission. The flat was at the back of a shabby tenement. The front of the building was no longer there and the vacant space was used as a place to dump rubbish. The back of the building was owned by a West German and was administered by trustees, who apparently preferred to see the building unofficially occupied than standing empty. Nor did the state agency responsible for allocating housing, the Municipal Department for Housing Policy, show any interest in evicting the illegal residents. On the contrary, when the authorities found out in 1983 that Münstermann had moved in without permission, they asked him to pay a moderate administrative fine of 300 marks, and enclosed the papers

Trans. by Angela Davies (GHIL)

[1] The *Volkspolizei* was the national police force of the GDR from 1945 to 1990. It was a highly centralized agency responsible for most civilian law enforcement in East Germany.

[2] This essay uses the word *Schwarzwohnen* strictly in the sense in which it was used in the historical context of the GDR, as a name for the practice of illegal house occupation. This usage predates the current debate over whether the use of *Schwarz-* as a prefix for illegal activities (e.g. *Schwarzfahren*, *Schwarzmarkt*) has acquired racist connotations in modern Germany.

allocating the flat to him with the demand. This put an end to the problem as far as the authorities were concerned, while Münstermann now faced the challenge of keeping the flat habitable.

In the years that followed, he and other residents organized repairs to the building on their own initiative and removed the rubbish from the courtyard. To finance this, they made use of a regulation that allowed the residents of a given block to keep back part of their rent to pay for initiatives like this. In fact, the residents took on many of the responsibilities of the owners, including deciding who was allowed to move into vacant flats. Large parties were regularly held in the courtyard, and they mostly passed without incident. There was never any trouble with the Stasi or the police. It was not until shortly after reunification, in the autumn of 1990, that Münstermann witnessed his first 'real' raid by police in helmets and carrying truncheons.[3] This experience was part of the systematic enforcement of civil property rights, which began with reunification and fundamentally changed the conditions governing informal living. Those who had occupied flats in the GDR and dealt with an East German bureaucracy that veered half-heartedly between suppression and tolerance were now exposed to the consistent and sometimes militant forces of the German federal state. The transfer of West German conflict-solving techniques to the East—which became blatantly obvious in November 1990, when Mainzer Straße in the Berlin district of Friedrichshain was cleared—accelerated the process by which the occupation of buildings and flats was either formalized or swept away.

After the end of the GDR, it took almost twenty years for contemporary historians to discover informal living in East Germany as a research topic. When I began working in this field in 2008, I was stepping on to virgin historiographical territory, and it is only in recent years that historians and geographers have started studying it.[4] This neglect might be justified, given that we are dealing with the actions of

[3] Interview Andreas Münstermann, Berlin 2008.

[4] Peter Angus Mitchell, 'Contested Space: Squatting in Divided Berlin *c.*1970–*c.*1990', Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 2015); Alexander Vasudevan, 'Between Appropriation and Occupation: The Spatial Politics of "Squatting" in East Berlin', *Urban Geography*, 9 Aug. 2019, at [http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2019.1646035]; Jakob Warnecke, *'Wir können auch anders': Entstehung,*

a small minority, and the overwhelming lack of archival sources also plays a part. My research was based on about forty interviews which I conducted. The lack of official sources made it difficult to critically evaluate statements obtained using oral history methods. While many interviewees provided documents to support their views—from official letters to copies from Stasi files—there were often discrepancies between the monosyllabic and formulaic expressions used in official documents and the detailed, lively descriptions given by eyewitnesses. The latter, therefore, had a greater influence on the stories in the book I published in 2011 than did the files.[5]

For this article, which investigates changes in the practices of occupying housing in the period around 1990, the sources are less of a problem. This topic did not officially exist in the GDR, but it entered the public discourse soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Here, too, it was more the witness reports than the official documents that articulated an experience that questioned the master narrative presenting the fall of the Wall and reunification as the triumph of freedom.

Allocation of Housing as a Battleground

In order to understand the socialist variant of squatting, we need to look briefly at the legal framework governing housing. In the GDR, housing was allocated by the state. Unlike in the old Federal Republic, where a similar practice of compulsory housing management (*Zwangsbewirtschaftung*) lasted until its abolition in 1960, in the GDR, the emergency measure decreed by the Allies at the end of the Second World War was given permanent status in the Housing Control Regulation (*Wohnraumlenkungsverordnung*, or WLVO).[6] This was intended to

Wandel und Niedergang der Hausbesetzungen in Potsdam in den 1980er und 1990er Jahren (Berlin, 2019).

[5] Udo Grashoff, *Schwarzwohnen: Die Unterwanderung der staatlichen Wohnraumlenkung der DDR* (Göttingen, 2011); id., 'Cautious Occupiers and Restrained Bureaucrats: *Schwarzwohnen* in the German Democratic Republic. Somewhat Different from Squatting', *Urban Studies*, 56/3 (2019), 548–60.

[6] Hartmut Häußermann and Walter Siebel, *Soziologie des Wohnens: Eine Einführung in Wandel und Ausdifferenzierung des Wohnens* (Weinheim, 1996), 168.

enable the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), the governing party of the GDR, to secure the right to distribute housing—always in short supply—according to social need, but also in line with the needs of the state. Receiving accommodation was thus 'the result of an act of favour on the part of the state'.[7] Decisions about who could move into a particular flat were made by the city authorities, or, to be more precise, by the Housing Policy Departments in municipal and *Kreis* councils. Tenants and landlords were only allowed to sign a rental agreement after an allocation had been issued for the flat.[8] This practice of housing control made the GDR a 'welfare dictatorship'.[9] It allowed the state to allocate flats according to social criteria—for example, by giving families with children preferential treatment. It could also serve regulatory interests, for example, by 'directing' employees of the state apparatus and university graduates to particular places of work through offers of housing.

The state's control over housing, however, was limited by the lack of homes. The SED's ambitious housing construction programme did not succeed in providing every GDR citizen with adequate living space by 1990. On the contrary, while prefabricated housing estates sprang up on the outskirts of cities, the old inner-city districts fell into disrepair. The housing construction programme used available capacity and workers mainly to build new homes, leaving few resources for the renovation of old buildings. It was not only buildings under municipal management, but also privately owned apartment buildings whose condition deteriorated. Up to 40 per cent of the old housing stock was in private ownership. Rents, frozen at 1936 levels, did not yield enough to finance the renovation of these buildings. The result was not only the typical greyness of East German cities, but also an extremely high vacancy rate of up to 6 per cent of all housing.[10]

[7] Hannsjörg F. Buck, *Mit hohem Anspruch gescheitert: Die Wohnungspolitik der DDR* (Münster, 2004), 169.

[8] *Zivilgesetzbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 19. Juni 1975*, § 99: 'Voraussetzung für die Begründung eines Mietverhältnisses ist die Zuweisung des Wohnraums durch das zuständige Organ', at [http://www.verfassungen.de/ddr/index.htm], accessed 26 June 2020.

[9] Konrad Jarausch, 'Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship', in id. (ed.), *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (Oxford, 1999), 47–69.

[10] Buck, *Mit hohem Anspruch gescheitert*, 344.

The growing number of empty, run-down properties exacerbated the situation of permanent shortage. The tension between dilapidation and housing shortages turned the allocation of living space into a civil 'battleground' in socialist society. Many GDR citizens were suspicious of the practices by which housing was allocated, the handling of housing applications was a constant source of controversy, and housing issues ranked first among the grievances (*Eingaben*) addressed to local authorities in the GDR.[11]

Schwarzwohnen

The vacancy rate was at least partly the result of mismanagement. In many cities, the authorities had lost track of what housing stock was available. Against this background, it is understandable that many people in need of accommodation simply moved into vacant properties without a permit and stayed there for years without any pronounced sense of guilt. In total, more than 10,000, mostly younger, GDR residents got around the state's housing regulations in this way.

While there are no official statistics on the extent of illegal occupation of flats, there is evidence to suggest this figure. In 1979, an audit of empty accommodation uncovered a total of 534 illegally occupied flats in the Berlin district of Friedrichshain alone.[12] In 1987, the Housing Policy Department in the Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg registered 1,270 flats with 'irregular tenancies' ('ungeklärte Mietverhältnisse').[13] There were illegally occupied flats in other Berlin districts too, though the numbers were not so high. This was not something limited to Berlin, but was also widespread in cities such as Dresden, Halle, Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Jena.

Officially, this phenomenon did not exist, and the large variety of names by which it was known can be seen as reflecting the

[11] Felix Mühlberg, *Bürger, Bitten und Behörden: Geschichte der Eingaben in der DDR* (Berlin, 2004), 184.

[12] Archiv des Bundesbeauftragten für die Stasi-Unterlagen der ehemaligen DDR (hereafter BStU), MfS, AKG 4050, fo. 296.

[13] Meeting of the Prenzlauer Berg district council on 10 Aug. 1987, Vorlage Nr. 395/87, Landesarchiv Berlin (hereafter LAB), C. Rep. 134-02-02, Nr. 1408.

regionalization of—largely invisible—informal living in the GDR. In many places (mainly in the southern districts), it was called *Schwarzwohnen*; in Halle it was often described as *Leben im Abriss* (living in demolition); while in Rostock, the term *Erhaltungswohnen* (conservation or maintenance living) was used towards the end of the GDR's existence. In Berlin, by contrast, the term *Wohnungsbesetzung* (housing occupation) predominated.

The latter term can be misleading because it calls to mind the left-wing housing occupation movement in western Europe. Informal living in the GDR differed from this in that its primary focus was the occupation of a single flat. It was a subversive act, but also a private one, in which political protest or performative 'otherness' played little part. Any display of slogans or banners on the facade of a building would have meant the immediate end of the 'occupation' anyway under the SED dictatorship. Unlike the occupations of buildings that took place from the end of the 1960s in western European capitals such as Amsterdam, London, and Paris, the occupation of flats in the GDR, which happened at about the same time, had no social presence in the form of public actions, leaflets, networks, symbols, graffiti, and so on. A media presence was out of the question. Secret, unnoticed action was what led to success. People acted alone, and did not shout about it from the rooftops. 'We didn't *occupy* buildings, it was not a political act, it was not an act of aggression or of provocation, it was really quite natural: living space was available and we took it. And that was *Schwarzwohnen*—a typical GDR term that no longer exists today.' This is how theatre director Bettina Jahnke remembers her time as an illegal occupier in Leipzig in the late 1980s.[14] In view of the appropriation of vacant housing, one could speak of a partial privatization of neglected public property in the GDR—in contrast to the socialization of private property, which was the aim of West German squatters.[15]

Admittedly, in the 1980s, there were a few occupied buildings in the GDR whose residents in some respects modelled themselves on western European squatters. But despite the wild parties held there, these were above all places to live in, and graffiti was limited to the

[14] Interview Bettina Jahnke, Leipzig 2008.
[15] Peter Wurschi, Discussion Statement, Jena 2009.

interior. The facades did not stand out because of their colour or the slogans painted on them, and the police and housing authorities tolerated them for years (for example, on Dufourstraße in Leipzig, or on Lychener Straße in Berlin) before they were cleared—officially because of their dilapidated state. These places had long been way stations; most of the residents were punks who sooner or later moved to the FRG.

The most commonly used term, *Schwarzwohnen*, better expresses the difference from 'squatting', but can also create false associations by its linguistic proximity to the term *Schwarzfahren* (fare-dodging). The most important motive was not to save money, but the desire to have one's own flat. *Schwarz* here referred merely to the fact that official housing controls had been evaded. Many *Schwarzwohner* regularly paid rent. This has left traces in the documents of the district council of Prenzlauer Berg in Berlin, where in the 1980s 'unexplained rental income' totalling more than 30,000 marks was registered. The paying-in slips generally lacked the name of the sender, so that the revenue could not be allocated to any particular person.[16] Given the extremely low rents, most *Schwarzwohner* did not find it difficult to pay small amounts. They often sent their money with an expression of hope—never fulfilled—that their voluntary rental payments would automatically result in a tenancy agreement.

The restrained and relatively apolitical attitude of most *Schwarzwohner* went hand in hand with relatively mild repression on the part of the state. The main reason why the GDR authorities took only lenient, 'soft' action against the unauthorized use of vacant living space, certainly by comparison with the FRG authorities, was that two statutory regulations blocked each other. On the one hand, the Housing Control Regulation stipulated that flats could only be occupied by those to whom they had been allocated.[17] On the other, for social reasons, the GDR's civil code (*Zivilgesetzbuch*) made it illegal for tenants to be evicted with nowhere to go; they could only be moved into another flat. Thus, all the authorities could do to curb the practice of *Schwarzwohnen*, which had become increasingly widespread since the 1970s, was to bring misdemeanour proceedings. Administrative fines could

[16] See LAB, C.Rep. 134-02-02, Nr. 1385, 1408.
[17] Buck, *Mit hohem Anspruch gescheitert*, 169.

be a maximum of 500 marks. Irrespective of the fine, the authorities decided in a second step whether other reasonable living space was available so that an eviction order could be issued. If necessary, this was enforced with the threat of fines of up to 5,000 marks. But this was the exception. In many cases, tenants could not be evicted. My random sampling suggests that in Leipzig and Berlin the chances of legalizing the unauthorized occupation of a flat lay between 50 and 85 per cent. Occupants could put forward a number of arguments to the Housing Policy Department, from showing that they had carried out maintenance work at their own expense, to demonstrating a particular need, or threatening to file an application to leave the country. In most cases these resulted in them being able to stay in their flats, which were hardly fit for any other use anyway. This form of self-help became part of the repertoire of everyday life in the GDR during the Honecker era, which was characterized by improvization and informal relationships. In the following, I will examine in greater detail how this changed during the course of the weakening of the late socialist dictatorship from around 1987, the Peaceful Revolution, and reunification.

*Erosion of the Dictatorship: Illegal Cafes (*Schwarzcafés*) and Bars*

While the illegal occupation of vacant flats was, as a rule, a private and individual act, during the last two or three years of the GDR's existence this practice gained something of a public dimension. We must remember that public space in the GDR offered only a very limited range of options for socializing. Cafés and restaurants were rare, and spontaneous visits were mostly difficult, given the limited space.

In response both to this situation and to the style of the existing restaurants, which did not appeal to young people, a number of *Schwarzcafés* and bars emerged in some of the GDR's larger cities, becoming part of a non-confrontational cultural opposition. This was the case in Leipzig, which I will look at more closely in the following. From 1987, an illegal bar subculture developed in various parts of the city, with a run-down villa in the Waldstraße district to the north-west of the city centre proving an especially popular nightspot. In the first half of 1989, the villa was transformed into a trendy bar monthly and at times even

weekly. Wine, beer, and cocktails were served. Sometimes there was hot soup. The host borrowed large numbers of glasses from restaurants for the drinks, and a friend delivered them in a truck. This was necessary because there were up to 200 visitors per evening. The villa was kept under observation by the Stasi. On two occasions, the evening ended with violent attacks by civilians—presumably plain-clothes members of the Stasi. In order to shake off the representatives of state power, the bar was relocated to a dilapidated apartment building in the east of Leipzig. Mattresses were laid out in the flats, a table-tennis table was set up, and the date of the next meeting circulated. The event was attended by fifty to sixty people.[18] The mood was apocalyptic. Many of those who attended viewed their stay in the GDR as time-limited; they were only waiting for their applications to leave the country to be approved.[19]

Around 1988, another illegal night café was set up in the east of Leipzig. From the outside, there was nothing to indicate its purpose. The café was in a ground floor flat in an unlit courtyard at Zweinaundorfer Straße 20a. The windows were darkened, so people had to know what they were looking for to find it.[20] On entering, visitors found themselves in a large furnished space that looked like a living room. Those who ran the café had brought in tables and chairs from empty flats in the neighbourhood. The walls were painted, there were candles on the tables, and one or two people were on bar duty each night. Good, cheap red wine was served along with *Karlsbader Schnitten* (toast with ham and cheese).[21]

The building at this address was also 'one of the most important meeting places for the opposition in Leipzig'.[22] Initiativgruppe Leben (IG Leben), an environmental and human rights group that organized various actions and demonstrations, met there. A number of its members also lived in the building and printed leaflets in a flat under the leaking roof. For World Environment Day in 1988, the group organized the Pleiße Memorial March, which 200 people joined, to remind everyone that the Pleiße—once a river—now crossed the city

[18] Interview Plattenralle, Leipzig 2009.
[19] Interview C., 15 June 2009.
[20] Interview Plattenralle, Leipzig 2009.
[21] Interview Gesine and Christian Oltmanns, Leipzig 2008.
[22] Interview Uwe Schwabe, Leipzig 2008.

as a stinking, poisonous sewer in underground pipes. In addition, subgroups of IG Leben worked on human rights issues, the situation in Romania, and perestroika in the Soviet Union. In 1989, it began to network with other groups, and further demonstrations and actions were held, including a street music festival.[23]

Other illegally inhabited buildings in Leipzig also offered living space for oppositional groups. It was not only the hard core of the political opposition that found a little freedom here; a broader counter-cultural milieu emerged in the city's dilapidated houses and illegally occupied flats. According to Dieter Rink, before the Peaceful Revolution this milieu 'hardly expressed itself in visible political behaviour because of the repressive political conditions, and it was imperceptible to the public'. In 1989–90, however, it quickly became apparent that the beginnings of a 'multifaceted scene consisting of projects, initiatives, and groups' had developed in the GDR's grey zones and niches, and that they represented similar attitudes critical of civilization as did the new social movements in the FRG.[24]

In the Shadow of Emigration: 'Flat-Hopping'

Another factor that influenced the practice of *Schwarzwohnen* in the late years of the GDR was the rapid rise in the number of GDR citizens who became refugees and emigrants to the FRG. As early as March 1989, a few months before the mass exodus via Hungary, East Berlin's municipal authorities held a consultation because they could no longer keep up with clearing the flats left behind by emigrants. At this time, 175 flats were unused because they were still full of furniture. It is possible that even more flats had been abandoned because in the case of pensioners who did not return after a visit to the West,

[23] Uwe Schwabe, 'Die IG Leben' (video), Portal Jugendopposition von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung und Havemann-Gesellschaft, at [http://www.jugendopposition.de/index.php?id=207], accessed 26 June 2020.
[24] Dieter Rink, 'Das Leipziger Alternativmilieu zwischen alten und neuen Eliten', in Michael Vester, Michael Hofmann, and Irene Zierke (eds.), *Soziale Milieus in Ostdeutschland: Gesellschaftliche Strukturen zwischen Zerfall und Neubildung* (Cologne, 1995), 193–229.

flats could only be registered as vacant once the official tenant's passport had expired.[25] By the summer of 1989 at the latest, the number of abandoned flats could no longer be counted.

Many of those who left did not officially cancel their tenancies, but simply gave their keys to people they knew. In this way, large, bourgeois flats became available overnight. This gave people looking for housing an unprecedented chance to improve their situation and, as an eyewitness remembers, resulted in widespread 'flat-hopping'.[26]

In the north of Leipzig, a flat became vacant in a building where a young woman was still living with her parents in a tiny child's room. The tenant had left for the FRG and given the key to her father, who passed it on to the young woman in March 1990. In the meantime she had got married, and now she and her husband renovated the flat and moved in. When they applied to the district Housing Policy Department to be retrospectively assigned the flat, permission was granted relatively easily—possibly also because she was now pregnant. They were only asked to pay a moderate fine of 300 marks.[27]

In some cases, flats vacated by emigrants triggered bitter quarrels among the neighbours. This happened in the spring of 1988 in a building in an attractive location in Halle (Saale). A tenant waiting for his application to leave the country to be approved took in a subtenant for the sake of appearance, although the woman in question did not actually move into the fully furnished flat until three days before he left the country. This set off a storm of indignation among the neighbours, who had already made other plans for it. One of the neighbours wanted to install a bathroom in her flat and to annex the two-room flat next door by way of compensation. In turn, the tenant of this flat (which had only a provisional water supply) was planning to move into the flat into which the sub-tenant—an artist—had illegally moved.

The two neighbours applied to the mayor, convinced that sooner or later they would be found to be in the right. They had already discussed their intended flat swap with the Housing Policy Department,

[25] Presidium of the Volkspolizei Berlin, criminal police, minutes of the deliberations of the municipal authorities of Berlin, capital of the GDR, Housing Policy Department, 20 Mar. 1989, BStU, MfS, HA IX, Nr. 3618, fos. 9–11.
[26] Interview Matthias Klemm, Leipzig 2008.
[27] Stadtarchiv Leipzig (hereafter StAL), SB Nord, Nr. 1577, fo. 28, 23–5.

and also provided some denunciatory details that made the artist appear in a bad light. The mayor found in their favour and instructed the head of the Housing Policy Department to evict the unauthorized tenant from the flat. When an attempt was made to seal off the flat, the artist living there negotiated a four-week postponement. Even after that she did not move out. More than a year passed before another eviction order was sent to the artist—this time, however, combined with the offer of another flat that was ready for immediate occupancy.[28]

Approaches to a New Housing Allocation Policy

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the number of flat occupations in the GDR rose slightly. One indication of this is the increase in the number of misdemeanour proceedings. For example, the Halle-West district registered nineteen illegal occupations in each of the years 1988 and 1989, while in the first eight months of 1990 alone, the housing administration dealt with a total of thirty-three cases.[29] Similarly, there is evidence of forty misdemeanour proceedings for 'the illegal use of living space' in the same period in the Leipzig-North district.[30]

An additional indication that illegal occupations were increasing is that even in the newly built prefabricated housing estates, a certain state of anarchy was taking hold. As the West German news magazine *Der Spiegel* reported early in 1990 from Rostock: 'Citizens of the port city looking for accommodation have long since stopped occupying only ramshackle premises. They are also moving into newly built flats that have already been assigned to tenants, following the motto "first come first served".'[31] A meeting of the Housing Department in Halle in July 1990 discussed five specific cases of unauthorized occupation in the housing estate at Halle-Neustadt, one of which led to weeks of wrangling between the Housing Policy Department and the tenant. After her divorce in August 1989, this woman and her child had

[28] Stadtarchiv Halle (hereafter StaH), Rat der Stadt Halle, Abteilung Wohnungspolitik/Wohnungswirtschaft, Karton Nr. 84.
[29] Ibid.
[30] StaL, SB Nord, Nr. 1577.
[31] 'Ein bißchen Anarchie', *Der Spiegel*, 13 (1990), 50–3, at 53.

moved in with her sister, who rented a two-room flat in a newbuild. She paid a share of the rent and the two had also signed a subletting agreement. In the spring of 1990, the sister had moved to the FRG, and since then the mother and child had lived in the flat alone. In the meantime, the young mother had been threatened with a fine of 5,000 marks (a 'D' for Deutsche Mark was later inserted by hand as monetary union had happened in the meantime). Yet the last note on the file was a recommendation to leave the woman in the flat.[32]

This rise in the number of illegal occupations went hand in hand with a clear increase in self-confidence on the part of those who determinedly stood up to the housing authorities. In April 1990, for example, two young people from Leipzig who had renovated a flat at their own expense and now wanted an official allocation wrote to their district Housing Policy Department:

> It is now relatively clear that the housing industry is tending towards the free market economy. In this context, it would be uneconomical to leave residential accommodation standing empty for months, sometimes years. We noted these new conditions and simply reacted quickly. We pay [rent], have created reasonably rentable living space, help the owner of the building, and (this is very important and must be emphasized) we have freed ourselves from want and distress.[33]

A new tone was undoubtedly being struck here. While the arguments and points of view articulated were not necessarily new, the self-confidence of this reply was based on the new freedom to express personal positions openly without having to subscribe to socialism, as had been necessary to get a hearing in the past.

In the GDR, *Schwarzwohnen* had been a taboo subject which was spoken about only among friends. Illegal housing became a public issue only with the Peaceful Revolution. At the Monday demonstrations in the autumn of 1989, protesters called for a new housing policy. 'Create space and legalize communal living—no more *Schwarzwohnen*' a placard demanded on 6 November 1989 in Halle. Soon, specific ideas for democratizing the allocation of housing and making it easier to use

[32] StaH, Rat der Stadt Halle, Wohnungspolitik/Wohnungswirtschaft, Nr. 79.
[33] StAL, SB Nord, Nr. 1577, fo. 62.

vacant flats reached the decision-makers. Local citizens' groups were formed in some places. At the beginning of January 1990, a group called the Citizens' Initiative for Conservation Living (Bürgerinitiative Erhaltungswohnen) was founded in Rostock and campaigned for the legalization of occupied flats and houses.[34] Its founding meeting was attended by 200 people. Not long afterwards, the group concluded an agreement with the city of Rostock that guaranteed an official allocation to all residents living illegally in flats that were in good repair and had previously been vacant for more than six months. The city administration's intention in passing this regulation was to prevent the sort of 'free anarchy' found in Hamburg's Hafenstraße.[35] In Halle, too, at a meeting on 31 January 1990, the city council discussed a paper proposing that previously illegal acts of moving should be legalized, and suggesting ways of making it easier to move into flats that had been vacant for more than six months. Citizens were to be encouraged to report empty flats by assuring them that they would receive an allocation for the flat in question if it had not been blocked by the building authorities and had not already been assigned. In addition, the paper even provided for the privatization of flats in poor condition, provided that repairs would be carried out by the new owner within a certain period of time.[36] On 14 March 1990, the city council approved an amended version of the paper. Flats were now to be assigned if they had been vacant for more than six weeks. A commission consisting of representatives of the Round Table of the City of Halle and of the authorities was to decide on the allocation of housing. One of the conditions for a positive decision was that the accommodation had not been 'occupied by force'. At the same time, illegal residents were given the right to apply for a retrospective allocation.[37]

In the context of this relaxation of the rules for allocating living space, students also gained a better chance to move into their own places. It was no longer necessary to break into a flat secretly. The

[34] 'Presseerklärung der Bürgerinitiative', *Norddeutsche Neueste Nachrichten*, 10 Jan. 1990.
[35] 'Ein bißchen Anarchie', 53.
[36] StaH, Rat der Stadt Halle, Wohnungspolitik/Wohnungswirtschaft, Nr. 79.
[37] StaH, Rat der Stadt Halle, Bestand A 3.29, council decisions Halle and Halle-Neustadt.

newly founded student council of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg received a list of vacant flats from the city administration, many of which had water damage from leaking roofs or damp walls, no bath or shower facilities, a communal toilet in the stairwell, and needed extensive renovation. The student council passed the addresses of these flats on to students who felt able to undertake the necessary repairs. Sometimes, the student council officer had to write another letter to the relevant clerk in the housing department to push the matter, but that was usually enough. In this way, around fifty apartments were filled within weeks.[38]

To sum up: in the first few months of 1990, the GDR's Housing Control Regulation became less and less effective, either as the result of administrative decisions or because, increasingly, it was simply ignored. Decisions were made on a case-by-case basis, and often in favour of the illegal occupants. The status of many people living in flats that had not been officially allocated to them was legalized. Housing managers also concentrated on gaining an overview of how many illegally occupied flats there were, and on putting a stop to the rampant state of anarchy. In Potsdam, for example, the city Council for Housing Policy issued a total of thirteen eviction orders between February and April 1990, threatening fines of 5,000 marks. As a deterrent, the evictions were made public in the press.[39] At the same time, however, compromises were negotiated with many people living in illegal housing in Potsdam.

Squatting during the GDR's Final Months

Another problem soon arose. During the rapprochement between East and West Germany, there were incidents of western European-style squatting in many places, taking advantage of temporary weaknesses in state structures in the East. In some cases, West German squatters played a significant part in this.

[38] Udo Grashoff, *Studenten im Aufbruch: Unabhängige studentische Interessenvertretungen an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg 1987–92* (Halle, 2019), 62.
[39] Warnecke, *'Wir können auch anders'*, 116.

There had been two large waves of squatting in the FRG in the early 1970s and early 1980s. Notwithstanding the different political and social conditions, these had not gone unnoticed in the GDR. From spontaneous occupations to communes and the illegal occupation of entire apartment blocks, there had also been isolated incidents in the GDR that were similar to those in the West. But once again, there were differences. The few 'occupations' in the GDR were usually not the result of collective action, but of gradual, silent proliferation. Although the residents might have had counter-cultural and anarchist inclinations, these were primarily homes for living in, not political projects. Facades were not decorated with banners or graffiti, and they did not send out clear political messages, as this would not have been tolerated by the SED dictatorship.

But in the final year of the GDR's existence, all this changed. The SED dictatorship's administrative threats had lost their deterrent effect, while the coercive means for protecting private property which were normal in capitalist market economies could not yet be used. In this temporary power vacuum, anarchy became a mass phenomenon.

It started in Berlin, where the transition from occupying individual flats to occupying whole buildings began in the summer of 1989. For example, young people from the opposition scene occupied a building at Schönhauser Allee 20 that was slated for demolition. Two further occupations followed at the end of 1989.[40] While the initiators were mainly concerned with creating living space, at the beginning of 1990 a number of cultural projects were created through squatting.

On 17 January 1990, a number of artists broke into an empty, dilapidated building at Rosenthaler Straße 68 in the Berlin district of Mitte. Before the building could be used, countless buckets of rubble had to be carried out of it—hence its later name, Eimer (bucket). The ceiling between the cellar and the ground floor was unsafe and had to be removed. A bar was built and outlandishly decorated and furnished. Soon the first punk concerts were held here, with the audience standing one floor down and looking up at the band. Those who ran it founded an association called Operative Haltungskunst and declared

[40] *Hausbesetzer: Selbstdarstellungen von 16 Projekten aus Friedrichshain, Mitte und Prenzlauer Berg*, Thüringer Archiv für Zeitgeschichte 'Matthias Domaschk' (ThürAZ), OAUB-K-14.09.

Eimer a project for musicians and artists, one that deliberately had no commercial intentions.[41] This was demonstrated by a spectacular stunt in April 1990, when musicians threw Western money down from a roof into the assembled crowd and repeatedly encouraged them to shout 'We want to be Westerners'. Instead of the promised 5,000 DM, however, only pennies rained down.[42] When Eimer got too small, some of those involved moved on. On 13 February they occupied the ruins of a former department store building that was scheduled for demolition and turned it into the 'Kunsthaus Tacheles' (Art Centre Tacheles). Its name (the Yiddish word for 'plain speaking') made the intentions of its activist founders clear: this collective of artists, social utopians, and radical anarchists wanted to sweep away the GDR's 'culture of allusion'. According to one of the founders: 'Very few people dared to express their true opinions openly; generally everything was hinted at, suggested, alluded to. This was largely the case even in art, literature, films, music, and in painting and theatre. We wanted to smash this status quo once and for all.'[43]

From February 1990 at the latest, we can speak of a squatting movement in East Berlin that was largely populated by East Germans, at least initially. At this stage, a number of apartment blocks that had been almost entirely illegally occupied retrospectively declared themselves squats. Given the imminence of reunification, joint actions were soon undertaken by squatters from East and West Berlin. In the days around 1 May 1990, half a street—2–11 Mainzer Straße in the Berlin district of Friedrichshain—was taken over by squatters who largely came from West Berlin. An important source of inspiration for this action was an appeal by members of the East Berlin 'Church from Below' published in *Interim*, the magazine of the radical left-wing *Autonomen* movement in West Berlin, which called on West Berliners and West Germans to help occupy the neglected row of apartment blocks. Within a very short

[41] Sabine Magerl, 'Eimer gegen alle: In Berlin-Mitte gibt es noch genau ein besetztes Haus. Nun soll es geräumt werden', *Die Zeit*, 25 Jan. 2001.
[42] 'Sternthaleraktion mit Westmark im Osten', *taz*, 17 Apr. 1990.
[43] Rafael Insunza Figueroa, 'Die Entstehung der Tacheles-Bewegung' (Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educacion, Santiago de Chile, July 1995), in *Tacheles: Eine Geschichte*, at [https://archive.vn/20110408123717/http://super.tacheles.de/cms/new_site/history_start.php], accessed 29 Mar. 2020.

time, around 250 young people transformed the buildings into bastions of multicultural creativity. This was primarily a transfer of ideas and projects from the West Berlin alternative scene. The diversity of these projects, which ranged from a house for women and lesbians to small alternative shops (a late night convenience store and a second-hand bookshop named after the anarchist Max Hoelz), a café and so-called 'Volxküche' (people's kitchen), and a hip-hop and punk club, represented the revitalization of the West Berlin squatter movement.[44] This was also true of the 'Tuntentower', a gay party venue whose organizers knowingly adopting the word *Tunte*—a derogatory German word for a gay man. Among the thirty residents there were only four East Germans, who ironically dubbed themselves the 'token Ossis'. The West Germans set the tone and influenced the debates, pointing to their many years of experience on the squatting scene.[45]

The anarchical convergence of East and West encouraged a wave of squatting in the East. In May, the Housing Policy Department in the Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg was temporarily occupied, which prompted a meeting between squatters from the Berlin districts of Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg, and Friedrichshain and state representatives. The latter issued an assurance that they were prepared, in principle, to grant 'all squatters legal status' provided the buildings they were occupying were structurally sound. In the fifty-four occupied buildings, twenty-eight squatters were promptly granted residence permits and sixteen received usage agreements. An Alliance of Occupied Buildings was set up, and by the end of July 1990, eighty-one buildings in East Berlin belonged to it.[46] Squatters' councils represented the interests of the young squatters vis-à-vis government agencies and property owners. One important result of the negotiations was the 'no eviction guarantee' issued by the Berlin municipal authorities for all buildings in East Berlin that had been occupied before 24 July 1990, while all

[44] Susan Arndt et al. (eds.), *Berlin Mainzer Straße: 'Wohnen ist wichtiger als das Gesetz'* (Berlin, 1992), 43–55.

[45] Juliet Bashore, 'Battle of Tuntenhaus Part 2', at [https://vimeo.com/165788327], accessed 9 July 2020.

[46] 'Bündnis der besetzten Häuser', status: 24 July 1990, Archiv der Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft, NFo-PA/RBa 27 (1) Wohnungspolitik/Instandbesetzung 1990.

sites occupied after this date were to be vacated within twenty-four hours. At the height of the squatting movement in East Berlin, a total of around 130 buildings were occupied.[47] Among them was a house in the Berlin district of Lichtenberg which was occupied by right-wing extremists—the 'odd one out', so to speak, among the otherwise left-wing alternative projects.

As in Berlin, the spring of 1990 also saw a major squatting campaign in Leipzig, but it was organized by locals who had rather different motives. The disappointing results of the Volkskammer[48] elections on 18 March 1990 led the activists of New Forum[49] to conclude that there was no point in continuing to engage in national politics. Instead, they turned to organizing local actions. An association known as the Connewitzer Alternative was founded and registered as early as April 1990. It looked into the cases of fourteen empty buildings slated for demolition, published a call for an alternative housing project, and then distributed the flats to about forty young people. The occupations were approved both by the local *Abschnittsbevollmächtigter*[50] and a district councillor. The municipal owners of the building concluded usage agreements with the squatters. Social and cultural institutions such as a café, a 'people's kitchen', a housing project for foreigners, a gallery, a fair-trade shop, and an alternative bookshop were set up. Concerts and big street festivals were held there in the summer of 1990. As an activist noted in retrospect, 'this was simultaneously a farewell from "grand politics", and from the "grand aims" of New Forum and the other citizens' movements'.[51]

[47] Ilko Sascha Kowalczuk, '"Wohnen ist wichtiger als das Gesetz": Historische Streiflichter zu Wohnungsnot und Mieterwiderstand in Berlin', in Arndt et al. (eds.), *Berlin Mainzer Straße*, 231–59, at 259.

[48] The East German legislature, the Volkskammer, was the highest organ of state power in the GDR.

[49] Neues Forum was a political movement formed in the months leading up to the collapse of the East German state. It called for a dialogue about democratic reforms, and aimed to 'reshape' society with the largest possible popular participation.

[50] *Abschnittsbevollmächtigte* were community police officers in the GDR who carried out conventional policing duties, but also played a part in state surveillance.

[51] Dieter Rink, 'Der Traum ist aus? Hausbesetzer in Leipzig-Connewitz in den 90er Jahren', in Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht (eds.), *Jugendkulturen, Politik und Protest: Vom Widerstand zum Kommerz?* (Opladen, 2000), 119–40, at 122.

The Neustadt neighbourhood of Dresden also developed into another hotspot of the alternative scene. Here, too, trendy bars opened, most with the ambience of a jumble sale, and ironically displayed souvenirs of the SED dictatorship. In the last years of the GDR's existence, a number of illegal cafés and bars had opened, and now they became a public attraction in many places. In Dresden, an autonomous zone known as the 'Bunte Republik Neustadt' (the Colourful Republic of Neustadt) was declared for three days—partly out of high spirits, and partly in protest at the impending monetary union.

The Question of Violence

The wave of squatting in Berlin was unique in that it was born out of the euphoric mingling between East and West Germans. The colourful diversity of the western European alternative scene provided a positive point of reference, and at first glance many occupied buildings in the East resembled those in the West. But soon the fundamentally different experiences of life in a capitalist democracy and a socialist dictatorship led to conflicts, sparked particularly by the question of violence.

In the GDR, physical violence played almost no part in the squatting movement. Evictions, which were rare in any case, generally occurred without the use of force. In most cases, illegal occupants were able to negotiate compromises with the state authorities. This experience led most East Berlin squatters to avoid confrontations with the police and state power as far as possible, and to seek negotiated solutions. A characteristic example was the behaviour of those squatting in the building at Schönhauser Allee 20, which was right next to a police station. In view of the radical right-wing attacks which began in the spring of 1990, they agreed a 'security partnership' with the *Volkspolizei*. Subsequently, members of the *Volkspolizei* often lined up in rows three deep in front of this and other occupied buildings to protect them from attack. Such arrangements did not continue in reunified Berlin. Conflicts between squatters and police had escalated violently for many years in West Berlin, and this militant culture carried over to the East after reunification.

Jörg Zickler, who had moved to Berlin from an illegally occupied building in Jena in 1988, was one of those who had negotiated the security

partnership in East Berlin. In 1990, he took part in the 'squatters' council' and met West Berliners there who explained that squatting was a political act, which was why they made sure that they always had access to alternative accommodation in the event of an eviction.[52] Their view of squatting as a symbolic act meant that some West Germans were more prepared to countenance violent escalation, and even to risk total failure.

By contrast, for most East Germans a squat was their permanent home. While their positive experience of the security partnership led East German squatters to act cautiously, some squatters from West Berlin made fun of the 'gentle autonomists' from the East. And more than that, they exported their culture of violence. This showed itself for the first time on 24 June 1990 at a protest against the building occupied by neo-Nazis on Weitlingstraße in the Lichtenberg district of Berlin, which was attended by several thousand people. Accustomed to years of violent confrontation with the West Berlin police, around 300 masked demonstrators attacked the *Volkspolizei* with steel balls, sawed-off chair legs, and alarm pistols towards the end of the protest. Twenty-one police officers were injured and four personnel carriers were burned out. The appropriation of the East by the West—the subject of several recent historical analyses[53]—could be seen everywhere in the GDR in 1990, and even extended as far as the alternative milieu.[54]

Added to this was another factor that practically forced a transition to defensive militancy. Attacks by skinheads put pressure on squatters in many East German towns and cities. A right-wing extremist scene had already formed in the GDR in the 1980s, and now, encouraged by logistical support from the FRG (including from the right-wing Republicans party),[55] it appeared more militantly in public. This included

[52] Interview Jörg Zickler, Berlin 2008.

[53] Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Die Übernahme: Wie Ostdeutschland Teil der Bundesrepublik wurde* (Munich, 2019); Steffen Mau, *Lütten Klein: Leben in der ostdeutschen Transformationsgesellschaft* (Berlin, 2019); see also Wolfgang Dümcke and Fritz Vilmar, *Kolonialisierung der DDR: Kritische Analysen und Alternativen des Einigungsprozesses* (Münster, 1995); Andrej Holm, 'Kolonie DDR: Zur ökonomischen Lage in Ostdeutschland', *telegraph,* 1998, 1, at [http://www.telegraph.ostbuero.de/1-98/1-98holm.htm], accessed 14 Nov. 2020.

[54] 'Anarchie ist Arbeit', *Der Spiegel*, 6 Aug. 1990.

[55] Die Republikaner is a nationalist political party in Germany which opposes immigration.

attacks by skinheads and hooligans on left-wing alternative projects. Residents at Schönhauser Allee 20 in Berlin, for example, reacted to attacks in April 1990 by making structural changes. They reinforced the entrance door from the inside with beams, secured the stairwells with iron barriers, and hung nets in the hallway that were designed to fall on intruders. The situation was similar in neighbouring Potsdam, where the occupation of Dortustraße 65 in December 1989 had created a public meeting place for left-wing young people and punks. From February 1990, skinheads regularly attacked the building, and unlike in Berlin, the *Volkspolizei* in Potsdam offered no protection. In view of this, the squatters hung barbed wire from the facade, installed large spotlights to illuminate the area in front of the house, and held regular patrols so that they could issue timely warnings in the event of an attack.[56]

Fig. 1: *Volkspolizei bei Otto*. Parked police car in front of a squat on Gutenbergstraße in Potsdam, 1991. © Hassan J. Richter

[56] Warnecke, *'Wir können auch anders'*, 122.

The Street Battle on Mainzer Straße as a Turning Point

With reunification, the legal and regulatory framework for squatters changed fundamentally. Neglected 'public property' in the GDR, with its many empty flats, had provided a natural habitat for *Schwarzwohner*, and the activist squatting movement had enjoyed a brief, intense heyday in the last few months of the GDR's existence. But with reunification in October 1990, the rights of owners and official users were fully restored. This development, imposed by police violence, was experienced as brutal repression by the anarchist squatters, who in the spring and summer of 1990 had enjoyed something like fools' licence. Yet the squatters themselves also contributed to the violent escalation.

The switch from tolerance to confrontation was already becoming apparent in September 1990, when negotiations between the squatters' alliance and the East Berlin municipal authorities broke down. Wolfram Kempe, at that time the spokesperson of the Prenzlauer Berg's squatters' council, remembers: 'For the municipal authorities, the principle of land ownership declared sacrosanct by the West Berlin consultants from the Department for Building and Housing prevented a pragmatic solution.' And in the squatters' representative body, 'squatters from East Berlin, who were working for more pragmatic solutions to secure their buildings, found it difficult to come to an agreement with West Berliners who were fighting the "corrupt capitalist system".'[57] As the hardliners on both sides had prevailed by September, it was no surprise when, five days after reunification, the city representatives broke off negotiations with the squatters for good. The clearance of Mainzer Straße was the turning point. The confrontation between squatters and the police began on 12 November, when three buildings in the district of Lichtenberg that had been occupied after the agreed deadline of 24 July 1990 were cleared. A protest organized by the squats on Mainzer Straße led to the building of barricades and triggered street fighting reminiscent of a civil war. It ended on 14 November 1990 with the clearance of the whole row of houses.

[57] Wolfram Kempe, 'Aufbruchstimmung am Prenzlauer Berg: Hausbesetzungen in der Dunckerstraße', in Bernt Roder and Bettina Tacke (eds.), *Prenzlauer Berg im Wandel der Geschichte: Leben rund um den Helmholtzplatz* (Berlin, 2004), 223–41, at 225.

Although the site of the conflict was in the East Berlin district of Friedrichshain, most of the actors were West Germans. This applied to the police officers deployed there from the West, as well as to those who defended Mainzer Straße. More than 300 squatters were arrested, and only 17 per cent of them came from East Berlin.[58] Thus it was more of a re-run of earlier street battles in Kreuzberg, with the squatters barricading themselves against police formations advancing with water cannons and tear gas.

GDR civil rights activists desperately tried to prevent escalation, coining the slogan 'No violence'. But unlike in the previous year, when the renunciation of force had made the Peaceful Revolution possible, this time they were crushed between the two fronts. In vain civil rights activists formed a human chain between police formations and barricades, and in vain they tried to mediate in the negotiations. For hours, the co-founder of New Forum, Bärbel Bohley, tried to speak on the phone to the responsible politicians in the Senate of Berlin, the executive body governing the city. Unlike the SED, the CDU showed no willingness to enter into dialogue. In view of this, the 'punk philosopher' Lothar Feix went so far as to claim that 'the war for Mainzer Straße was for many people the end of the illusion of civil rights'.[59]

But it seems that many—though by no means all—West German squatters had apparently set out to engineer their own failure, or to sell it as dearly as possible. This was the impression gained by Bärbel Bohley when she tried to find a non-violent, negotiated solution for Mainzer Straße during the street battle. 'I think they are often just performing a play', the disappointed civil rights activist said in an interview after the evictions. 'If anyone could have achieved a breakthrough, it would have been the squatters, who could have offered genuinely non-violent resistance.' But at a street meeting on Mainzer Straße, Bohley felt that

[58] See 'Die Mainzer Straße in Berlin-Friedrichshain von 1894 bis heute', at [https://mainzerstrasse.berlin/toetungsbereite-chaoten-gegen-brutale-bullen-die-raeumung-der-mainzer-strasse-am-14-november-1990/index.html], accessed 9 July 2020.

[59] Lothar Feix, '"Die DDR existierte eigentlich nicht mehr." (Der Prenzlauer Berg, & was hat Kultur mit Politik zu tun?)', in Bernd Gehrke and Wolfgang Rüddenklau (eds.), *. . . das war doch nicht unsere Alternative: DDR-Oppositionelle zehn Jahre nach der Wende* (Münster, 1999), 44–63, at 59.

the squatters had no confidence in their own utopia and only wanted to stage a good exit by building barricades and throwing stones, thereby causing the failure of their own project. 'In this respect, they behaved just as stupidly as the politicians', said a disappointed Bohley.[60]

East Berlin Squatters under Pressure to Conform

It was not only the documentary filmmaker Thomas Heise who saw the fact 'that one of the first measures taken by the Senate of Berlin was to restore property rights entered in the land registers and to establish peace and order by evicting the utopia that had developed in the anarchy of the transition' as a missed 'opportunity to make fundamental changes'.[61] The evacuation of Mainzer Straße, which the majority of the population undoubtedly supported in their desire for order, sent some of those who had already been in opposition in the GDR back to the fringes of society. The East Berlin activists of the Church from Below initiative, whose appeal had helped trigger the occupation of Mainzer Straße, summed up the situation thus: 'The market value of flats, seen as goods, has risen to such an extent that it no longer bears any proportion to their function as living space, and attacks on that value are seen as a political issue.' The 'humane and relaxed approach' that had developed during the mass illegal occupation of flats in the last days of the GDR was 'no longer possible under current conditions', the authors of a book published in 1997 pointed out with regret.[62]

The clearance of Mainzer Straße had exactly the deterrent effect on other squatters that West Berlin politicians had intended. 'Squatters and everyone else were shown what is tolerated in this state and what is not', as one squatter said bitterly.[63] The Senate's harsh response and the

[60] Interview with Bärbel Bohley, in Arndt et al. (eds.), *Berlin Mainzer Straße*, 182–6.
[61] Anke Westphal, 'Dieser Haufen Geschichte. Die DDR ist Material, das längst nicht genug befragt wird: Ein Gespräch mit Thomas Heise', *Berliner Zeitung*, 29 July 2009.
[62] Kirche von Unten (ed.), *Wunder gibt es immer wieder: Fragmente zur Geschichte der offenen Arbeit Berlin und der Kirche von Unten* (Berlin, 1997), 136.
[63] Arndt et al. (eds.), *Berlin Mainzer Straße*, 213.

failure of the squatters' militant strategy on Mainzer Straße increased the pressure on the remaining squats in East Berlin to conform, and these were gradually converted into legally compliant forms. Immediately after the evacuation of Mainzer Straße, the Rehab Squat Round Table (later renamed Working Group for Repairs) was convened in Prenzlauer Berg. Through it, squatters and state representatives negotiated a framework agreement to cover occupied buildings. The agreement provided for residents to be given individual rental contracts, while also guaranteeing their collective right to determine who should occupy flats that became vacant and to use common space. 'This framework, formally initialled by all those involved in the Round Table at the Working Group's ninth consultation on 11 January 1991 and later ratified by the counter-signature of each individual association, was considered a model of success in Berlin because from then on it not only prevented large-scale evictions of squatters in Prenzlauer Berg, but also made possible the legalization of squats after the deadline set by the municipal authorities', was the judgement of Wolfram Kempe.[64] The cost of the repairs which some squatters had undertaken could be set off against the rent, so that many residents lived very cheaply for a considerable length of time.

Some of the alternative projects dating from the summer of 1990 were even continued. Thus a new 'Tuntenhaus' was set up at Kastanienallee 86 in Prenzlauer Berg. This was legalized, but was less politicized than its predecessor on Mainzer Straße had been.[65] For the squatters at Schliemannstraße 39 it was even more difficult to realize their former ideals. They were among the last to accept the framework agreement, at the end of 1991. Abandoning their 'hard line on squatting' and agreeing to individual rental contracts changed the way they lived together in the building, remembers Jörg Zickler, who had squatted in the house with friends. The solidarity they aspired to could only be achieved in part. The house bar, LSD, at the front of the building was a constant source of strife. There were quite a few families with children living in the building, and they were anything but enthusiastic when a band started playing at 2 a.m. without prior

[64] Kempe, 'Aufbruchstimmung', 226.
[65] Bashore, 'Battle of Tuntenhaus Part 2'.

notice. Nor did the residents' meetings create a sense of community. It was impossible to agree on anything, which was perhaps also due to the lack of common denominator: 'We had a relatively large number of welfare cases—alcoholics, junkies, and the like—in the building', recalls Zickler, 'but we had no overarching idea. Of course, we always met for demos, but never everyone, only a few politically active people from the front of the building.'[66]

Another squat at Schönhauser Allee 5 similarly lost its utopian ideals, as Carlo Jordan describes: 'It makes a difference whether I open up a free space under the conditions of a dictatorship, or under today's social conditions. When I did it under socialism, creatives moved in, people who wanted to do something themselves; projects with a similar approach in our democracy today attract welfare cases, blockheads, and drug addicts. There were enormous levels of vandalism in the building. A completely stoned woman jumped out of the window, the free space was only occupied by destructive forces, and those who created it suddenly had to lay down the law to keep the project going.'[67]

Lost in Transformation?

With legalization, much of the colourful anarchy of 1990 was lost—though not overnight, but gradually. Many projects continued to exist for many years, such as Eimer and the Kunsthaus Tacheles. In some squats, too, it was possible to ensure the survival of alternative lifestyles. Some East Berliners, however, felt that they were being relegated to the sidelines by more professional or business-minded 'Wessis'. Thus the musician André Greiner-Pol pointed out that commercial interests had finally prevailed against the original intentions behind Eimer: 'Afterwards so many West Germans came into the building, and they just did better. We didn't want to do anything better at first, we just wanted to be creative in our own way. The Wessis were active, threw their cash around, they actually ruined everything with their business

[66] Interview Jörg Zickler, Berlin 2008.
[67] Interview Dr Carlo Jordan, Berlin 2008.

dealings.'[68] In other buildings, former *Schwarzwohner* suddenly found that they were tenants of their former neighbours, West German ex-squatters who had been smart enough to get funding from the Senate of Berlin to pay for roof repairs and purchase the property.[69]

In some cases, lack of financial resources was the deciding factor in putting an end to alternative housing projects. This was the case with the 'unofficially occupied building' at Rykestraße 27, in Prenzlauer Berg, mentioned at the start of this article. Andreas Münstermann had founded an association there with other residents in 1990. Little by little, international residents moved in, and the house retained its creative flair for a while. The landlord worked hard to enforce law and order, wrote down the names of those who lived in the building from the doorbells, and gave everyone a rental agreement. At the end of 1994 the building was sold at auction. The association tried to save the alternative housing project, but it did not have enough funds to buy the building. By the end of 1996, all the former tenants had moved out.[70]

While order was restored in Berlin in the course of 1991, some of its squatters relocated to Potsdam. As the redevelopment of the inner city was still in full swing, many properties lay empty there. Those who had moved from West Berlin encountered a scene that was not as well organized as that in Berlin. They were surprised, for example, that the Potsdam squatters had neither infoshops nor squatters' councils, and that they did not take it for granted that an occupied house had to be identifiable from the outside by the banners it displayed.[71] The local police consisted mainly of East Germans who wanted to avoid a violent escalation like that on Mainzer Straße. The city administration, too, pursued a course of temporary tolerance, albeit with the medium-term goal of clearing all buildings without exception. For now, however, given the thirty buildings occupied by squatters in 1991, Potsdam was declared Germany's unofficial 'squatting capital'.[72]

[68] Roland Galenza and Heinz Havemeister (eds.), *Wir wollen immer artig sein . . . : Punk, New Wave, HipHop und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990* (Berlin, 2005), 673.
[69] Interview Dr Carlo Jordan, Berlin 2008.
[70] Interview Andreas Münstermann, Berlin 2008.
[71] Warnecke, '*Wir können auch anders*', 130.
[72] Ibid. 153.

Fig. 2: *Nichts war unmöglich*. Squat at 65 Dortustraße in Potsdam, 1991. © Hassan J. Richter

The influx of West Germans, who boasted of their experience in West Berlin, sometimes triggered internal conflicts. But the increase in the number of squatters in Potsdam also contributed to the development of a functioning 'infrastructure of alternative life' in the occupied houses, especially on Gutenbergstraße. In addition to collective living and bars, cafés, and concert venues, an ecological housing project was also developed here.[73] In the long term, at least some of these were converted into legal forms, such as concert venues, bars, and left-wing information centres and book shops. Interestingly, this was also the result of a transfer from West Berlin. The Social Pedagogical Institute there, which had already worked on the legalization of squatting in the 1980s, developed a concept for converting the occupation projects into legal forms, which usually involved relocation to an alternative property.[74]

[73] Ibid. 138.
[74] Ibid. 256.

Similar processes of normalization took place at the same time in Leipzig and Dresden. In Dresden's Neustadt, around twenty buildings occupied by squatters were either cleared or turned into housing co-operatives.[75] In the Connewitz district of Leipzig, neo-Nazi attacks led almost all of the first generation of squatters to leave their homes, and young, mostly radical left-wing and anarchist squatters continued the occupation. After the escalation of violent conflicts, threats of eviction, and a Squatter Congress held in 1995, the squats were transferred to the ownership of the Alternative Housing Association Connewitz (AWC) in 1996.[76]

In Potsdam, the transformation phase marked by conflict and co-operation between authorities and squatters dragged on until 2000. After illegal housing and squatting became obsolete with reunification, a tough process of normalization began there, as in other East German cities, and squatting disappeared as a result.

What Remains?

What significance did the experience of *Schwarzwohnen* or squatting have for those involved even after 1989? Undoubtedly, moving into illegal housing was an experience that encouraged young people to act independently in the last years of the GDR, and also contributed to undermining the dictatorship's claims to power. Added to this, in 1990 they had the experience of almost unlimited freedom to shape their own lives, at least for a few months. A new era began in the autumn of 1990, when clear legal regulations significantly reduced their freedom to negotiate with property owners and the authorities. The large variety of options for negotiation that had existed in the GDR was lost. Before 1990, the state had assigned flats in an act of

[75] Andrej Holm and Armin Kuhn, 'Squatting and Gentrification in East Germany since 1989/90', in Freia Anders and Alexander Sedlmaier (eds.), *Public Goods versus Economic Interests: Global Perspectives on the History of Squatting* (New York, 2016), 278–304, at 289.

[76] Dieter Rink, 'Der Traum ist aus?', in Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht (eds.), *Jugendkulturen, Politik und Protest: Vom Widerstand zum Kommerz?* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 119–40.

favour, and had also prescribed how large the flat could be. At the same time, the widespread neglect of property in public ownership hastened the partial erosion of the concept of ownership. Those who lived in illegal housing did not see themselves as owners, but claimed usage rights. Tatiana Golova's observation that in Leningrad, substantial parts of the population did not see the private appropriation of public property as a criminal act probably to some extent also applied to the GDR.[77]

With the introduction of the market economy, not only could everyone freely choose where to live, with price taking over the regulatory function previously exercised by the state, but clear normative signals were now sent to protect property. Thirty years after reunification, *Schwarzwohnen* no longer exists. In the new German federal states (on the territory of the former GDR) and in Berlin, there are occasional cases of squats which temporarily develop into 'islands' of alternative and counter-cultural life. But these follow western European squatting traditions and, as the most recent eviction in Berlin shows, have no chance of survival in the long term.[78]

Is *Schwarzwohnen* purely a historical manifestation of life in the GDR which has no relevance today? The economic and political framework has changed radically since 1990, and a large percentage of the old building stock in Germany's new federal states has been renovated. But many buildings from the Wilhelmine period remained empty for some time. In view of this, a *Wächterhaus* (guard house) initiative started in Leipzig in 2004. Residents may live and work rent-free in these vacant buildings, paying only the running costs. In return, they maintain and repair the building, while acting as 'guardians' against weather damage and vandalism. The legal basis of this arrangement is a time-limited agreement concluded between owner and user, granting the residents permission to use the property.

[77] Tatiana Golova, 'Squatting and the Moral Economy of Public–Private Relations: Leningrad/St Petersburg', *Baltic Worlds*, 11/1–2 (Apr. 2016), 57–67. On the topic of property, see the *Schriftgespräch* with Kerstin Brückweh in this issue of the *GHIL Bulletin*.

[78] 'Berlin Police Clear Anarchist-Occupied House Liebig 34', Deutsche Welle, at [https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-police-clear-anarchist-occupied-house-liebig-34/a-55211590], accessed 13 Nov. 2020.

In the sixteen years of its existence, HausHalten e.V. in Leipzig alone has created thirty-two such 'guard houses'. Fourteen of them have been converted to new uses and eighteen continue to exist as residential properties. Chemnitz, Dresden, Erfurt, Görlitz, Halle, and Zittau have all set up associations with similar aims, which have also created guard houses.[79] Unlike the anarchist squatting that was typical of the West, these are not subversive, provocative acts, but unspectacular, individual attempts to solve housing problems in the tradition of *Schwarzwohnen* in the GDR. Like some of the housing co-operatives that have grown out of the squatting movement, guard houses combine a desire to preserve valuable buildings with the provision of free space for alternative lifestyles. They are as far removed from the logic of capitalist exploitation as living in illegal housing once was from the political and bureaucratic logic of the SED dictatorship.

[79] HausHalten e.V., at [http://www.haushalten.org/de/index.asp], accessed 26 June 2020.

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HOME SWEET HOME: A SCHRIFTGESPRÄCH *ON DOING THE LONG HISTORY OF 1989*

KERSTIN BRÜCKWEH AND MIRJAM BRUSIUS

MIRJAM BRUSIUS (MB): Kerstin, you have been looking at questions of ownership and property, with a focus on housing. The working title of your project is 'Home Sweet Home: Property between Expropriation, Appropriation, and New Modes of Organization in the Long History of 1989'. The articles in this issue of the *GHIL Bulletin* concentrate on the same themes. Why is the topic of housing so suitable for making the experience of the *Wende* tangible?

KERSTIN BRÜCKWEH (KB): In the research group, 'The *Longue Durée* of 1989–90', we are concerned with the connection between system change and life-world (*Lebenswelt*) and, in a sense, with a *longue durée* history of society and everyday life going beyond the turning point of 1989. I therefore looked for themes that were important in both areas—that were fundamentally affected by system change, and that played a part in everyday life, in the life-world. While the Ph.D. students in the group are researching schooling and consumption, my subject of housing and the related question of the ownership of residential spaces and land is also particularly suitable for an investigation of the history of everyday life during a turning point because it allows system change and the life-world to be viewed simultaneously. Analysing the everyday life-world demonstrates the connection between the individual and the system, the micro and the macro levels.

Karl Schlögel, a historian of eastern Europe, demonstrates this connection by taking housing as an example. He sees the house in the widest sense (that is, including flats), as '*the* scene and junction of all the events that shape a life'.[1] Living space plays a central role in everyday life; routines, preferences, possessions, status, and much

Trans. by Angela Davies (GHIL)

[1] Karl Schlögel, *In Space We Read Time: On the History of Civilization and Geopolitics*, trans. by Gerrit Jackson (New York, 2017), 262 (original emphasis).

more can be seen there. At the same time, the relationship between mobile residents and their immobile homes is fragile. This is visible throughout the twentieth century with its history of politically motivated expropriation under National Socialism, in the Soviet occupation zone, and in the GDR—but it could also be investigated outside German history. Homes offer a retreat from the adversities of everyday life; they seem to promise security at times of uncertainty. But in fact they cannot provide this, or only to a limited extent.

MB: So the topic of housing gave you access not only to the inner structures of the residents' life-worlds, but also to the structures of a state in upheaval?

KB: Yes, from a systemic perspective, housing as a research topic reveals ideas and ideologies of property, property rights, and the politics of property. Everyday life and the political, legal, and economic system are connected here; administrative and everyday practices become visible. After 1989, all post-socialist states regarded the privatization of property as vital to the development of a functioning economy, the rule of law, and a democratic society. It was believed that everything could be achieved at once, and all via the privatization of property. Behind this lay the idea that the new legal and economic order would guarantee the existence of a liberal economy, the rule of law, and civil society, as Hannes Siegrist and Dietmar Müller put it for eastern central Europe.[2] This ties in with a long-standing Western liberal, individualistic understanding of property as conferring strong and absolute rights which are assigned to the individual—in other words, private property.[3] This may sound complicated, but the important thing is the idea that post-socialist societies sought to use property to solve several problems at once: to build a capitalist economy and to strengthen individuals as self-confident, active, and autonomous citizens. In short, to bring about a new economic

[2] See Hannes Siegrist and Dietmar Müller, 'Introduction', in eid. (eds.), *Property in East Central Europe: Notions, Institutions, and Practices of Landownership in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2015), 1–26, at 3–4.

[3] Hannes Siegrist and David Sugarman, 'Geschichte als historisch-vergleichende Eigentumswissenschaft: Rechts-, kultur- und gesellschaftsgeschichtliche Perspektiven', in eid. (eds.), *Eigentum im internationalen Vergleich: 18.–20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1999), 9–30.

and social order. Therefore, what appears commonplace in the life-world is, in fact, highly politically charged.

The relevance of this topic also lies in the fact that East and West Germany still diverge in this respect today. The fact that the East has less wealth and more tenancies compared with the West is related to the history of the GDR and the way in which assets and ownership were regulated during the period of upheaval in 1989–90. Thus inequalities persist here to the present day.[4]

MB: You have written that life plans are reflected in housing. To what extent is living space something special?

KB: That remark alludes to the fact that different social groups have different life plans. For some people, living in a single-family house with a garden and space for children is a central element of their plan for life. That is what they work towards and save for. Often, the intention is for the house to be passed on to the next generation. For some, this remains a dream that will never be achieved. For others, a single-family house represents an ecological catastrophe, a nightmare; they prefer to live in flats or alternative housing projects. For others again, it is a pure investment project, designed to amass wealth. People living in cities and in rural areas also have different ideas on the subject. And in any case, these ideas are subject to historical change. This can be seen very clearly in the example of the prefabricated tower blocks that many GDR residents moved into, mainly from the 1970s, because of the mod cons they offered, but which were abandoned by some social classes after 1989. This did not happen in the same way in all regions or city districts. But in the interviews conducted by Sonya Schönberger and in her interpretation of them, it becomes clear that because of people moving out, or perhaps even more because of unwanted new people moving in, something changed in the residents' perception of their living environment.

MB: As a place of retreat in a state like the GDR, a home can offer protection against the outside world. Sonya Schönberger chose an entire tower block as the setting for her artistic work. Udo Grashoff

[4] Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung (ed.), *Vielfalt der Einheit: Wo Deutschland nach 30 Jahren zusammengewachsen ist* (Berlin, 2020), 30–1, 48–9.

investigated *Schwarzwohnen*[5] and squatters, who often lived in communes. Can't we equally think of the home as a collective space in which we can be protected, but may also be exposed and vulnerable?

KB: For some time, the prevailing idea was of a retreat or niche where one could escape from the system. My research shows very clearly, however, that these supposedly private places were, in fact, more strongly penetrated by the regime than some residents recognized in their everyday lives. For instance, they did not look after their homes—renovating, refurbishing, extending, and converting them—solely out of self-interest, as this activity was supported, or at least condoned, by the GDR state. In the 1970s and 1980s in particular, the GDR regime was unable to meet the housing needs of its citizens. Instead, it depended on its 'socialist citizen inhabitants' (I call them this by analogy with the 'socialist citizen consumer')[6]—that is, on people who contributed to the functioning of the system by their actions. This is shown clearly by the example of DIY manuals. Thus we read in the Foreword to *Du und Deine Wohnung: Heimwerkertips* ('You and Your Home: Improvement Tips', 1973): 'The home in which the citizen spends much of his free time constantly calls upon the tenant to show social responsibility in using it rationally, looking after it independently, preventing damage, and properly repairing minor damage.'[7] I don't want to give new impetus to the totalitarianism thesis; we have already had this debate in the historiography of the GDR. Rather, both these narratives are valid. Throughout this project, interviewees again and again described the seemingly everyday experience in the GDR of having free spaces and options for action beyond the reach of the regime in the context of both housing and

[5] See the discussion of this term in Udo Grashoff's Article in this *Bulletin*.

[6] I thank Clemens Villinger for drawing this to my attention. On the significance of DIY, see Reinhild Kreis, 'A "Call to Tools": DIY between State Building and Consumption Practices in the GDR', *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity,* 6/1 (2018), 49–75, at 65. Also Katherine Pence, '"A World in Miniature": The Leipzig Trade Fairs in the 1950s and East German Consumer Citizenship', in David F. Crew (ed.), *Consuming Germany in the Cold War* (Oxford, 2003), 21–50. The basic text is Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York, 2003).

[7] Max Pause and Wolfgang Prüfert, *Du und Deine Wohnung: Heimwerkertips*, 6th edn. (Berlin, 1973), 5.

consumption in general. And yet the GDR regime is visible everywhere in the sources.

MB: How do such findings, which provide a more nuanced picture, fit in with earlier interpretations? To what extent was the process of coming to terms with circumstances at the time partly responsible for the situation today?

KB: These narratives are firmly established today; they have emerged as counter-narratives to interpretations of the total penetration of society that were developed in the 1990s.[8] From an analytical perspective, I would say that the residents looking after their homes and the state measures complemented each other. But it is especially important—and this leads us back to the argument of fragility—that there was no legal security with regard to housing in the GDR. Thus single-family houses could be bought, but the land registers were not kept properly, and changes of ownership were often not recorded. Moreover, while a house could be bought, the land on which it stood could not. All this made it possible for the GDR regime to take action against residents whenever and wherever it wanted to. I call this policy of sketchy registration of property sales 'arbitrary by design' because it often seemed arbitrary to the owners of property, who sometimes successfully opposed it in grievance procedures (*Eingaben*). Sometimes a sale was entered in the land register, sometimes not; sometimes *Eingaben* were successful, sometimes not. All this created the impression of arbitrariness, but at the same time it was intentionally designed by the regime to produce a lack of legal security.

[8] This refers to criticism expressed by Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, who regards the process of coming to terms with the 1990s, which was shaped by oppositional forces in the GDR and West Germans, as partly responsible for these counter-narratives and the situation today. For criticism of the process of coming to terms with the past, and for reflections on the relationship between historiography and this process, see Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, 'Zur Gegenwart der DDR-Geschichte: Ein Essay', in Marcus Böick and Kerstin Brückweh (eds.), 'Weder Ost noch West: Ein Themenschwerpunkt über die schwierige Geschichte der Transformation Ostdeutschlands', *Zeitgeschichte-online* (Mar. 2019), at [https://zeitgeschichte-online.de/themen/zur-gegenwart-der-ddr-geschichte], accessed 8 Jan. 2021.

MB: In this issue of the *Bulletin*, we look at different forms of housing before, during, and after the *Wende*. The role of ownership is often there in the background as well. You write in your book that after the *Wende*, the privatization of property was seen as hugely important for the development of the new state. To what extent was the reorganization of property ownership a challenge in East Germany?

KB: This carries on directly from my previous answer. For those who felt that they owned their property by virtue of having looked after it—sometimes for decades—or who had bought or built a house, it was a blow when in 1990, the old owners, who may have left the GDR for economic or political reasons, came back and reasserted their rights of property ownership. The German–German negotiations that led to the Property Law (*Vermögensgesetz*) are interesting here. Ultimately, the land register was consulted as the ultimate authority for decision-making in order to establish the true state of things. But as we have seen, it was not always reliably maintained in the GDR, both because of the policy described above and because the administration was overstretched.[9] I found many such complaints in the files from the 1950s, in particular, when a large number of people left the GDR. A decision could have been made that the years of maintaining and living in properties should be valued more highly than legal ownership. For land, at least, the German Civil Code (BGB) provided for the possibility of adverse possession,[10] and this also existed in the GDR. The thirty-year period specified in the BGB was, however, interrupted by the Basic Treaty between East and West Germany, in which property issues remained open. The law of 1990 was therefore called the Law Regulating Open Property Issues (*Gesetz zur Regelung offener Vermögensfragen*). The basic principle laid down there, 'return before compensation', was based on the land register, and governed

[9] Kerstin Brückweh, 'Wissen über die Transformation: Wohnraum und Eigentum in der langen Geschichte der "Wende" ', *Zeithistorische Forschungen/ Studies in Contemporary History*, 16/1 (2019), 19–45, at [https://doi.org/10.14765/zzf.dok-1335].

[10] This is a legal principle under which a person who does not have legal title to a piece of property—usually land—acquires legal ownership based on continuous possession or occupation of the property without the permission of its legal owner.

the decisions taken by the relevant offices. Gradually, GDR practices were taken into account, which in some regions led to long processing times and thus to longer periods of uncertainty. Those affected described these as unbearable, and they had a lasting impact on their feelings towards German unification. This was the case, for example, in communities close to Berlin, where property prices rose immediately in the 1990s. In the rural areas in my investigation, the Property Law played a minor role as far as houses were concerned, because the families who lived in them had often been there since before the GDR era. We therefore have to look very carefully to see for whom the Property Law posed a particular challenge. At the same time there were people, for example, on the outskirts of Berlin, who were very successful in making their concerns public. This created a biased view of the problem and shifted attention to narratives that foregrounded a negative picture of a clash between East and West.

MB: In your research, you explain that you do not see any major differences between the ideas of property held by many East Germans in the GDR and those of West Germans—a conclusion you draw from their everyday activities around the home. What were some of the most surprising discoveries you made in the context of your research project?

KB: I was often amazed by the sources, most recently when I was looking in greater detail at the negotiations for the Property Law held in the spring of 1990. Contemporaries repeatedly suggested to me that the West German negotiating partners had ripped off East Germans, and I saw this power imbalance reflected in the sources too. There was also a huge degree of ignorance on both sides. According to the current state of research, both negotiating partners seem to have had only rudimentary knowledge of the nature and extent of property ownership in the GDR. Günther Krause became a key figure for me. He negotiated for the GDR side, later became Minister of Transport under Helmut Kohl, and several scandals were associated with his name. The sources are not straightforward, but in her analysis, the historian Anke Kaprol-Gebhardt suggests that Krause did not really represent the interests of the GDR people. The effective date regulation (*Stichtagsregelung*) is interesting in this context. While the Property

Law was being negotiated, ownership of property changed on the basis of the law concerning the sale of publicly owned buildings of 7 March 1990, which became known as the Modrow Law after the last chairman of the GDR Council of Ministers. Among other things, this law permitted the owners of houses in the GDR to buy the land on which their houses stood. The West German side could not simply accept this as a *fait accompli*, which is why Klaus Kinkel is said to have brought the effective date regulation for the recognition of sales into the negotiations.[11] It seems that Kinkel proposed 1 January or 1 March 1990.[12] In the end, however, the negotiators settled on 18 October 1989, the date of Erich Honecker's resignation. This caused considerable consternation among those affected because it implied that GDR citizens 'would or could have known that on Erich Honecker's resignation, the GDR authorities lost the right to authorize the sale of anything, although the independence of the GDR was not in any way in question'.[13]

MB: What does this mean in the larger context of historiography about the *Wende*?

KB: In conversations with contemporaries, they often point out that the effective date was suggested by the West German side. According to Kaprol-Gebhardt, however, the sources are equivocal on this. In fact, it is more likely that the GDR delegation suggested the date. On 14 June 1990, Kinkel wrote: 'The new version called for by the GDR is better for us too; the date of 18 October 1989 was suggested by the GDR in view of Honecker's resignation.'[14] When Kaprol-Gebhardt asked

[11] Anke Kaprol-Gebhardt, *Geben oder Nehmen: Zwei Jahrzehnte Rückübertragungsverfahren von Immobilien im Prozess der deutschen Wiedervereinigung am Beispiel der Region Berlin-Brandenburg* (Berlin, 2018), 119.

[12] Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes, B 136/264569; 421-52602-Ve45, Klaus Kinkel to Lambsdorff, Seiters, Tietmeyer, Schäuble, and Ludewig, Re: Gespräch am Freitag den 8. Juni 1990 im Gebäude des Ministerrats in Sachen offene Vermögensfragen, Bonn, 6 June 1990, quoted from Kaprol-Gebhardt, *Geben oder Nehmen*, 119.

[13] This is how Thomas Singer puts it in his 'Kommentar', in Kerstin Brückweh, Clemens Villinger, and Kathrin Zöller (eds.), *Die Lange Geschichte der 'Wende': Geschichtswissenschaft im Dialog* (Berlin, 2020), 74–6, at 76.

[14] Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes, B 136/264569; 421-526-Ve45, Klaus Kinkel to Lambsdorff, Seiters, Tietmeyer, Schäuble, and

Günther Krause about this, he replied on 4 November 2012: 'There is no doubt that Honecker's resignation marked the beginning of the "official" change, both in the GDR and in the SED.'[15] At this point, therefore, a question mark remains, given the present state of research and the sources. However, this example shows the inner struggle and different interests within the GDR, which are sometimes forgotten when people today speak about East Germany as a unity or 'the' East Germans.

What I would also like this example to illustrate is that I am repeatedly surprised by how strongly and confidently certain contemporaries present their opinions as the only truth. In a sense, this was the starting point of our research because there are already many interpretations of the GDR and the *Wende* in fiction, for example. We therefore asked how these individual representations are connected to a greater whole; we were looking for a pattern.

MB: Your research group, 'The *Longue Durée* of 1989–90: System Change and Everyday Life in East Germany',[16] asked how people in East Germany experienced the final years of the GDR and the change of system. Your premise was that anyone who wants to understand East Germany must connect the periods before, during, and after the upheaval of 1989–90. Why is this important? Do people remember things differently if they view turning points like the fall of the Berlin Wall in temporal isolation?

KB: Our starting point was the simple observation that the lives of East German people did not start anew in 1989, but continued, and that the turning point of that year must be integrated into people's biographies in order to construct meaningful, individual life stories. The goal was to relate people's expectations of the Federal Republic or

Ludewig, Re: conversation of 14 June 1990. Re: Offene Vermögensfragen, here: gestriges Gespräch mit Herrn PSt Dr. Krause in Ost-Berlin; coalition talks held on Friday, 15 June 1990, 13.30 in the Federal Chancellery. Quoted from Kaprol-Gebhardt, *Geben oder Nehmen*, 119.

[15] Kaprol-Gebhardt, *Geben oder Nehmen*, 123.

[16] The title of the research group in German is 'Die lange Geschichte der "Wende": Lebenswelt und Systemwechsel in Ostdeutschland vor, während und nach 1989'. The group was funded by the Leibniz Association and based at the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam.

unification before 1989 first to their experiences during the core period of upheaval in 1989–90, when one system was replaced by another, and then to experiences since the 1990s, when the decisions made during the core period were implemented. All three periods shape the memories and narratives of today. Let's look at the core period of 1989–90 as an example. Udo Grashoff's research leads him to speak of 'the experience of almost unlimited freedom' in 1990, and I also recognize this from my sources. This short period was perceived as exciting and often as positive; the 1990s could only pale in comparison. It is interesting to consider how segments of time were perceived at different points. For the school sector, for example, one of the sources is a longitudinal study in Saxony, which has been interviewing the same people since 1987. It shows that the memories of one and the same person could change considerably depending on how far in the past the GDR was. This is not a matter of right or wrong, but of noticing divergences and contextualizing them—something which is well known to oral historians, as is the tendency for stories to be narrated differently depending on the setting or context in which they are told.[17] In public, the people living in the community on the outskirts of Berlin in which I did my research describe the 1990s as a clash between East and West Germans, but they do not mention who was able to move into houses in the GDR when and why. This sort of information is more likely to be forthcoming in qualitative interviews that are seen as more private. There, interviewees talk about 'envy' and 'privilege', 'fat cats' and 'the average punter'.[18] This is one reason why we travelled out to the places we were studying

[17] Dorothee Wierling, 'Zeitgeschichte ohne Zeitzeugen: Vom kommunikativen zum kulturellen Gedächtnis—drei Geschichten und zwölf Thesen', *BIOS*, 21/1 (2008), 28–36, at 33.

[18] I refer here to interviews conducted in the context of the research project 'Property Restitution and the Post-1989 Transformation Process in Germany and Poland: An International and Interdisciplinary Research Project', funded in 1999–2001 by the Volkswagen Foundation. Carsten Keller gave me access to them for a second analysis. They include audio recordings of interviews with three contemporary experts, sixteen semi-structured interviews, and two focus groups, as well as documents and transcriptions of some of the interviews. There are also a number of unpublished working papers, a final report on the project, and a central publication: Birgit Glock, Hartmut Häußermann, and Carsten Keller, 'Die sozialen Konsequenzen der

and tried to give the quiet people a voice. In other words, we didn't want to let those people who regularly speak out in public have their say again. Rather, we wanted to hear the stories of those who have so far held back with their stories in public. We wanted diverse narratives.

MB: This issue of the *Bulletin* explores interviews as historical sources. Apart from the previously unheard voices, for you it was especially important to have insights into the views of people who had first-hand experience of the period, and you used different approaches to compare the narratives of the ruling classes with those of their subjects. How would you describe your approach? How does it differ from established methods, such as oral history or ethnographic field research?

KB: We clearly started as a research project that combined various different sources. My main sources were the files of the offices for resolving open issues concerning property. In selected locations (rural, urban, and suburban), I investigated typical streets house by house. By 'typical', I mean here that these locations could be subdivided into different areas (for example, single-family or multi-family houses, villas, or settlements whose Jewish owners had been expropriated under National Socialism), and that I examined selected streets in these areas. I supplemented this approach by drawing on various other sources, such as media reports, and especially by carrying out secondary analysis of interviews that urban sociologists had conducted in one of my research locations in 1999–2000, and which they made available to me (see footnote 18). In addition, I conducted oral history interviews. The combination of all these sources made it possible to divide the period into the three segments before, during, and after 1989.

The secondary analysis of material from the social sciences is rather new for the writing of contemporary history. My colleague Clemens Villinger based his historical analysis on ethnological studies dating from the 1990s, and he placed the secondary analysis of interviews at the centre of his work on consumption in the long history of the *Wende*. And in the longitudinal study in Saxony mentioned above, another

Restitution von Grundeigentum in Deutschland und Polen', *Berliner Journal für Soziologie*, 11 (2001), 533–50.

colleague, Kathrin Zöller, also chose a social science source which combined quantitative data that had already been used in different ways with open questions that had not yet been evaluated. Thus in our project, we conducted 'contemporary history in the archives of the social sciences',[19] because various funding initiatives in the 1990s ensured that research projects had already been carried out on almost all topics. Sometimes we have the results of these projects; sometimes we have only the interviews or photographs.[20] These are wonderful sources. Thus our work consists only partly of oral history. Moreover, during my time at the German Historical Institute London, I gained the impression—strengthened by insight into the methods used by my ethnologist colleagues working at the Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies at the University of Erfurt—that German historiography has not yet developed any comparable ethical standards. There is still urgent need for exchange between different disciplinary and national academic cultures. And to work in social science archives often requires a knowledge of the history of data collection and of the institutions that collect it.[21] This is a huge undertaking that goes well beyond the usual source criticism.

MB: How did you deal with these challenges?

[19] Jenny Pleinen and Lutz Raphael, 'Zeithistoriker in den Archiven der Sozialwissenschaften: Erkenntnispotenziale und Relevanzgewinne für die Disziplin', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 62/2 (2014), 173–95.

[20] On the development of transformation research in the social sciences, see Raj Kollmorgen, 'Eine ungeahnte Renaissance? Zur jüngsten Geschichte der Transformations- und Vereinigungsforschung', in Marcus Böick, Constantin Goschler, and Ralph Jessen (eds.), *Jahrbuch Deutsche Einheit 2020* (Berlin, 2020), 46–72; Stephan Weingarz, *Laboratorium Deutschland? Der ostdeutsche Transformationsprozess als Herausforderung für die deutschen Sozialwissenschaften* (Münster, 2003). On the relationship between social science research and historiography, see Kerstin Brückweh, 'Das vereinte Deutschland als zeithistorischer Forschungsgegenstand', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 28–29 (2020), 4–10, at [https://www.bpb.de/apuz/312261/das-vereinte-deutschland-als-zeithistorischer-forschungsgegenstand], accessed 8 Jan. 2021.

[21] Kerstin Brückweh, 'The History of Knowledge: An Indispensable Perspective for Contemporary History', *Blog GHI Washington, History of Knowledge: Research, Resources, and Perspectives*, 4 Dec. 2017, at [https://historyofknowledge.net/2017/12/04/the-history-of-knowledge-an-indispensable-perspective-for-contemporary-history/], accessed 11 Feb. 2021.

KB: Our initial response was to look in depth at selected individual studies. But in contemporary history, it seems to me that secondary analysis is not yet really established as a method. We are therefore also addressing these questions in a follow-up project, in which the GHIL is also involved.[22] So much for the research project.

However, I would distinguish this from another aspect of our research group's work that arose out of current political discussions and from the fact that during the elections in Brandenburg, the right-wing, populist political party Alternative for Germany (AfD) put up posters virtually on our doorstep in Potsdam. With slogans such as 'Wende 2.0' and 'Vollende die Wende' (Complete the *Wende*), the AfD hijacked the central concerns of our project. We did not want to let this stand without comment, and therefore decided to follow a citizen science approach and travel through the former East Germany instead of holding a concluding academic conference.

MB: Your project then gave rise to a publication that, in an unusual combination, contains academic work, the memories of contemporaries, photography, and journalism along with research findings, travelogues, and memories of experiences of the *Wende* in the GDR. You presented your findings in an unusual format which you called a 'dialogue trip' (*Dialogreise*), visiting East German locations where you had conducted your studies, but also discussing your results with contemporaries. Thus even after you had completed your research, you kept up a conversation with the people you interviewed. In preparation, you summarized your results in something that you called a *Schriftgespräch* (lit. 'written conversation'), sent it to contemporaries and other academics, and asked them for comments in advance of the trip. In this *Bulletin*, too, inspired by your methodology, we decided to present your methods and research results in a similar format rather than in an article. Why did you choose the *Schriftgespräch* form?

[22] 'Sozialdaten als Quellen der Zeitgeschichte: Erstellung eines Rahmenkonzepts für eine Forschungsdateninfrastruktur in der zeithistorischen Forschung/Data from Social Research as Source for Contemporary History: Designing a Framework for a Research Data Infrastructure for Research on Contemporary History', funded by the DFG, at [https://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/418958624?language=en], accessed 8 Jan. 2021.

KB: We settled on the *Schriftgespräch*—this is not an established form in historiography—because it had two functions for us. First, it allowed us to relate the different results that we arrived at as individual researchers working in the archive and at our desks, to those of the other members of the research group. It offered us the chance to draw more general connections, but also to highlight the specificities of the individual thematic areas that we were working in. The *Schriftgespräch* differs from traditional academic formats in that it reflects the process of writing. It is less about the spoken word—and thus lacks the dynamic of an interview—but reproduces the process of discussion and its results. It is quite clearly not an interview that has been transcribed, but an artefact in which we have invested a great deal of effort to put our thoughts in order in a readable form. That is why it contains footnotes and quotations. Our aim was to present complex results to a readership outside academia in a more easily understandable form, rather than in abstract academic language. This brings me to the second function of the *Schriftgespräch*. It is a way of making research results available to a broader public. Our target audience is made up of people who are interested in our topic, who like to read, who enjoy thinking, and who are open to new ideas, but who have not necessarily studied history. We want to make it possible for this audience to come to grips with historical works and with a specific historical topic. The *Schriftgespräch* is intended as a method of academic communication in two respects: within research groups, and with a wider public that has not studied history.

MB: You and your team won the Potsdam Prize for Academic Communication (WISPoP) in 2020. Congratulations! The jury stated that your project is particularly convincing because of the breadth and type of communication it represents. They went on to say that in addition to academic research, your focus is primarily on the 'human being', and that there is a 'direct exchange between equals'. It is not unusual for contemporaries to be involved in historical research—but what prompted you to view them not only as 'sources of information', but also as actors?

KB: Our research topic, 'The *Longue Durée* of 1989–90', is politically highly charged. I have already mentioned the AfD's election posters,

and have pointed to the many exciting interpretations offered in fiction. We could also add references to film and music (for example, the song 'Grauer Beton' by Trettmann). Among historical research initiatives, our project was one of the first to look at the rupture of 1989 from a *longue durée* perspective covering the history of everyday life and social history. As a historian, I am interested not only in individual experiences, but also in larger patterns. We found these in our projects—over and above the thematic sections on consumption, schooling, and housing—and we wanted to present and discuss them with those who lived through the events. We wanted to take the diversity of experiences seriously, but also to show where they remained individual experiences and where they formed overarching patterns. For this reason, we also avoid the term 'witness to history' (*Zeitzeuge*) because it is associated with a high degree of authenticity, whereas we know from oral history research how complicated it can be to assess the statements of contemporaries.

MB: So your group engaged closely with interviewing as a method, while also reflecting on your own roles. It is generally accepted that oral histories and archives are not neutral. So far, however, there has been little or no reflection on how our own biographies also influence our approaches to sources and historiography itself. Your approach is therefore interesting for other research areas as well, such as feminist and queer history, or global and colonial history, where we often find power imbalances between researchers and the 'researched', and different standards apply. Male, white, cisgender, heterosexual historians are more often perceived as neutral—a privilege not always shared by women, transgender people, or marginalized colleagues from diasporic backgrounds who, depending on the research topic, may be considered biased. Prejudices can also arise when, for example, a Wessi researches East Germany. How did you deal with this?

KB: In the course of our research we found that we ourselves were being labelled as 'West German'. After our initial disappointment with this pigeonhole thinking, we found the identification itself understandable. After all, nobody likes it when someone talks about or researches them while the right to interpret the findings is reserved for the researchers. What we were really interested in was

an 'exchange among equals'. Yet history does not belong exclusively to anyone, and it is equally legitimate for us, as historians, to be interested in history. Ultimately, in our book we dealt proactively with this question, which the group had already discussed in detail. Right from the start, Anja Schröter was involved as a postdoc in the project alongside me, which meant that an East and a West German were involved. Unfortunately, Anja left the project for a (permanent) new position before our 'dialogue trip'. One of our Ph.D. students, Clemens Villinger, grew up in Bremen, but has now spent most of his life in the former East Germany, and the other Ph.D. student comes from Hamburg. Both Ph.D. students, who were born during the *Wende*, repeatedly stressed that not one but a number of factors play a role in interviews, an issue that is addressed in the introduction to the book. I am glad that although we were labelled 'West German', this never deteriorated into the pejorative 'Wessis'. Hendrik Berth, for example, who is currently jointly responsible for the aforementioned longitudinal study in Saxony, referred to the origin and socialization of the researchers in his commentary on our *Schriftgespräch*, coming to the conclusion that 'a certain personal distance can be beneficial when researching complex historical facts'.[23]

MB: You also tried to make heterogeneity visible in the label 'East German'.

KB: Yes, against the background of this experience of labelling and of our research, we made a few conscious preliminary decisions before our 'dialogue trip'. Our research had shown us how strongly certain local actors can influence interpretations. We therefore deliberately did not invite them to join us on the stage, calling instead on those who normally do not appear in public. Thus in Kleinmachnow, on the outskirts of Berlin, it was not a protagonist of the typical East–West narrative who was on the podium, but an architect from Schwerin, whose experiences with the Property Law there were completely different, and who took a different view of property. We wanted to shake up the established or engrained public narratives one

[23] Hendrik Berth, 'Wie lang ist die lange Geschichte der "Wende"?', in Brückweh, Villinger, and Zöller (eds.), *Die Lange Geschichte der 'Wende'*, 99–100, at 100.

finds in certain places, and to encourage various different people to tell us about their experiences. Even in Kleinmachnow, a prime example of the Ossi–Wessi narrative, there were examples of peaceful encounters. East Germans are not simply East Germans—we all know this—but the distinction has survived in everyday speech. The panel discussion, which we did not open to the floor, formed only the first part of the evening's events. In the second half there were stands with information on our research topics and dialogue cards that the audience could fill in.

MB: How did people react?

KB: What was interesting for us was that our basic results were confirmed, and that we became positive West Germans—that is, ones who listen and show interest. It was also exciting that some of the people who shared the stage with us told us later that the project had encouraged them to talk about history more—including with their children. We had a lot of positive experiences with the people we met who lived through the *Wende*, and I think we learned from each other. Of course, there were also older people who signalled that they wanted to speak after the first contribution from the podium, or who said afterwards that the young people who had spoken earlier had no idea. We not only had older contemporaries on the stage, but also younger ones, because we believe that it is everyone's history.

MB: So there were imbalances in certain respects. How did you deal with these, or did something need to change here?

KB: For our citizen science approach, it was important that our 'dialogue trip' and its preparation and follow-up were organized as democratically and non-hierarchically as possible. Thus, for instance, a student assistant analysed the dialogue cards, and her analysis forms part of our book. She and another student assistant also posted about our 'dialogue trip' on the social media accounts of the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam, where the project was based—with a surprisingly positive reception. This response showed me something else as well. I sometimes have the impression that certain colleagues, especially in the field of contemporary history, believe that the impact of their research depends on a review in the prestigious national press. But my observations suggest that

important social struggles about the interpretation of East German history take place on social media. Perhaps this is specific to the topic of East Germany, which tends to eke out a marginal existence in historical research because it counts as neither eastern nor western European history. For me, the discussions conducted on social media provide interesting insights; yet I also see a disadvantage in how opinions have to be expressed so briefly. Historical research has long taught us that different counter-publics exist; whether and how they are connected in the digital age is an open question for me.

MB: On the 'dialogue trip' held in January 2020, contemporaries were actively involved in your research process, in a spirit of citizen science or citizens creating knowledge. The journalist Christian Bangel and the artist Clara Bahlsen travelled with you as observers. With Sonya Schönberger, we also present an artist in this issue of the *Bulletin*. Using practices that partly relate to historical studies but are nonetheless different, Sonya, along with witnesses to history, produces knowledge about the *Wende*. What value did it add to include art in your research on experiences of the *Wende*?

KB: As we all had so much to do on our 'dialogue trip', we invited Clara Bahlsen and Christian Bangel to come along to observe us and the events we organized, and then to comment from their own points of view. We benefited greatly from both perspectives. For example, the photo essay by Clara Bahlsen, which she personally compiled, initially grated on me because she mixes up various places and presents people from one location alongside motifs from another. While this runs counter to my idea of order as a historian, it opens up new interpretations. This is discussed in the conclusion of the book, and I don't want to give away too much here.

We knew Christian Bangel as an active writer on East German topics and also on subjects that did not initially come up in our sources. As a result of his work, the violence of the 1990s became widely known as 'the baseball bat years'. With our focus on the history of everyday life, topics such as violence, racism, antisemitism, and nationalism had not come to the fore in our research until our 'dialogue trip'. But many newspaper reports of the last few years explicitly linked the success of the AfD in East Germany with hostile attacks on people. Although

Kathrin Zöller's analyses of schooling in the longitudinal study in Saxony had already shown results relating to nationalist nation-building from below, and although the restitution of residential property had involved negotiations about the expropriation of Jewish property under the Nazis, these topics did not feature prominently in our results. So we wondered whether we had missed something. We therefore brought another Ph.D. student on board after the 'dialogue trip', and with her moderating our discussions, we re-examined our sources and looked into the everyday occurrence of racism, antisemitism, and nationalism. I can say at this point that it was the most difficult chapter in the whole book. The discussions started with the (controversial) term 'right-wing extremism' and ended in the question of whether we were doing violence to our sources by working anachronistically. Ultimately, this gave rise to some suggestions about how to continue researching the history of these topics in East Germany.

MB: How has the media discourse about East Germany influenced memories of life in the GDR? How do you see memories and views of the GDR changing over the next few decades?

KB: For me as a historian, forecasting the future is not something I do everyday. This became clear to me when I was asked to make proposals for action in the context of a report produced by the 'Thirty Years of Peaceful Revolution and German Unity' commission set up by the German federal government.[24] But I would say that much depends on whether the various publics can be forged together. There have been interesting but, in my opinion, problematic attempts by a generation born after 1989 to spread a new awareness of the East. And many people, including historians, still have reservations about East Germany's relevance for German history, even if, after Hans-Ulrich Wehler's comment on the 'intermezzo of the East German satrapy', no one else has dared to express this so clearly.[25] I would like people to

[24] Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat, *Abschlussbericht der Kommission '30 Jahre Friedliche Revolution und Deutsche Einheit'* (Berlin, 2020), at [https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/975226/1825612/cbdbb1fd3b4ca0904aa796080e3854d1/2020-12-07-abschlussbericht-data.pdf?download=1], accessed 8 Jan. 2021.

[25] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte: 1700–1990,* 5 vols. (Munich, 1987–2008), vol. v: *Bundesrepublik und DDR 1949–1990* (2008), pp. xv–xvi. On the

set aside their preconceptions of an East–West clash more often when trying to explain current problems, and I would like more positive curiosity on all sides—more listening, and fewer quick opinions. For me, this also includes discussing historical research and findings outside the university from an early stage, and doing history on an equal footing.

Further reading:
Kerstin Brückweh, Clemens Villinger, and Kathrin Zöller (eds.), *Die lange Geschichte der 'Wende': Geschichtswissenschaft im Dialog* (Berlin, 2020).

debate over Wehler's comment, which was made in a footnote, see Patrick Bahners and Alexander Cammann (eds.), *Bundesrepublik und DDR: Die Debatte um Hans-Ulrich Wehlers 'Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte'* (Munich, 2009).

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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE THEORETICAL PAST: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY AND TEMPORALITY

KONRAD HAUBER

ZOLTÁN BOLDIZSÁR SIMON, *History in Times of Unprecedented Change: A Theory for the 21st Century* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), xiii + 209 pp. ISBN 978 1 350 09505 2. £85.00. US$114.00
DONALD BLOXHAM, *Why History? A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), xi + 396 pp. ISBN 978 0 198 85872 0. £35.00. US$45.00
ACHIM LANDWEHR, *Diesseits der Geschichte: Für eine andere Historiographie* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2020), 380 pp. ISBN 978 3 835 33742 8. €28.00
MAREK TAMM and PETER BURKE (eds.), *Debating New Approaches to History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), xiii + 371 pp. ISBN 978 1 474 28191 1. £75.00. US$100.00

History is in crisis. At least this is what a number of reports and articles imply. They suggest that academic history is suffering from a decline in public relevance, if not in graduate numbers.[1] Historians such as Jo Guldi, David Armitage, and Niall Ferguson have made the

[1] Benjamin M. Schmidt, 'The History BA since the Great Recession', *Perspectives on History*, 26 Nov. 2018, at [https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/december-2018/the-history-ba-since-the-great-recession-the-2018-aha-majors-report], accessed 15 Jan. 2021; Eric Alterman, 'The Decline of Historical Thinking', *The New Yorker*, 4 Feb. 2019, at [https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-decline-of-historical-thinking], accessed 15 Jan. 2021; Bagehot, 'The Study of History is in Decline in Britain', *The Economist*, 18 July 2019, at [https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/07/18/the-study-of-history-is-in-decline-in-britain], accessed 15 Jan. 2021.

case for renewing the public role of history, especially in advising public policy.[2] Yet calls for a more engaged relationship between the historical profession and the public have met with resistance. For instance, a resolution on 'current threats to democracy' passed by the Association of German Historians in 2018 precipitated a debate on the legitimacy of the profession taking a political stand against right-wing populism.[3] Criticism of the resolution, even from liberal historians and journalists, comes as no surprise given the ongoing debate on how to deal with the radical right in Germany. However, only one critical assessment of the resolution explicitly pointed out that the attempt to draw lessons from history seems to be at odds with the modern concept of history.[4] According to Reinhart Koselleck, the notion of *historia magistra vitae* became increasingly implausible at the beginning of the long nineteenth century due to fundamental changes in the experience of time. Instead of being seen as life's teacher, history came to be conceived of as a singular and irreversible process, implying at the same time a future open to human action.[5] Thus the eagerness among some historians to draw lessons for the present from the past is remarkable, and might indicate changes in the temporal horizons of Western societies.

[2] Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2014); Graham Allison and Niall Ferguson, 'Why the U.S. President Needs a Council of Historians', *The Atlantic*, Sept. 2016, at [https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/09/dont-know-much-about-history/492746/], accessed 15 Jan. 2021; Virginia Berridge, 'Why Policy Needs History (and Historians)', *Health Economics, Policy and Law*, 13/3–4 (2018), 369–81.

[3] Association of German Historians, 'Resolution on Current Threats to Democracy', Sept. 2018, at [https://www.historikerverband.de/verband/stellungnahmen/resolution-on-current-threats-to-democracy.html], accessed 15 Jan. 2021; Thomas Sandkühler, 'Historians and Politics: Quarrel Over a Current Resolution', *Public History Weekly*, 18 Oct. 2018, at [https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/6-2018-31/vhd-resolution/], accessed 15 Jan. 2021.

[4] Manfred Hettling, 'Bedingungen möglicher Lektionen', *FAZ*, 31 Oct. 2018, at [https://www.faz.net/aktuell/karriere-hochschule/resolution-von-muenster-bedingungen-moeglicher-lektionen-15863786.html], accessed 15 Jan. 2021.

[5] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Historia Magistra Vitae: Über die Auflösung des Topos im Horizont neuzeitlich bewegter Geschichte', in id., *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt, 1979), 38–66.

In the last two decades, scholars such as Aleida Assmann, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, and François Hartog have detected a new way of connecting past, present, and future that they suggest emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Hartog coined the term 'presentism' to describe this new 'regime of historicity'. Presentism is characterized by the all-encompassing dominance of the present in relation to past and future. In 'our broad present', as Gumbrecht calls it, the future is perceived not as an open horizon, but as a trap that is closing, while the past is no longer seen as an irreversible and limited space, but as something that haunts contemporary experience.[6] While these assessments may sound exaggerated to some, the discourse on environmental risks and climate change shows that new concepts of time are currently emerging. This becomes clear when considering the debate on the Anthropocene, a proposed geological epoch marked by human impact on the Earth's geology and ecosystems. The concept turns humanity into a geological force, thus collapsing the distinction between human and natural history that was crucial to the emergence of the modernist time regime.[7]

Debates on the Anthropocene and attempts to reverse the rejection of the notion of learning from history indicate that profound changes are taking place in our experience of historical time. New approaches to thinking about temporality have also influenced research on historical cultures of time. In the last decade, research on the practices,

[6] Aleida Assmann, *Is Time Out of Joint? On the Rise and Fall of the Modern Time Regime*, trans. Sarah Clift (Ithaca, N.Y., 2020); Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Unsere breite Gegenwart* (Berlin, 2010); François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité: Présentisme et expérience du temps* (Paris, 2003); Marek Tamm and Laurent Olivier (eds.), *Rethinking Historical Time: New Approaches to Presentism* (London, 2019).

[7] Will Steffen, Paul Crutzen, and John McNeill, 'The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?', *Ambio*, 36/8 (2007), 614–21; for the temporalities of the Anthropocene see Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *L'événement Anthropocène: La terre, l'histoire et nous* (Paris, 2013); Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', *Critical Inquiry*, 35/2 (2009), 197–222; Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, 'L'arrêt du monde', in Émilie Hache (ed.), *De l'univers clos au monde infini* (Bellevaux, 2014), 221–339; Gérard Dubey and Pierre de Jouvancourt, *Mauvais temps: Anthropocène et numérisation du monde* (Bellevaux, 2018).

politics, and discourses of time and history has flourished.[8] The new history of temporality has also turned towards the temporal practices of academic history. Several studies have shed light on the production of historical time in places and institutions such as archives.[9] Thus the deconstruction of the modernist time regime in theoretical work and research on the temporalities of academic history have increasingly turned into a self-reflection on the practice of history.

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The four books reviewed here all entail reflections on the practice of history in the light of changing perceptions of historical time. Their perspectives range from philosophy of history to historiography. In this Review Article, I ask to what extent these works demonstrate fundamental shifts in the temporalities of historical writing.

Zoltán Boldizsár Simon, Assistant Professor at the Institute for History at Leiden University and Research Fellow at Bielefeld University, has made an ambitious attempt to reinvigorate the philosophy of history. His *History in Times of Unprecedented Change* starts from the assessment by Hartog, Gumbrecht, and others that the modern regime of historicity has ended. However, Simon differs in one crucial respect from his predecessors: he does not claim that the present predominates over other temporal horizons. Instead, he bases his account of the current predicament on the expectation of unprecedented change in the future. Simon's assumption references the debate on environmental and technological risks such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and genetic engineering. Even techno-optimistic visions of the future centre on the notion of disruption, thus negating more incremental concepts of change. Simon's account focuses less on the reality of unprecedented change than on the public expectation of the

[8] For a general overview see Allegra R. P. Fryxell, 'Time and the Modern: Current Trends in the History of Modern Temporalities', *Past & Present*, 243/1 (2019), 285–98.

[9] Markus Friedrich, *Die Geburt des Archivs: Eine Wissensgeschichte* (Munich, 2013); Philipp Müller, *Geschichte machen: Historisches Forschen und die Politik der Archive* (Göttingen, 2019); Sina Steglich, *Zeitort Archiv: Etablierung und Vermittlung geschichtlicher Zeitlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 2020).

unexpected. To the author, the idea of unprecedented change represents 'a disconnection between the past, the present and the future' (p. 20). He suggests that nowadays even the past is perceived as discontinuous, representing unprecedented change that has already happened.

Simon argues that such discontinuous temporalities challenge narrative theories of history that have reduced history to historical writing. He therefore structures his work along the difference between history and historiography. In the first part of the book, he asks how to conceptualize actual historical change, proposing a 'quasi-substantive philosophy of history' (p. 39). This is an attempt to offer a philosophical account of historical change that takes seriously the post-war criticism of all philosophies of history exemplified by Karl Löwith and Arthur C. Danto. Simon suggests a notion of history bereft of a unifying subject or a telos. By analogy with negative theology, this means a negative philosophy of history. Therefore, in contrast to Koselleck's concept of history as a 'collective singular' that unifies heterogeneous histories, he proposes a notion of history as a 'disrupted singular' (p. 41) that he characterizes as a 'perpetual transformation of unknowable "coming" histories into dissociated, apophatic pasts' (p. 56).

In the second part of the book, Simon turns his eye towards historical writing and investigates the possibility of historiographical change in times of unprecedented historical change. Notwithstanding the contemporary context Simon describes, he essentially proposes a general theory of historiographical revision, highlighting the epistemological specificity of historical writing by comparison with other modes of writing. Thus he investigates modes of expression that mediate between non-linguistic historical experience and historical writing. Simon conceives of experience as a momentary collapse of meaning—a rupture giving birth to a new process of expression. Like those representing realist currents in contemporary philosophy, Simon seeks to transcend the linguistic turn. However, he writes about the 'expression ~~of~~ historical experience', with the strikethrough ruling out any mimetic relationship between expression and experience. His phenomenology of historical writing pursues a realist ontology, assuming the reality of historical processes, but eschews any realist epistemology. According to Simon, all experiences of the historical

start with a sudden aesthetic encounter with the discontinuity of the past. Such encounters happen, for instance, when a historian is confronted with a source in the archive that seems to be at odds with contemporary experience. This short moment of non-sense initiates a process of interpretation and contextualization and thus of historical sense-making. Simon's account of historiographical change mirrors his concept of dissociated pasts in the first part of the book.

History in Times of Unprecedented Change offers an intriguing reflection on the conditions that make history and historiography possible in an age that has ceased to believe in a modernist concept of historical time. Simon demonstrates a profound knowledge of contemporary philosophy; however, his engagement with current historiography remains narrow compared to his discussion of historical theory and political philosophy. Rather like Slavoj Žižek, Simon seems to prefer drawing on examples from pop culture, such as Harry Potter, to make his point. In the first part of the book, which focuses on historical change as such, there are some allusions to global history and environmental history. The second part makes even less reference to existing historiography, even though it explicitly deals with historical writing. Historians such as Robert Darnton and Carlo Ginzburg are occasionally mentioned to demonstrate the strangeness of encounters with the past, but it is questionable whether these references to microhistory offer a convincing account of the challenges facing historical writing at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Simon could have found more suitable interlocutors in environmental history—an absence that is all the more surprising given the interest in the Anthropocene he demonstrates in the first part of the book. What is more, from the historian's perspective, the sudden encounter with the strangeness of the past is hardly the only initiator of historical sense-making. Not every process of knowledge formation starts with shock, and in his focus on discontinuity and rupture, Simon ignores the more mundane aspects of historical research and writing.

The same cannot be said of Donald Bloxham's monumental account of historiography in *Why History? A History.* The author, who is Professor of Modern History at the University of Edinburgh, offers a history of the rationales for historical writing. In contrast to Simon, Bloxham favours continuity over rupture, and he identifies

several means of legitimizing history that have been used since the beginning of historical writing in ancient Greece. Bloxham distinguishes between history as memorialization, travel, entertainment, speculative philosophy, moral lesson, communion, identity, and method. In the book's last chapters, he adds the more recent modes of history as emancipation and therapy. Bloxham traces these arguments in the Western tradition from classical antiquity to the present day. In his focus on continuity, he is wary of strict periodization, and hardly any of Bloxham's rationales for history are exclusive to a single period. For instance, history as travel encompasses all kinds of arguments favouring history as an experience of alterity from Herodotus to R. G. Collingwood.

Bloxham's study is outstanding in its grasp of two and a half millennia of historiography, and he traces his subject through time and space seemingly effortlessly. Across the chronological narrative, Bloxham picks up specific methodological and theoretical questions of historical writing, such as the relationship between context and causality. Although the chapters are organized roughly by historical period, the author is eager to highlight continuities across the ages—for instance, when he reveals how far medieval historians shared the assumptions of their ancient predecessors and their Renaissance successors alike. Bloxham displays analytical strength when he develops surprising analogies between authors who seemingly have little in common, but struggle with similar problems and questions. For example, he shows how figures as remote as Michel Foucault and Lewis Namier both worked on the interplay of structure and discontinuity (p. 251).

Despite Bloxham's impressive erudition, however, there are some serious problems with his history of the legitimization for writing history. First of all, although the author arranges his work chronologically to make clear his ambition to historicize the different rationales for historical writing, his account is not free of essentialism. Essentially, in presupposing the transhistorical continuity of most arguments for history, Bloxham answers the question that gives the book its title—*Why History?*—before he even starts his investigation, by simply enumerating these arguments. The neatly distinguished rationales for history and the lack of any inflection points in the narrative make

the book repetitive. Bloxham's narrative only gains momentum in the chapters on nineteenth-century historicism and on current historical writing, in which he describes the advent of the political rationales of history as emancipation and history itself as therapy.

Nevertheless, *Why History?* is a remarkable contribution to the history of historical writing that transcends traditional accounts of historiography. Bloxham decentres the shift to the modern regime of historicity at the beginning of the nineteenth century by embedding it in a *longue durée* account of debates on the writing of history. Moreover, he is fully aware of the dependence of modern historical writing on theory. Although Bloxham's narrative is based on the actual work of historians, he shows a profound engagement with authors from Augustine to Derrida. Thus, *Why History?* is a highly recommended self-reflection on historical writing.

Achim Landwehr is even bolder in combining the theory of history, reflections on the writing of history, and the historicization of time and history. Landwehr is Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Düsseldorf. In recent years, he has published a study on the construction of time in seventeenth-century calendars and a book-length essay on the theory of history.[10] It therefore comes as no surprise that he has published a self-reflection on the relation of historians to time that might be of practical use for the writing of history. His new book, *Diesseits der Geschichte*, bundles several essays and arranges them in relation to three questions: how do established concepts of history function? What are their flaws and are there any viable alternatives? And what would an alternative historiography actually look like? These questions offer a good overview of the scope of the thirteen essays, four of which have not been published before.

In the first essay, 'Das Jetzt der Zeiten', Landwehr introduces the fundamental concept of 'Pluritemporalität' (p. 61) for the co-existence of multiple temporalities in the present. Following Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems, Landwehr considers the present as the only perspective from which different temporal horizons can be conceived. Thus every past is necessarily the present's past; every future is the

[10] Achim Landwehr, *Geburt der Gegenwart: Eine Geschichte der Zeit im 17. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 2014); id., *Die anwesende Abwesenheit der Vergangenheit: Essay zur Geschichtstheorie* (Frankfurt, 2016).

present's future. In this respect, the present entails multiple pasts and futures, and the co-presence of temporal horizons is Landwehr's leitmotiv throughout the book.

In the following chapter, he gives an example of how to analyse historical cultures of time, explaining that during the seventeenth century, artefacts such as clocks and calendars shaped a new concept of time as an abstract resource that was open to interpretation. In the middle section of the book, Landwehr mainly deconstructs commonplaces of Western historical thought and proposes conceptual alternatives. For instance, in a masterful essay on the concept of the 'Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen', which is commonly translated as 'contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous', he traces the history of the metaphor from the art historian Wilhelm Pinder to Reinhart Koselleck. Landwehr then demonstrates how the trope of non-contemporaneity emerged in the wake of early modern European overseas expansion. Finally, he exposes the shortcomings of the concept in order to propose his alternative notion of pluritemporality. In other essays, the author delves into the concept of anachronism and the notion of the present, in each case examining them through the prism of conceptual history before exploring alternative uses of the term under discussion.

In the last section of the book, which mostly brings together hitherto unpublished material, Landwehr showcases experimental forms of historical writing that take into account phenomena of pluritemporality. He starts with a chapter on the concept of 'Chronoferenzen', referring to the entanglements between different temporalities and suggesting the concept of 'chronoference' as an alternative to linear models of historical time that have been predominant in the modernist regime of historicity and have come under attack in recent years. First and foremost, the term indicates the 'present absence of the past' (p. 245) from the present—the key concept of Landwehr's previous book on the theory of history. This present absence is mediated by historical sources and artefacts. In the following chapters, Landwehr sets out to sketch several exemplary cases of chronoference. A fascinating essay on the timescapes of Carlsbad, New Mexico, links the deep time of Permian caverns to the future of the nuclear waste repository nearby, proving the pluritemporality of every present. On

the one hand, the city's name intentionally refers to nineteenth-century spa culture, thereby erasing the alternative chronoferences of native Mescalero culture. On the other, the long-term nuclear waste warning messages at the repository represent an attempt to communicate with future generations. In a short postscript, Landwehr reflects on his approach to this case study. Starting from the problem of nuclear semiotics, he unearths the many and various chronoferences of a particular place.

Landwehr's essays display an incredible vigour in rethinking history and temporality. He makes use of theoretical concepts from systems theory, deconstruction, and semiotics with ease, but never loses touch with the actual challenges of writing history. Of course, it remains to be seen whether Landwehr's neologisms will stand up to scrutiny. For instance, it could be argued that the concepts of pluritemporality and chronoference mostly cover the same phenomena. Furthermore, some of the paradoxes the author wilfully introduces might dissolve when put to the test. However, Landwehr's essays are outstanding as they tear down the implicit division of labour between history and the theory of history. He convincingly illustrates that theory without history is empty, whereas history without theory is blind. Given the intricate relationships between history and theory in Landwehr's writing, however, there is one small disappointment: it would have been particularly interesting to read his thoughts about the conditions governing his own vantage point, especially in light of current theories of presentism. Although the introduction speaks rather vaguely about the growing uncertainty of history in our culture, Landwehr makes only passing reference to Hartog and Gumbrecht. So the question remains whether presentism might be the condition that makes Landwehr's courageous historical–theoretical endeavour possible.

The introduction to *Debating New Approaches to History*, edited by Peter Burke and Marek Tamm, more openly assumes the crucial role of presentism and 'the demise of the modernist time regime' (p. 3) in enabling new perspectives on history and temporality. This volume is of particular interest to those who want to know how changing concepts of time go hand in hand with methodological innovation in the writing of history. It echoes the volume *New Perspectives on Historical*

Writing that Burke edited in 1991.[11] *New Perspectives* contains essays on microhistory, history from below, women's history, overseas history, oral history, the history of reading, the history of images, and the history of the body. Twenty-eight years later, *Debating New Approaches* reassesses some of these threads: women's history has become gender history, overseas history has merged into global history, and the history of images has turned into a history of visual culture. Further, as Peter Burke states in the conclusion, *Debating New Approaches* features at least six topics which have no precedent in the 1991 volume. History of memory, history of emotions, digital history, neurohistory, environmental history and post-humanist history are the newcomers to the 2019 sequel. Clearly, a comparison of the volumes reveals that historical writing has undergone some profound changes in less than three decades. These changes cannot be separated from a deeper understanding of temporality and historicity.

As Marek Tamm argues in the introduction, the current discourse on time regimes coincides with a profound rearrangement of the temporal and spatial scale of historical research. Whereas global history has broadened the geographic scope of history, several new historiographical currents have adapted to the vast timescales of the Anthropocene. For instance, Gregory Quénet's intriguing essay on environmental history and the comment by Sverker Sörlin both contain reflections on temporality. Quénet even proposes overcoming the distinction between natural history and human history in order to better connect the respective temporalities of human and non-human entities. He historicizes the exclusion of the natural world from historical writing. Similarly, in her contribution on post-humanist history, Ewa Domanska reflects on the timescales of histories transcending the human world. The essay on neurohistory by Rob Boddice and the subsequent comment by David Lord Smail also deal with the 'deep' temporalities of epigenetics and neural development that until recently would hardly have qualified as worthy of historical inquiry.

Apart from these contributions dealing with phenomena beyond human timescales, there are also essays that approach time from a somewhat different angle. In his contribution on memory history,

[11] Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 1991).

Geoffrey Cubitt makes an important point about how 'memory as a medium of perception disrupts temporal linearity and only intermittently concurs with the kinds of narrative ordering historians are used to imposing' (p. 142). This approach echoes Landwehr's thoughts on chronoferences and the present absence of the past. Moreover, Cubitt reflects on the changing media ecologies in which memory is produced and stored. Correspondingly, Jane Winters mentions in her essay on digital history that archival records 'will increasingly only exist in digital form' (p. 285). As Marek Tamm remarks in the introduction, digital technology will transform our relationship with the past. Yet it is open to debate whether the spread of digital media has played a particular role in the demise of the modernist time regime.[12]

Beyond its focus on temporality, *Debating New Approaches* provides an excellent overview of the state of the art in history. I will mention just a few of the insights to be gained from the essays in the volume. Jürgen Osterhammel, for example, reflects upon the current state of global history and makes some self-critical observations on the shortcomings of the field. According to Osterhammel, national history and Eurocentrism are 'two bogeys whose despicability is too often taken for granted' (p. 21) by practitioners of global history. Osterhammel then bemoans the lack of debate over concepts such as explanation, comparison, and circulation. Equally worth reading are Laura Lee Downs's essay on gender history and the comment by Miri Rubin, which show how the debate in the field has evolved in recent decades. There is much to learn about the emergence of 'the body' and 'emotions' as key terms after the linguistic turn. They also discuss the gendered context of universities, thus demonstrating how practices and institutions matter for historical writing. Of course, not every contribution gives such a convincing overview of its respective field. For instance, in an otherwise flawless essay on the history of knowledge, Martin Mulsow omits one of the most influential institutions in the field: the Center History of Knowledge at the ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich. Instead, he uses the essay mainly to promote his own work on 'precarious knowledge' (p. 170). Nevertheless, Lorraine

[12] Timon Beyes and Claus Pias, 'The Media Arcane', *Grey Room*, 75 (Spring 2019), 84–107.

Daston's comment offers an interesting account of the history of knowledge from the viewpoint of the history of science. In summary, despite some minor shortcomings, Burke's and Tamm's volume attests to the methodological and theoretical breadth of historical writing today.

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History is far from being in crisis. A lively debate is going on about its role in relation to radically altered experiences of time in the age of climate change and digital media. I would like to highlight three aspects of this debate: the shifting timescales in historical research; the movement towards non-human subjects and non-linguistic sources; and the intricate relations between the theory of history and historical writing.

Historians and historical theorists have discovered the long term, and not only as a consequence of the debate on the Anthropocene. Environmental history, Daniel Lord Smail's 'deep history', and certain proponents of global history have all developed a renewed interest the *longue durée*. Even cultural historians have become aware of time periods transcending the existence of the human species. For instance, Landwehr consciously incorporates geological timescales into his narrative on the temporalities of Carlsbad. The interrelationship between different temporalities—some of them reaching back well beyond the origins of humankind—which Landwehr has dubbed chronoference, is also present in environmental history, as Gregory Quénet remarks in *Debating New Approaches*. Quénet cites his own work on the environmental history of Versailles, which describes the interplay between the geological time of the place, the technological time of the castle's water supply infrastructure, and the short-term political history of the *ancien régime*. Such interrelationships between temporalities should be further explored.

The awareness of large timescales goes hand in hand with the discovery of subjects that cannot be reduced to human agency, such as cod, hurricanes, mosquitoes, volcanoes, or viruses. Similarly, approaches such as the history of emotions, neurohistory, and the history of the body explore the non-linguistic processes that were involved in

the production of written sources. The history of material culture—or, rather, the history of things, as the field is called in Burke and Tamm's volume—even works with non-linguistic sources. These attempts to go beyond written records should not be confused with naive realism or ontological naturalism. If historians respect non-human entities, they by no means embrace a strict notion of necessity. As Bloxham remarks, even natural objects are contingent. 'They are contingent on tectonic plate movements, volcanic activity, etc. Their ongoing existence is contingent, among other things, on their not being blown up by human-made explosives' (p. 347). The last aspect also resonates with Landwehr's reflections on nuclear waste. And the same thoughts on contingency hold true for the human body. Perhaps it is only in the Anthropocene that we have become fully aware of the contingency of nature, which opens up wholly new avenues in historical research.

Finally, we should reconsider the increasing convergence of history and theory, particularly in their shared perspective on temporality. In the conclusion to *Debating New Approaches*, Burke observes history's growing engagement with social and cultural theory, as does Bloxham. This entails a deeper self-reflection on history as a discipline, as most essays in the book edited by Burke and Tamm demonstrate. One reason for the growing interest in reflecting on the possibility of historical writing is clearly the crumbling of the modernist time regime. This process may gain momentum with the Covid-19 pandemic that has changed the experience of time at the level of everyday life. Such a situation demands new ways of writing history, and the books reviewed give hints about what historical writing that is aware of the demise of the historicist time regime might actually look like. In particular, Landwehr's essays demonstrate the playful character of historical writing that acknowledges the contingency of its approach to temporality. Or, as Gumbrecht stated at the end of a public debate on presentism in June 2019: 'We have an experimental situation . . . and I think instead of complaining about it, we should just use it almost in a surrealist way.'[13]

[13] Discussion 'Against Presentism', 26 June 2019, at [https://www.leuphana.de/en/research-centers/cdc/events/summer-schools/stanford-leuphana-summer-academy-2019.html], accessed 15 Jan. 2021.

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BOOK REVIEWS

B. ANN TLUSTY and MARK HÄBERLEIN (eds.), *A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Augsburg*, Brill's Companions to European History, 20 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), xvii + 595 pp. ISBN 978 90 04 41495 2 (hardback). €228.00

B. Ann Tlusty and Mark Häberlein's monumental volume on late medieval and early modern Augsburg brings the history of this intriguing, and in many ways unusual, imperial city to a wider anglophone audience. The last few years have seen something of a trend for the publication of large edited volumes focused upon the most significant late medieval and early modern cities, including Andrew Brown and Jan Dumolyn's *Medieval Bruges* c.*850–1550* and Bruno Blondé and Jeroen Puttevils's *Antwerp in the Renaissance*.[1] The present volume brings Augsburg into this august company, and has already succeeded in attracting widespread interest amongst urban historians who are far more used to reading about the cities of the Low Countries and Italy. Any such volume faces a fundamental choice of how far it should focus upon acting as a comprehensive survey and introduction to its city, and how far it should aim to capture the state of the art in historiographical innovation as demonstrated in work on that particular city. This is no easy decision, and it is inevitable that no compromise will entirely satisfy all readers. Brown and Dumolyn's volume on Bruges tacked further towards the complete survey, with many authors collaborating on each chapter to create a rounded and consistent interpretation of the city's fortunes, while Blondé and Puttevils's volume on Antwerp is a collection of distinct essays reflecting the individual research interests of the contributors. Tlusty and Häberlein's volume on Augsburg embodies a compromise

[1] Andrew Brown and Jan Dumolyn, *Medieval Bruges* c.*850–1550* (Cambridge, 2018); Bruno Blondé and Jeroen Puttevils (eds.), *Antwerp in the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2020).

between these two approaches. Most chapters are single or dual-authored, but generally survey quite tightly defined areas rather than reflecting particular interests.

The volume is organized into four thematic sections: 'The City', 'Economy, Politics, and the Law', 'Religion and Society', and 'Communication, Cultural and Intellectual Life'. The first section appears intended to serve as a form of extended introduction, for, unusually, the volume lacks an introduction in the traditional sense, and non-specialist readers are somewhat thrown into the deep end. Helmut Graser, Mark Häberlein, and B. Ann Tlusty's opening chapter on 'Sources and Historiography' situates Augsburg's importance in historiographical terms—not least in discussing the significance of Richard Ehrenberg's work on the Fuggers, which is well known in both English and French as well as German. Barbara Rajkay's chapter on topography, population, and visual representations effectively sets the scene for many of the issues discussed in later chapters, but in doing so it also highlights one of the most notable absences from the volume: maps. The half-page reproduction of Rogel's woodcut of 1563 is conspicuously the only map in the entire volume. On one level, now that spatial approaches are such an important element of contemporary urban historiography, we might have expected to see some chapters make use of thematic mapping; but more broadly, there is a real need for at least schematic maps identifying the locations, boundaries, and features discussed. The absence of even one such map from the volume is a real disappointment for this reviewer.

Claudia Stein's chapter on 'Invisible Boundaries' is extremely interesting and conceptually ambitious. Here, the now-familiar question of the early modern 'medical marketplace' is given a unique new dimension: Stein's 'invisible boundaries' are both confessional boundaries between Catholics and Protestants, and the boundaries of the body. Exploring these concepts in parallel offers a distinctive contribution to debates in medical history, while also powerfully explaining the reality of a bi-confessional city in a way to which the rest of part one only alludes. However, the nature of this chapter means it perhaps sits uncomfortably amongst its more descriptive neighbours in part one. Gregor Rohmann's chapter on 'Textual Representation' completes section one, introducing the wide range of

chronicle and related sources for the city in largely narrative fashion, but also considering the contexts and motivations behind their composition in a very insightful manner.

The second part of the volume focuses upon the broad but interrelated matters of trade, politics, and law, along with a digression into crime. Häberlein's chapter on production, trade, and finance sets out to look 'beyond the Fuggers'. Considering them in the broader context of fustian weaving, other merchants, and mining, he clearly proves that this was no one-horse town. Two chapters explore Augsburg's politics: Christopher W. Close considers the era of the dominance of the guilds over the city's government up to 1548, while Häberlein and Rajkay's chapter picks up the story with the patrician regime, which lasted until 1806. This regime-change aligned with the shift from an earlier embrace of the Reformation to what became Augsburg's distinctive bi-confessional nature. Together, these chapters offer a compelling narrative; yet some key aspects are explained only cursorily. While the closed patriciate might be familiar to historians of Augsburg and a good number of its neighbours, it is an alien concept to historians of many other European cities. More discussion of the formation, composition, and character of the patriciate—and, indeed, of the character of Augsburg's guilds themselves—would have made this section much richer for a broader range of readers. Allyson F. Creasman's chapter on crime and punishment does not lack context or explanation: the inquisitorial process and its implementation in the city are explained in a very accessible manner, making frequent comparisons with the wider European context. Likewise, Peter Kreutz's chapter on the civil law neatly balances a summary of the city's courts, processes, and legal code with a comparative analysis placing Augsburg in its context. The enduring influence of the 1276 *Stadtbuch*, although many neighbouring cities, by contrast, updated their legal systems with new Roman law-influenced codes during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is striking, as is the late adoption of formal recognition for bills of exchange in the city of the Fuggers.

The third part of the book is entitled 'Religion and Society'—although, as we have seen, religion in this city had a great deal to do with its politics, and questions of social stratification and inequality are largely explained by its commercial life. Michele Zelinsky

Hanson's chapter on the urban Reformation provides a lively narrative of the changing tides of confessional policy in the city, helpfully expanding many of the points introduced in the pair of chapters on city politics (indeed, these three chapters should be read alongside one another). Marjorie E. Plummer and B. Ann Tlusty's chapter, 'Catholic–Protestant Coexistence', considers Augsburg's distinctive pattern of religious change and an unusual degree of tolerance through a welcome discussion of lived experience, offering an engaging picture of how this bi-confessional city worked in practice. Sabine Ullmann's 'Jews as Ethnic and Religious Minorities' offers an important reminder of the limits to the city's relative religious tolerance: Jews were expelled in the fifteenth century and not readmitted to the city until the early eighteenth.

Part three also includes four chapters on Augsburg's social structures. Mark Häberlein and Reinhold Reith's chapter on 'Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility' provides an overview of the city's tax structure, its increasingly diverse guilds and economic specialization, and its structures of poor relief. These are all quite typical stories for western European cities of this period, so it would have been interesting to see the detailed discussion of Augsburg's people and their fortunes contextualized in terms of its neighbours and competitors. Margaret Lewis's chapter on women, family, and sexuality makes the point that Augsburg's women experienced the same tribulations as most others in the Holy Roman Empire, but that the role of guild influence in the formative stages of the Reformation in the city gave them a particularly sharp burden to carry. B. Ann Tlusty's chapter on sociability and leisure is also framed around the influence of the Reformation on everyday life—especially in light of the fact that its support came more from the guilds than the elites. Nonetheless, there is much engaging detail on the city's inns, as well as intriguing leisure activities, such as sleigh rides around the squares. Finally, Andreas Flurschütz da Cruz addresses what has been sitting in the background of all the issues discussed so far during the seventeenth century: the experience of war. Rather than simply recounting the city's brushes with the Thirty Years War, this chapter provides an engaging cultural consideration of the city-dwellers' experiences.

The final section, 'Communication, Cultural and Intellectual Life', encompasses a broad range of arts and culture, beginning with print and the book trade. Regina Dauser's opening chapter on the dissemination of news connects Augsburg's centrality in financial networks to its centrality in news networks, first in manuscript and then print. Print then provides the focus for Hans-Jörg Künast's chapter on book production, which explores Augsburg's prominent role in the German print trade and its uniqueness in producing more vernacular than Latin texts, which is explained by the absence of a university. Wolfgang E. J. Weber's chapter on learned culture goes on to show that this absence of a university, however, did not prevent the emergence of vigorous humanist and intellectual networks—notably featuring an early embrace of the city's Roman origins and the natural sciences.

Victoria Bartels and Katherine Bond's fascinating (and richly illustrated) chapter on dress and material culture explores Augsburg as a city with a particularly rich clothing culture, and one possessed of uniquely abundant sources for fashion, including the illustrated manuscripts of Matthäus and Veit Konrad Schwarz. Their compelling analysis considers clothing as a key means of constructing status, identity, and gender in light of the city's complex social and confessional structures. Andrew Morrall's chapter on the arts—encompassing painting, printmaking, sculpture, and luxury trades such as goldsmithing—also illustrates Augsburg's distinctive richness, which resulted from the convergence of German and Italian influences. Alexander J. Fisher's analysis of music in the city also emphasizes the significance of this conjunction of Italianate and Germanic influences, along with the patronage of the Fuggers and their associates. Dietrich Erben's chapter on architecture explores a combination of influences in terms of 'competitive patronage', including the intriguing example of humanist mayor Marcus Welser's 1583 garden house, designed to exhibit Roman antiquities. The chapter also includes rich analysis of architectural features of the streetscape which greatly adds to the sense of the city that the early chapter on topography began to create; the two should certainly be read together.

There is no doubt that this volume must stand as one of the most complete and wide-ranging surveys of any single early modern city. However a volume like this is organized, readers might inevitably feel

that the editors could have done things a little differently, and that another structure or combination of chapters might have been better. It does seem, however, that the exhaustive structure of this volume actually creates some gaps through its segmentation, and some of the most interesting interpretative threads are left for the readers to assemble themselves. Surveying the whole volume, it becomes obvious just how indivisible the questions of religion and politics were in Augsburg (and how they influenced everything else), and it is tempting to think that it would have been both richer and clearer to weave the stories of Reformation and political change together into a collaboratively authored chapter. These areas of missed conjunction between chapters seem all the harder to follow in the absence of an introduction to provide an overall frame through which to interpret them, in addition to the absence of a map to navigate the places discussed in them. Context and comparison are strong features of some chapters, but are sparse in others, suggesting the question of quite whom this volume is intended to serve? The choice to publish in English rather than German marks it out as intended to reach a broader audience, many of whom might seek to employ it as a comparison in work on other cities; yet the reader who is less familiar with the region might sometimes be left lacking the contextualization required to really place the huge depth of detail offered. Regardless of any criticisms, however, the volume that Tlusty and Häberlein have put together is a supremely impressive achievement, and it will undoubtedly succeed in bringing the intriguing history of Augsburg to a wider audience for a long time to come.

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LUCA SCHOLZ, *Borders and Freedom of Movement in the Holy Roman Empire*, Studies in German History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), xii + 266 pp. ISBN 978 0 19 884567 6. £60.00

This study combines an examination of practices of safe conduct during the early modern period with wide-ranging reflections on mobility in general at the time. In return for a fee, holders of the right of escort (*Geleitrecht*) would provide armed guards, either mounted or on foot, for travellers within a particular territory or over a specific part of their route in order to protect them or—as in the case of noble travellers—to emphasize their 'honour'. Scholz has conducted substantial archival research into this subject, and his readers accompany him not only on early modern roads, but on waterways too. We explore the River Main between Miltenberg and Marktheidenfeld, along with the lower course of the Weser, and we learn of escort conflicts between the county of Wertheim and the prince-bishopric of Würzburg, as well as the struggle between the city of Bremen and the counts of Oldenburg over the *dominium Visurgis*. Along the way, we see that safe conduct often led to conflict between purported rights holders, and (partly as a result of these conflicts) was generally unpopular among those in need of an escort. Indeed, some travellers sought to avoid such protection and therefore went incognito or used relatively unfrequented minor roads. The rhetoric deployed by the holders of escort rights was charged with a special emphasis on security: 'protection . . . provided a powerful argument' (p. 202). In Scholz's view, this was merely a pretext; but if so, why did the rights holders go to such trouble? After all, although safe conduct came at a financial cost to those obliged to avail themselves of it, the granters of rights of escort rarely made a profit. Schulz suspects that the aristocracy 'valued safe conduct as a tool for negotiating honour' (p. 86), but his book also provides evidence to the contrary in the examples of nobles who preferred not to make a fuss of their rank so they could make easier progress, or who even slipped quietly through city gates in the early hours of the morning. In any case, *ius conducendi*—alongside other indicators, such as the exercise of judicial authority—was a marker of territorial sovereignty

Trans. by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL)

that granted legal and political authority to individual lords in the more fragmented portions of the Empire, where many small territories seemed to consist almost entirely of disputed borders.

By and large, the study sticks to its subject of safe conduct, but Scholz also casts a more general light on other aspects of early modern mobility, drawing on the rich body of literature on the topic—much of which examines local history. We see many of the tesserae that come together, mosaic-like, to form a 'history of free movement and its restriction' (p. 2), and we make acquaintance with the methods and motives—whether fiscal, economic, hygienic, or security-related—for limiting, channelling, or even promoting mobility. Yet the author speculates too casually over what outstanding experts on the Middle Ages (such as Ernst Schubert) have already demonstrated in far greater detail—that the medieval era experienced greater interregional mobility, while early modern societies were more settled overall.

Scholz's book frequently visits customs stations, which he notes were unpopular not so much for their financial cost as for the time they wasted. People objected less to the tariffs, which were often locally negotiable, and more to the various chicaneries practised at these stations, such as their highly irregular opening hours. Customs stations slowed down the flow of goods. Scholz also casts his eye over epidemics, quarantines, and *cordons sanitaires*; the condition of early modern roads; the *Kaiserliche Reichspost* and its competitors; and passports, which were by no means as crucial to everyday mobility in the early modern era as they are now, but which were issued by many different authorities and inspected on various occasions.

Elsewhere, the author repeatedly emphasizes that boundaries between states did not pose any major obstacles to early modern mobility, writing that 'up until the mid-eighteenth century, mobility was mostly controlled at checkpoints along roads and rivers and not at territorial borders' (p. 125). Does this mean that we tend 'to overestimate the importance of the countless boundary lines' (p. 8)? And were contemporaries 'confused' (p. 87) by the many disputed and overlapping borders of the era? This reviewer would not go quite as far as that. There was one central issue of the early modern period that did require clear categorization: that of confession. For this reason alone, travellers always knew exactly which polities they happened

to be passing through, and it is extremely rare to find localities incorrectly ascribed to territories in travel diaries (which Scholz has not evaluated here). Likewise, the legal literature examining borderlines is plentiful. And incidentally, even disputes over safe conduct often took the form of border conflicts, since lords needed to reach agreement over where the escorts accompanying their more-or-less noble charges would hand over to those of a neighbouring ruler. In short, we must confine ourselves to the conclusion—which Scholz himself presumably would not oppose—that borderlines were in fact reasonably important to everyday mobility in the early modern era. This too could be demonstrated by travel diaries, whose authors almost always assigned the locations they visited to the correct polity—thereby implying precise knowledge of territorial boundaries—but rarely stated the importance of borders in explicit terms.

Because 'the enclosure of movement can be seen as a key element of state-building' (p. 230), Scholz's wide-ranging study even seeks to correct 'anachronistic narratives on the history of state formation' (p. 5). 'Political orders can be understood as regimes of movement' (p. 11), he writes. This premise may be convincing in the mobile modern era (or what is currently left of it), but what specific results do Scholz's investigations produce? For one thing, he repeatedly floats the idea that the progressive monopolization of lawful mobility went hand in hand with the gradual establishment of a state monopoly over the use of force and the administration of justice. This implies an assumption of progress—an upwards trend. But do the many case studies in this book offer sufficient evidence for this? Scholz himself observes that 'The period witnessed manifold attempts by authorities to monopolize the legitimate means of movement, but this was an open-ended process that yielded different results in different settings' (p. 10), which is perhaps more suggestive of haphazard fumbling. 'There is no one linear direction in which the politics of mobility developed over the three early modern centuries' (p. 14). Customs tariffs, the value of passports, the inaccessibility of 'forbidden roads'—all these things were constantly renegotiated at the local level. This is in line with our current understanding of early modern statehood, whereby even 'absolutist' states relied on consensus and co-operation, were inefficient and fairly corrupt, and

failed to punish their crooks or maintain their roads. The author's observations on mobility in Japan, south-west Asia, and the Ottoman Empire are rather cursory, but nonetheless offer a contribution to the debate over whether Germany represented a special case: 'Polycentric, fragmented, and multilayered political orders were not an anomalous exception in the early modern world' (p. 37).

Now is of course an apposite time to place mobility regimes at the centre of an analysis of state formation, and Scholz is happy to draw parallels with the early twenty-first century. Future generations of historians will judge the durability of such comparisons; for the time being, however, we might question Scholz's decision to argue that the exact halfway point of the eighteenth century represented a decisive, all-encompassing watershed, instead of understandably admitting that he had to focus on a particular period and therefore could not look beyond it in any detail. The argument is not entirely convincing, since travel reports from the late Enlightenment inform us that roads were still in an atrocious state as late as 1770 or 1790. Likewise, passports did not acquire their paramount importance for mobility until the nineteenth century; the Franco-Spanish border only became a precisely defined and marked boundary line in the wake of the Treaty of Bayonne in 1868; and rights of escort lost their status as a primary guarantor of security during the establishment of the *Landfrieden* peace mechanism in the sixteenth century. That said, the author himself points out that the Dukes of Saxe-Weimar continued to claim the right of escort until 1831 (p. 134).

Scholz guides us through all manner of territories and local histories, and inevitably, given his broad scope, he lapses into inaccuracy at times. His chapter on 'The Old Reich', which draws largely on scholarship from the English-speaking world, is not exactly a reliable source of information on the political system of the Holy Roman Empire. If Scholz wishes to explain how relations between the Kaiser and the Imperial Estates were structured, he needs to include by far the most detailed text on this subject: the electoral capitulation (p. 28). Nor would it have hurt to include article IX.2 of the IPO (the *Instrumentum pacis Osnabrugense* of 1648, which ended the war between the Empire and Sweden), since this laid down rules governing mobility under Imperial law. Similarly, the role played by the more

active Imperial Circles in promoting central European mobility goes unrecognized. Why the lesser polities of the Empire 'owed [their] continued existence . . . to the Westphalian Treaties' (p. 52) also remains obscure, since it is unclear who sought to abolish them before 1648. Scholz repeatedly points out the importance of passports to the work of diplomats, but is evidently unaware that this was already a highly political issue prior to the Peace of Westphalia, as the peace congress in Cologne had (at least officially) been toiling in vain over the 'passport question' since 1636. The author seeks to set out the theoretical debate over interterritorial mobility, but his index omits the names of almost all the leading thinkers on international law—from Gentili and Textor to van Bynkershoeck, Vattel, Wolff, and Moser—as well as those of the most prominent German cameralists of the day.

Scholz is even at pains to trace troop movements, being interested in the practicalities of such manoeuvres (and earnestly informing us that soldiers sometimes ravaged the fields and readily engaged in looting; p. 71). However, though he also seeks to account for the theoretical discourses surrounding the topic, he fails to mention the many contemporary controversies on the subject that drew on political and military science, or the many treatises on the rights and obligations of neutrality. Given the countless wars of the early modern era, troop movements were the subject of intense dispute. Half a page (pp. 216–17) is not enough to provide an overview of the thorny debate over the lawfulness of troop transfers, and the description offered by Scholz is inadequate. There was nothing resembling a 'broad scholarly consensus' over the issue, and he also overlooks the bitterly disputed criterion of the justness (*iustitia*) of officially requested troop movements.

Scholz draws out many highlights and comparisons with adjacent topics, giving his book an almost pointillist effect, and as a result, his attempts to summarize his findings fall short: 'Early modern politics of mobility combined fluidity and friction, yielding widely different results for different social, corporative, religious, or economic groups at different times and in different places. Some roads were closed only at specific times. Letters of passage had to be acquired by some travellers, but not by others. Travelling persons of rank had to deal with bothersome symbolic practices and formalities, while many

peasants could move without bother. Whereas vagrants were forced into clandestinity, carters could move quite freely as long as they paid the required dues' (pp. 231–2.) Consider also the closing sentence: 'The ways in which societies channel mobility can be simultaneously promotive and restrictive, socially exclusionary, highly contingent, spatially dispersed, and morally ambiguous' (p. 234). Not all of the multifarious lines of investigation in this study offer profound insights, but many of them point to avenues for further research. Not everything has been thought through in detail, but much of it is stimulating in the best sense of the word. In any case, the book makes for an entertaining read.

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FRANZISKA HILFIKER, *Sea Spots: Perzeption und Repräsentation maritimer Räume im Kontext englischer und niederländischer Explorationen um 1600* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2019), 245 pp. ISBN 978 3 412 15171 3. €39.00

Based on doctoral research conducted at the University of Basel, this interesting study looks at Dutch and English maritime voyages between 1570 and 1620, an era which saw the first circumnavigations of the globe. Following recent trends in historiography, it seeks to direct closer attention at the oceans as an arena of sense-making and a culturally constructed space in their own right, rather than a space solely to be traversed in order to reach the shores beyond it. The study is inspired by theoretical work ranging from the oceanic turn and the spatial turn to New Historicism and New Criticism and quotes literature from various disciplines, including history, geography, and literary criticism. It relies mainly on printed (and a few manuscript) sources such as travel accounts, compilations, log-books, engravings, sea charts, and navigational treatises. Some of these, like the de Bry family's famous and richly illustrated collections of voyage accounts, published in twenty-five parts during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, are already well researched. Others, like Thomas Ellis's haunting descriptions and striking images of icebergs (1578) or Richard Hakluyt's pamphlet on the Strait of Magellan (1580), are less familiar. To this rich and diverse corpus, Hilfiker applies the method of close reading.

Central to the study is the concept of 'sea spots', which the author characterizes as 'maritime places . . . that, in the context of European expansion and colonial competition during the period under investigation, attained particular significance in being intensely sought after, navigated, experienced, and registered in various media, and thus became spaces of special meaning' (p. 36, translation by Sünne Juterczenka) The sea as a whole is conceptualized as a mosaic of individual 'sea spots', interconnected like a web, but each with distinct qualities that mark them out as desirable destinations and points of interest to European explorers.

The voyages at the centre of the study were led by navigators such as Martin Frobisher, John Davis, Willem Schouten, and Willem

Barents. New to the exploring scene and in competition with each other, the Dutch and the English bypassed routes controlled by the Iberian powers, challenging Spanish and Portuguese dominance and monopolies to the south and west by trying to establish alternative spheres of influence, especially in the Pacific and in the Arctic north. Pathfinding and reconnaissance in the Arctic Ocean, although marred by the harsh climate and difficult navigation amongst icebergs and drift ice, thus seemed to promise riches and kudos at a time when the Dutch and British strove to match and even surpass Iberian maritime prowess.

After a rather elaborate first part summarizing the state of research, contextualizing the voyages, and explaining her methodology, Franziska Hilfiker offers many fascinating insights in chapters four to six, which together form the most substantial part of the book. These chapters directly address maritime history's recently highlighted connections with research fields such as the history of cultural contacts and colonization. Hilfiker carries out a dense analysis of various encounters between explorers, maritime places, and coast and island-dwelling peoples. Closely following the sources, she identifies island coasts, maritime straits, and frozen Arctic seas as 'sea spots' especially pertinent to the experiences, observations, representations, and interpretations she seeks to reconstruct.

Representations of the sea, as Hilfiker shows in a chapter about the explorers' landfalls, were crucial means of articulating and interpreting cultural difference. In coastal areas and shallow waters, indigenous islanders often moved much more nimbly than European explorers who, by contrast, sought to avoid direct contact with water and considered entering it dangerous and inconvenient. Many island cultures, like those in the South Pacific, were intimately connected with the sea, and islanders comfortably inhabited coastal spaces. This astonished European observers, who discussed these agile swimmers at length and cast them as strange, amphibious creatures. Europeans also read the islanders' elaborate boat designs as indicating various degrees of 'savageness'; in other words, they constructed cultural hierarchies in their observations of coastal life.

In another chapter, the book makes a compelling argument that—just like islands, which have been widely acknowledged as

trans-oceanic stepping stones of the early modern period—straits and maritime passageways were relational spaces that became pivotal to the increasingly global thinking of European maritime powers. After all, such waterways were crucial to linking far-flung parts of the world (not least the oceans themselves) and to setting up commercial routes. Representations of the Strait of Magellan and of the much sought-after North-West Passage, according to Hilfiker, are especially revealing of this extending geopolitical horizon and of rivalries between the two newly risen and ambitious maritime powers, the Netherlands and England. They illustrate, moreover, that straits and passageways were rarely discussed in isolation, but were regarded as constituting a global system of interconnecting and intersecting paths.

The study furthermore offers a refreshing perspective on early modern interest in the Arctic regions, which the English dubbed 'Meta Incognita'. This interest has not typically been the focus of research on European expansion and colonization prior to the nineteenth century. While there is ample research on subsequent explorers such as Franklin, Scott, and Amundsen and their spectacular races to the North and South Poles, early modern attempts to enter the Arctic regions may have been underestimated as antecedents to those media events of the modern era. Hilfiker, meanwhile, is able to show how even the unsuccessful and unprofitable endeavour to establish a sphere of influence in the north that could rival the Iberian overseas possessions helped shape European imaginations. Devastating failure and prolonged suffering, as experienced during the exploration of the Arctic seas and indelibly 'inscribed' on the bodies, ships, and minds of the explorers, were regarded as essential aspects of pathfinding. They were even interpreted positively as signs of superiority over other exploring nations. The failure to master the hostile Artic environment was far from inconsequential. On the contrary, Hilfiker demonstrates that it left strong impressions on those who strove for more global influence, and that failure changed the ways in which the northern seas were perceived in Europe.

Hilfiker's observation that failure had an important role to play in the quest for global dominance raises the question of how acknowledgements of failure would later inform new initiatives to

enter the Arctic regions or find a route linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. So, for example, the eighteenth-century voyages of James Cook disproved the existence of both a navigable North-West Passage and the alleged vast southern continent of *Terra Australis Incognita*, whose existence had been posited by the ancient geographer Claudius Ptolemy and which was thought to border the Indian Ocean and counterbalance the continents of the northern hemisphere. Although Cook did explore and chart the coastline of the smaller southern continent of Australia, which had been previously discovered by the Dutch and was subsequently colonized by the British, his discoveries by and large disappointed hopes of compensating for the British loss of global influence after the American Revolution. Yet Cook's voyages were and still are considered the apex of exploratory achievement. It seems that shrewdly casting failure as success, as Dutch and English explorers did during the early phase of European exploration, may have contributed to a more general epistemological shift. After all, an appreciation for the negative results of exploration and the non-existence of much anticipated and hoped-for discoveries would later become crucial to key Enlightenment concepts like that of progress. These and other questions are outside the purview of Hilfiker's study, but they point to promising routes for further investigation.

The study's most impressive achievement, however, lies in showing how traces of early modern perceptions and interpretations of the sea can be detected in materials that have long been characterized as far removed from the 'actual' encounters and experiences of explorers and navigators and ridden with all sorts of distortions and inaccuracies. Hilfiker succeeds in showing how such perceptions and interpretations were processed and, through their circulation in texts and images, made accessible to a wider audience—not just in the Netherlands and in England, but also in the German territories through the de Bry family's publishing venture (for example). Engaging and enjoyable to read, *Sea Spots* certainly deserves interest from scholars outside history departments, and even from a wider public audience. Hilfiker does at times try the patience of readers not used to the soaring theoretical heights and abstract vocabulary of post-structuralism and constructivism. On the whole, however, this does not diminish the value of an original and well-written contribution to maritime

history: a thriving, rapidly evolving, and—in an age of climate crisis and intensified rivalries over newly accessible natural resources and trade routes—highly topical field of research.

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GRAHAM JEFCOATE, *An Ocean of Literature: John Henry Bohte and the Anglo-German Book Trade in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2020), xxxii + 540 pp. ISBN 978 3 487 15840 2 (paperback). €58.00

The British book historian Graham Jefcoate, a leading expert on the history of both the German and British book trades, fills an important gap in the research in his latest book. Using the example of the Bremen-based bookseller John Henry Bohte (1784–1824), he examines German–English trade relations in the two book markets in the early nineteenth century. Jefcoate's work is a continuation of his equally opulent study on German printers and booksellers in London between 1680 and 1811.[1] Little is known about the actors, structures, and conditions of the foreign book trade in both countries, about transnational transactions, and especially about the turbulent years following the Napoleonic Wars.[2] Over 500 pages, and relying strictly on source materials, Jefcoate has now traced the history of a hitherto completely unknown individual in the history of the German book trade, and has thus been able to make exemplary statements about the strategies, actions, and business areas of trade relations.

Taking Bohte's biography as a starting point, Jefcoate examines his bookselling and publishing activities against the background of the development of the bookseller profession and the history of the book trade. The study draws on extensive printed and unprinted source materials from libraries and archives in the UK, Germany, France, and even Australia and the USA. These include printed stock catalogues, correspondences, and order lists. As a young bookseller aged just 20, Bohte was in contact with Johann Friedrich Cotta in Stuttgart, Georg

[1] Graham Jefcoate, *Deutsche Drucker und Buchhändler in London 1680–1811: Strukturen und Bedeutung des deutschen Anteils am englischen Buchhandel* (Berlin, 2015). See the review by Michael Schaich in *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 39/2 (2017), 73–9.

[2] The foreign branches of German publishers have become the main focus of attention, while the retail book trade has been largely ignored. See the overview by Monika Estermann, 'Beziehungen zum Ausland', in Georg Jäger (ed.), *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, vol. i: *Das Kaiserreich 1871–1918*, pt. 3 (Berlin, 2010), 470–517.

Joachim Göschen, August Wilhelm Schlegel, Carl Christian Philipp Tauchnitz, and many others.

Bohte came to London in 1811 at the latest, where he opened his book import and export business at 3 York Street, Covent Garden, in 1813. At first, he specialized in importing German books and German editions of the Greek and Roman classics. At the request of 'many friends of German literature' (p. 115), he soon affiliated his bookshop with the 'Deutsche Lesebibliothek' (the German Circulating Library), which also stocked the most important German periodicals, such as the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, and other journals. Eventually, Bohte also became active as a publisher and prepared, for example, an edition of the famous Faust illustrations by Moritz Retzsch. From 1814 onwards, Bohte regularly attended the Leipzig Book Fair, where none other than the former publisher of Goethe and Schiller, Georg Joachim Göschen, became his commission agent, as did Leipzig's major publisher Steinacker & Wagner. However, Bohte was unable to attend the fair in 1817, which can now be seen as a stroke of luck from a book trade historical perspective as his correspondence with Göschen is particularly extensive in that year, providing information on book orders, offers, payment processing, and logistics. Göschen also supplied Bohte with antiquarian books, including some incunabula (p. 195). In 1822, Bohte even bought a Gutenberg Bible for the Duke of Sussex at an auction.

From 1820 onwards, Bohte was not only firmly established on the English book market, but also had excellent connections with the German book trade. He was, for example, in close contact with the director of the newly founded Bonn University Library (1818) and professor of philology and archaeology, Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker, and also supplied English literature. Jefcoate is able to dedicate a source-saturated chapter to this business relationship, as the correspondence between Bohte and Welcker is preserved in the Bonn University and State Library. On multiple occasions, Welcker ordered several hundred copies of English works at short intervals and took out subscriptions to English academic journals. Bohte also provided Welcker with information on interesting new publications. This resulted in a lively and close exchange over a period of several years.

Bohte's professional success led to the award of a Royal Warrant as 'Foreign Bookseller to His Majesty the King' in early 1820.

After examining Bohte's professional network, which included European professional colleagues, librarians, and writers, Jefcoate devotes himself to Bohte's publishing profile and range of products. To this end, Jefcoate has meticulously analysed Bohte's surviving printed catalogues between 1814 and 1826 (after his death). In summary, his programme included literature used in classical humanistic education, and offered a cross-section of German high culture.

After his death, his widow Sarah Bohte took over the company for a short time; however, in June 1826, she initiated the closure of the business for health reasons and took the last orders. In November 1826, the first part of Bohte's stock was auctioned off, but Andreas Stäheli, who had opened a 'Deutsche Buchhandlung' (German bookstore) in London at the end of 1826, had apparently already acquired up to two-thirds of the remaining books (p. 431). However, he sold his company to his London colleagues Koller and Cahlmann only one year later. The remainder of Bohte's stock was auctioned off in 1831.

Finally, Jefcoate traces the history of British–German book market relations beyond the death of Bohte and examines the long nineteenth century (1789–1914) in the same manner in which he profiles Bohte's predecessors in the London German book trade from 1749 at the beginning of his analysis. This approach is extremely useful because it allows us to place Bohte's merits in a larger context. Bohte was followed by the German booksellers Black and Co., Bohn and Son, Boosey and Sons, Koller and Cahlmann and Treuttel, and Würtz and Co.—some of which existed at the same time as Bohte's company.

Jefcoate (p. 458) lists Bohte's activities as importing German books and Continental editions of the Greek and Roman classics into England; exporting English books to Germany; establishing contacts with a wider European network of booksellers; selling printed material from his shop in Covent Garden to both personal and institutional customers; acquiring a Royal Warrant as Foreign Bookseller to the King; developing and maintaining a retail presence in Leipzig in collaboration with his agents there; supplying Bonn University Library and other German institutions; issuing specialist catalogues and lists of recent publications; running a circulating library in London

specializing in German books; developing a publishing programme focused on selected works of English literature, German literature, bibliography, and natural history; acquiring Cooke's Editions and other stereotype pocket editions of the classics and marketing them in both Britain and Germany; and establishing connections in literary and scholarly circles in both countries. As Jefcoate himself states, 'Few of these activities were unique to Bohte, and parallels for most of them can be found among his predecessors, contemporaries and successors. What may make Bohte unique is the sheer range of his activities during the eleven years of his business life as well as the scope of his personal ambition' (p. 458). Thanks to his detailed research, Graham Jefcoate's exemplary study succeeds in increasing our knowledge of the foreign book trade and transnational trade relations and in developing new research questions from these findings.

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WOLFGANG KÖNIG, *Sir William Siemens, 1823–1883: Eine Biografie* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2020), 270 pp. ISBN 978 3 406 75133 2 (hardback). €29.95

There are many reasons why a new and substantial biography of William Siemens is welcome. As Wolfgang König persuasively reminds us, Siemens was a highly significant figure in Victorian Britain in terms of the history of manufacturing and technology. He was a prominent player particularly in the development of steam engines, steel production, and, most spectacularly, telegraphy. Siemens was also, however, hyperactively and obsessively committed to experimentation in connection with mechanical enhancements and, as König makes clear, far more widely. He became a ubiquitous and leading figure across the many scientific and cultural societies that lay at the heart of Victorian (and global) endeavour, was extensively networked, and was particularly important in the professionalization and co-ordination of the British engineering sector. William Siemens was the main representative in Britain of the astoundingly successful Siemens *Geschwisterbund*, a network of siblings based and operating across Europe (and, as König hints, perhaps to an extent consciously inspired by and constructed on the model established by the Rothschilds). Taken altogether, Siemens is a fascinating and important figure for anyone interested in the history of technology, corporate history, and Anglo-German economic and cultural relations. On his death, a window was dedicated to him in Westminster Abbey, paid for by subscriptions organized by many engineering societies, and symbolizing the high esteem felt for him. As König argues persuasively, historical awareness of him has, however, become unfocused over time, given his cross-cultural context and uncertainty about his position within the wider family network.

This biography constitutes a detailed and direct reassessment of William Siemens's life and work. It makes use of a wealth of archival materials across the UK and Germany—most prominently those of the Siemens Historical Institute in Berlin, as well as copious printed primary sources. Many of these are by William himself—the biography contains a valuable comprehensive bibliography of William Siemens's publications—or by other members of his family or vast network of

acquaintances. Given the subject focus, the research has necessarily ranged across biographical and corporate history, the political histories of Britain and Germany, and cultural history, including the history of German immigration to Britain. It has also required detailed study of specific areas of technical development. The volume contains many fascinating and thought-provoking images, including of family, context, and inventions.

Born in 1823 in Mecklenburg-Strelitz near Lübeck, Wilhelm Siemens was the seventh of fourteen children (four of whom died early). After his father's death, Wilhelm came under the guidance of his older brother Werner, the leading player in the family. While Werner's studies and work focused increasingly on science and electronics, Wilhelm was drawn to the practical applications of scientific research, particularly to industry. After studying at Göttingen and completing an apprenticeship in Magdeburg, Wilhelm travelled to the UK for the first time in 1843 in order to arrange and sell the patents for Werner's inventions in the field of galvanic metal production. After further visits, he based himself there from 1847, taking British nationality in 1858. As König shows, William—as he then became known—started out in a somewhat subordinate role in the family firm as a salesman and proponent of technology developed by his brother Werner. This included the financially successful galvanic patent, as well as the less successful steam engine regulator and printing process. In 1847 Werner Siemens joined with Johann Georg Halske in the production of telegraphic equipment. William worked to promote the Siemens & Halske company's activities in Britain too. He was, however, increasingly making his own way.

Striking narrative dynamics within König's volume are William Siemens's astoundingly rapid and successful integration into British economic, scientific, and cultural life and his growing independence from Werner and the family firm. König traces the complex relationship between these aspects, which were interwoven—sometimes mutually supporting, but often in tension with each other. In addition to working for Werner, William worked independently for numerous British companies as an engineering adviser. He became increasingly interested in pursuing, promoting, selling, and applying the results of his own experiments—again with variable success. An area in which

William would take the leading role was the laying of telegraph cables beneath the sea, a technology first successfully applied with the cable laid between Britain and France in 1850–1. William directed the Siemens brothers' collaboration with British engineering companies such as R. S. Newall & Co. and would become independently involved in the sector as technical adviser, innovator, and entrepreneur. König provides dramatic illustration of the sometimes gargantuan scale of William Siemens's activities in this area, with his leading role in cables laid across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, his designs for and application of enhanced (and again monstrous) cable-laying equipment, and the enormous ship *Faraday*, specially commissioned by William Siemens from Mitchell & Co. in Newcastle and visited by Queen Victoria and the German Empress Augusta in 1876.

As the latter detail suggests, within three decades William had also gone from being a relatively unknown Germanic salesman to one of the most prominent, visible, and well-connected figures on the British national stage. König provides a wealth of detail and contemporary observation regarding William's personal characteristics. These played a significant part in his ability to form long-lasting and intimate friendships and technical and commercial collaborations. For those interested in the history of networks, König's account provides a wealth of information. William's entry to and relations with numerous leading societies are described, including the Royal Society, the British Association, the (Royal) Society of Arts, the Institutions of Civil Engineers, of Mechanical Engineers, of Electrical Engineers, of Naval Architects, and so on. With astounding and sustained energy, he devoted himself to giving presentations, building up connections, founding new establishments, and occupying leadership roles.

Not insignificantly in the context of his career, William married a cultured Scottish woman—Anne Gordon—who supported her husband domestically, through personal engagement, and by active participation. He also set up constructive and useful accommodation, with a town residence in Kensington enabling ease of access to the multitude of contacts and societies in London and a country seat at Sherwood in Kent, where he could conduct his experiments and receive guests. As König suggests, an invitation to stay at the latter could be an effective way of supporting and deepening friendships. Among William and

Anne's guests would be the Emperor of Brazil, the Crown Prince of Germany (future Emperor William II), and countless industrialists, musicians, and artists. König also describes how Sherwood became a showcase for electric power, with its own electricity generator powering water pumps, sawmills, greenhouses, and more.

König provides a convincing understanding of the evolution of the Siemens family network. Werner shaped William's early career and work. While Werner would remain the centre point for the family business, however, William would become in many ways an equal player, complementing Werner's science-based approach with his more technical, applied, and commercially minded activities. König also points out that the opportunities for impact were in some respects more conducive in Britain than in the German states. In addition to Werner and William, brother Carl looked after business affairs in Russia. Carl and his brother Friedrich also intermittently assisted William in Britain. The *Geschwisterbund* is revealed as not unproblematic. Werner and William were often not in agreement. Their intensive correspondence, however, reveals that they sustained throughout a positive, critical, and transparent discourse that possibly lay at the heart of the Siemens family's success. William's relationship with Carl and Friedrich, meanwhile, was more strained, with differences over commercial approach, attitudes to risk, and personality.

This volume contains excellent discussions in many respects. While necessarily focusing on the brothers, the account is gender-conscious in its description of the limitations of society life and the role of women in sustaining and enabling industrial and social interaction. There is an interesting and welcome acknowledgement of antisemitism among the brothers, which is depicted as to some extent typical, but also shown to vary in strength between them and, in William's case at least, is partly redeemed by a late rejection of such prejudices. There is a focused exploration of the role of intellectual and professional societies in Victorian life, and of William's significance generally in this respect as well as with reference to the professionalization of engineering, telegraphy, and electronic technology.

König provides highly useful information regarding William's—and his brothers'—involvement in German politics as their homeland passed through revolution, war, and unification. There are surprises,

such as the actual participation of the Siemens brothers on the ground in the First Schleswig War of 1848–9. William's connections with German emigrants in the UK are explored in some depth, focusing particularly on his close relations with J. G. Kinkel, Gottfried Semper, Richard Wagner, and Lothar Bucher. This account simply corroborates and underpins the allocation of William Siemens to the liberal camp. Though perhaps less enthusiastically than Kinkel and Bucher, William Siemens accommodated himself to German unification and shared patriotic, anti-French views after 1871.

König takes great care to explain and illustrate the scientific and technical findings at the heart of the Siemens brothers' work. As an exercise in publicly accessible science, this volume is excellent. As König shows, William Siemens's experiments, writing, and lectures were extensive and far-reaching. For this reader, the volume helps place William Siemens alongside the many other notable polymath Germans present in Victorian Britain, including figures such as Prince Albert, Baron von Bunsen, and Friedrich Max Müller. König's volume—presumably picking up on current trends—pays special attention to William Siemens's work in relation to environmentalism. This included, for example, innovations to reduce inefficiencies in coal burning, to support electricity as a more environmentally friendly mode of power and transport, and to capture hydro-electric power. But it is interesting that König devotes a chapter to William Siemens's work and publication on the power and life of the sun. Here, the reviewer is reminded of Max Müller's contemporaneous reflections on solar mythology.

The structure of the volume produces no little amount of repetition. It is highly irritating that no systematic distinction is made between 'England' and 'Britain', not least given, for example, the significance of Scottish scientific and cultural life with which William Siemens is linked. The treatment of societies is methodical and revealing, but also somewhat plodding. Discussion of the Siemens brothers' position on German politics is valuable, but it is also superficial and requires far more investigation. Werner's role as an MP for the *Fortschrittspartei* between 1862 and 1866 is mentioned. So, too, is the presence of Werner, William, and his wife Anne at the great meeting of German liberals in Coburg in 1860. These latter points, however,

might be placed under the heading of the reviewer's wish list. Taken as a whole, this is a fascinating and valuable addition to knowledge regarding the Siemens family, industrial history, and the history of Anglo-German relations. It provides much useful information for those working across a wide range of associated areas.

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LAURA PACHTNER, *Lady Charlotte Blennerhassett (1843–1917): Katholisch, kosmopolitisch, kämpferisch*, Schriftenreihe der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 104 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 720 pp. ISBN 978 3 525 31097 7. €90.00

In the early twenty-first century, Lady Charlotte Blennerhassett is known only to a few. Experts in reform Catholicism may have come across her correspondence with church historian Ignaz Döllinger, while historians of French–German relations will possibly know about her comprehensive biography of Madame de Staël. But in other scholarly circles—not to mention the broader public—her name is largely forgotten. However, when she died in Munich during the First World War, this German who took British nationality was not only mourned as the 'last European', but also well-known as a highly regarded writer of European cultural and political history. German historian Laura Pachtner has now published a comprehensive, diligently researched biography of this remarkable woman.

Charlotte Blennerhassett, born to a Bavarian noble family in 1843, is, indeed, a fascinating personality. Her life and career elucidate both the limited scope for personal development faced by noble young women in mid nineteenth-century Germany, and the agency and influence an outstanding personage like her could achieve even in this traditional milieu. Countess Charlotte von Leyden—from 1870 onwards Lady Blennerhassett—was a well-informed and strong-minded correspondent with links to Catholic intellectuals all over Europe. She published numerous historical books and essays that were highly acclaimed in her time. The mother of three lived a transnational life between London, Paris, and Munich. For many years, she was at the centre of the fierce conflicts between 'liberal' and 'ultramontane' (papist) factions of Catholicism over the position of the Church in rapidly modernizing societies. As a committed advocate of freedom of science and the separation of state and church, Blennerhassett always tried to mediate between the parties and warned against irreconcilable positions. After the conservatives prevailed at the First Vatican Council (1869–70), she was forced to hold back criticism that risked the schism of the Church.

Charlotte von Leyden's family of origin exemplified the transformations of the German nobility in a rapidly industrializing society in several respects. Charlotte's mother Franziska von Leyden, a devout Catholic from the von Weling family (previously a Jewish bankers' family that went by the surname Seligmann until their conversion and ennoblement), committed Charlotte to a traditional female upbringing which included an extended stay at a conservative Catholic boarding school frequented by the offspring of noble families. A ban on any scientific learning after her return home was meant to prevent her from spoiling her marriage opportunities. While the family strove to find a suitable husband for Charlotte (which proved difficult due to a rather small dowry), the intellectually active young woman eager for education was denied even the smallest personal freedoms. Only her acquaintance with Ignaz Döllinger, provost of the cathedral in Munich and an acclaimed liberal theologian more than forty years her senior, allowed her some intellectual and personal space. Döllinger provided her with scholarly books and, as his pupil, she was soon excellently informed about the controversies over the modernization of the church. When her family finally allowed her to travel to Paris and Rome, she was therefore able to send Döllinger detailed reports on the public and private opinions of the different parties abroad. Through him, she came into contact with many liberal Catholic thinkers of her time. Among them were the British historian and essayist Lord Dalberg-Acton and the French bishop Félix Dupanloup—both critics of the dogmatization of papal infallibility who nonetheless remained in the Church after its announcement by the First Vatican Council in 1870. Döllinger, by contrast, continued his harsh public criticism and was soon excommunicated. Marrying Charlotte von Leyden to the Anglo-Irish Catholic baronet and liberal politician Sir Rowland Blennerhassett, whom his protegée had met in Rome, was one of his last acts as a priest.

Through her marriage, Charlotte Blennerhassett escaped the strict surveillance of her family. But their economic difficulties followed her. Her husband's estate in Kerry was already in debt, and with the rise of the Irish Home Rule movement, his chances of obtaining revenue from the land diminished even further. Soon, the young couple could not afford their own house in London anymore. Charlotte and the

children spent more and more time in France and Bavaria, where living costs were lower. Increasingly, Blennerhassett, who had already published her first article (a report on liberal Catholicism in France) before her marriage, made her interests and profound knowledge of European history profitable as a prolific writer of scholarly articles, essays, and books, many of them on French history. Nonetheless, she would not have been able to provide her children Arthur, Marie Carola, and Willy with an education befitting their noble status without the help of her mother and her brother Casimir.

The recognition Blennerhassett received for her scholarly work was extraordinary. Her historical works—including extensive studies of culture and politics in eighteenth and nineteenth-century France, several publications on British history (such as a series of articles on Victorian England published in 1913–14), and biographies and biographical essays on both historical figures and contemporaries—were received very positively and often reviewed in highly respected journals. While she published several biographical portraits (including of Mary Stuart, Joan of Arc, and Marie Antoinette) that could be seen as part of the literature on women worthies, she also wrote on politicians and writers like Talleyrand and Chateaubriand. In the renowned German *Historische Zeitschrift*, where reviews of works by non-academic—let alone female—authors were scarce, Blennerhassett's three-volume biography of the famous salonnière and writer of Revolutionary France, Germaine de Staël, was highly praised for 'understanding the interplay between political events, the ideologies of the time, and Madame de Staël's life and works' (p. 400; all translations by Johanna Gehmacher). In 1898, at a time when German women were still fighting for access to universities, the University of Munich awarded Blennerhassett an honorary doctorate. Her nomination for this honour was based on her 'sharp judgement and masculine force of spirit' (p. 454), while a couple of years earlier her admission to the Bavarian Academy of Sciences had failed because of her sex (p. 452). France, by contrast, thanked her for promoting cultural understanding between Germany and France by admitting her to the 'Ordre des Palmes Académiques' founded by Napoleon in 1808 (p. 456).

As a member of a transnational aristocratic family and a Catholic intellectual with correspondents all over Europe, Blennerhassett bore

witness to the First World War in the last years of her life. Although her husband had died in 1909, she refused to apply for the reinstatement of her German nationality. In 1917, Charlotte Blennerhassett passed away as an enemy alien in Germany and never had the chance to rejoin her surviving friends abroad or her children living in the UK and overseas.

The extraordinary protagonist of this comprehensive biography is worthy of discussion for several reasons. First of all, it is noticeable that the study was published by the Historical Commission of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences—a fact that might be considered a late compensation for the failure to admit Blennerhassett to this prestgious institution. The significant role played by Blennerhassett and other aristocratic Catholic women as mediators and opinion formers in the debates and transnational political conflicts over the role of church and religion in secular societies sheds new light on the cultural and intellectual history of European Catholicism. It also raises questions about the gendered character of practices of intermediation in the heavily male-dominated institutions of the Catholic Church.

Second, this biography of a mid nineteenth-century female intellectual is also fascinating from a broader gender perspective. Blennerhassett herself once noted her generational position between two eras. The early nineteenth century was still influenced by the Enlightenment and by revolutions, which had raised women's hopes of emancipation at the end of the century in many countries, while in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, growing women's movements brought forward demands for educational and political rights for women. Between these more turbulent eras, however, restrictive ideologies regarding women's 'proper place' made it extremely difficult for a woman to obtain a higher education or take a public role as an intellectual. A closer look at journals of the time nonetheless reveals many female authors who often wrote under pseudonyms. In most cases, it is not easy to find out how these women, who were excluded from formal academic education and access to archives, acquired their knowledge. Blennerhassett is a good case in point for the alternative, often rather efficient informal networking strategies many of them used. Her example is therefore constructive in analysing the gendered history of knowledge and the informal

scholarly practices of a period that still deserve far more attention. The ways in which Charlotte Blennerhassett legitimized her extraordinary career are also instructive for the analysis of later debates on women's education. Although she had fought hard for her own education against the conservative views of her mother, she was far from demanding equal education for all women. On the contrary, she based her claim to be respected as a historian solely on her exceptional talent. This argumentative strategy provides historical context for elitist concepts of female intellectuality that were to turn up again in both feminist and anti-feminist arguments at the turn of the century.

Third, Laura Pachtner's work on Blennerhassett highlights some interesting questions from the perspective of transnational biography. It illustrates the challenges of all transnational biographical projects that must take into account archives in several countries and often require reading knowledge of more than one language. In the case of a member of the European elite connected with many eminent scholars, access to archives is comparatively straightforward (leaving aside the enormous amount of material Pachtner obviously had to deal with). In other cases, however, the distribution of archival material over multiple countries can make such a project unfeasible. Apart from these methodological issues, the case of Blennerhassett also opens up new perspectives on national, transnational, and global biographies of the nineteenth century. Biographical research often focuses on biography as a specific narrative closely linked with nationalism (best exemplified in national biographical encyclopaedias that nationalize individual lives despite all their complexities). Nations are also often taken for granted, with those moving between them (such as migrants, missionaries, adventurers, and refugees) seen as the exceptions to the national norm. However, when global religious communities such as the Catholic Church or transnational elites like the European nobility become the background for a European history of the nineteenth century, national identities become less self-evident and transnational lives a more common phenomenon worthy of detailed study.

For her book, Laura Pachtner has conducted extensive archival work in several countries and has documented her findings meticulously. Presenting Blennerhassett's life over more than 700 pages, she has undoubtedly surpassed earlier, more fragmentary research on this

eminent Anglo-German female writer and historian. However, it is not easy to pin down her specific perspective on the protagonist. She formulates several questions, including about the loss of status of the nobility as a background for Blennerhassett's childhood experiences, or about how she developed her transnational networks, but it is not clear how she links her research with recent arguments from any specific research field or with a specific theoretical approach. Pachtner's reflections on biographical concepts also remain rather implicit. She introduces the concepts of micro-milieus, transnationalism, and networks in the opening section of her book. However, in the detailed narrative of Blennerhassett's life (the first half of the book) and of her work and politics (the second half of the book), it is hard to see how she used these concepts or if she came to any conclusions about their utility. Throughout the book, she remains rather reserved about her own perspectives—and even when she seems to have an opinion, she hesitates to tell us. For instance, at one point Pachtner discusses different (gendered) approaches to history writing in English and German contexts and quotes from historian Bonnie Smith's claim that (female) 'high amateurism' formed 'the intellectual avant-garde of a general historical project to reach the past' (p. 463); yet she concludes that the validity of this argument must remain a 'matter of opinion'. As a result, the overall impression of this ambitious book remains ambivalent. It provides an enormous wealth of detailed information and will therefore doubtlessly become an essential work of reference for all future researchers working on this enormously interesting historical personality. Furthermore, a careful reading of Pachtner's study will open up several new research questions, including on the intellectual history of European women of the nineteenth century, on transnational lives in aristocratic milieus, and on the gender history of Catholicism. However, this highly recommendable book would have been far easier to read if the author had avoided some redundancies and had found a bolder structure for her narrative.

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ERIK GRIMMER-SOLEM, *Learning Empire: Globalization and the German Quest for World Status, 1875–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), xiv + 654 pp. ISBN 978 1 108 48382 7. £34.99

The history of the German Empire has for some years now been viewed and interpreted anew against the background of the globalization debate at the turn of the millennium.[1] Numerous individual studies, particularly on the interdependence of the world economy, have deepened and decisively differentiated our knowledge of essential aspects of globalization, such as internationalism and monetary policy, the professionalization of financial journalism, and the global interdependence and relevance of private banks.[2]

With his book *Learning Empire*, Erik Grimmer-Solem now provides another exciting perspective which finally puts the phenomenon of globalization in the second half of the nineteenth century into the wider context of the long-dominant view of Germany's outrageous 'grab' for world power. Although the German challenge has recently been repeatedly placed in the context of global imperialism and often relativized, Grimmer-Solem now offers a new, primarily economically motivated view of the period between the 1870s and the end of the First World War.[3] His study shows that Wilhelmine world politics was an 'improvised response'—a result 'of an accretion of insights' into 'opportunities and challenges'—in the context of a global trend involving all great powers and especially pitting the young ones, such

[1] Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Geschichte der Globalisierung: Dimensionen, Prozesse, Epochen* (Munich, 2003); available in English translation as *Globalization: A Short History* (Princeton, 2009).

[2] Cornelius Torp, *Die Herausforderung der Globalisierung: Wirtschaft und Politik in Deutschland 1860–1914* (Göttingen, 2005); Guido Thiemeyer, *Internationalismus und Diplomatie: Währungspolitische Kooperation im europäischen Staatensystem 1865–1900* (Munich, 2009); Robert Radu, *Auguren des Geldes: Eine Kulturgeschichte des Finanzjournalismus in Deutschland 1850–1914* (Göttingen, 2017); Verena von Wiczlinski, *Im Zeichen der Weltwirtschaft: Das Frankfurter Privatbankhaus Gebr. Bethmann in der Zeit des deutschen Kaiserreiches 1870–1914* (Stuttgart, 2011); Niels P. Petersson, *Anarchie und Weltrecht: Das Deutsche Reich und die Institutionen der Weltwirtschaft 1890–1930* (Göttingen, 2009).

[3] Andreas Rose, 'International Relations', in Matthew Jefferies (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Imperial Germany* (Farnham, 2015), 347–66.

as the USA, Japan, and Germany, against established powers such as the UK and France (p. 19). From the author's global economic perspective, the well-known German triad of 'world power as a goal', 'world politics as a task', and 'the High Seas Fleet as the means' therefore appears much less revolutionary and singular than has so far been suggested. Rather, this quest for global power proceeded from the logical conclusions of a liberal, imperialist elite, based on the lessons it learned from global developments since the 1860s in general and the British model in particular.

Using the approach of intellectual history, the author outlines the lives and cognitive paths of six influential national economists from Gustav von Schmoller's circle, all of whom had extensive national and international networks. These are Henry Walcott Farnam, Max Sering, Ernst von Halle, Karl Helfferich, Karl Rathgen, and Hermann Schumacher. He then traces the transfer of their insights and ideas into German economic, foreign, colonial, and social policy in the decades before the First World War. The result is a multifaceted study of how Germany perceived and reacted to the global situation during the period in question. The use of personal papers and publications by German national economists and social scientists provides an exciting change of perspective and distinguishes the study from the many works that draw upon diplomatic and military documents. A similar approach has been adopted in recent studies of the press as an actor in international relations. While these and other works have highlighted Anglo-German antagonisms, Erik Grimmer-Solem's selection of sources enables him to tell a story that stands out in four ways. First, there is the history of the UK as a role model that the emerging German nation sought to emulate. Second, he explores the history of the USA (pp. 29–78) and Japan (pp. 79–106), who were also newly emerging and provided the dominant frame of reference and parameters of comparison for Germany's own position in the world. Third, Grimmer-Solem presents the history of China (pp. 107–40), the Caribbean, and South America (pp. 119–58) as the last remaining outlets for the UK to play an active role in dividing up the world and its resources. And fourth and finally, this history is linked to another narrative that has hitherto often been overlooked—that of an empire which sought its own role in the world, orienting itself more by

contemporary examples and orders than by a desire to destroy them from the outset.

In three larger sections, divided into twelve chapters, the author develops a narrative that is initially (in the section 'Absent-Minded Empire, 1875–1897') devoted to the protagonists' experiences between 1870 and 1890 in the course of numerous journeys and observations, as well as transfers of ideas and expectations. The story is specifically concerned with the intellectual experiences of Henry Walcott Farnam (pp. 38–43), an American student of Gustav von Schmoller, and with the descriptions and impressions of industrial concentration and cartel formation that Max Sering (pp. 43–56), Hermann Schumacher, and Ernst von Halle (pp. 60–6) gathered and transferred to Germany during their extended stays in the USA (pp. 70–1).

The following chapters deal with Karl Rathgen's reflections on Japan and Schumacher's on China (pp. 79–118), which pointed to Germany's increasingly dangerous involvement in East Asia, and the South American expertise of Schumacher and von Halle (pp. 119–62). In the latter region, the goal of financial imperialism was dependent on the support of the UK due to the American Monroe Doctrine.

In the second section, 'Empire Imagined, 1897–1907', the author deals with the incipient exertion of influence of his protagonists, especially on the Chancellor of the Reich Bernhard von Bülow and Secretary of State of the German Imperial Naval Office Alfred von Tirpitz, and the implementation of political measures, from the building of a High Seas Fleet to enforce German trade interests (pp. 165–213) to the Anglo-German trade rivalry (pp. 213–50), the new mercantilism, the Bülow tariff, and the construction of the Baghdad Railway (pp. 250–388).

Grimmer-Solem devotes special attention to the importance of political and economic participation to the future of states in the twentieth century, as proclaimed by none other than the British colonial minister Joseph Chamberlain on 31 March 1897. His message was clearly heard, not least by German scholars and the German public: 'the tendency of the time is to throw all power into the hands of the great Empires, and the minor kingdoms . . . seem to be destined to fall into a secondary and subordinate place' (p. 159). The extent to which Chamberlain struck a chord in Germany is demonstrated by

the well-known quotation from the young Max Weber's inaugural lecture in Freiburg two years earlier: 'We must understand that the unification of Germany was a youthful prank which the nation committed in its old age, and which it would have been better to leave undone due to its cost if it meant the end, rather than the beginning, of a German policy of world power'.[4] According to Grimmer-Solem, this position was undoubtedly a legitimate and fundamental idea for German politics at the turn of the century (p. 172).

Finally, the third section of the book, 'Empire Lost, 1908–1919', deals with the failure of the Kaiserreich to keep pace with other global players. Here, Grimmer-Solem discusses the influence of the Hamburg Colonial Institute (pp. 397–407), German colonial interests in Morocco (pp. 416–20) and the Balkans (pp. 438–46), Sering and Schumacher's travels to Russia (pp. 431–8), the Baghdad railway (pp. 482–9), the July Crisis (pp. 496–509), the 'submarine professors' (pp. 519–41), and the war, various peace scenarios, and defeat (pp. 541–600), among other topics.

Overall, Grimmer-Solem provides an exemplary combination of modern intellectual history and classical political history. The book takes advantage of, and makes valuable contributions to, a growing secondary literature about transnational entanglements, global flows of ideas, and liberal imperialism. The depth and scope are impressive. Grimmer-Solem almost always succeeds in embedding the intellectual and political aspirations of his protagonists in constantly changing situational contexts and economic cycles, as well as in his own account of the changing constellations of national politics and the competition for great power status. He examines Germany 'in the world' along many different lines, including through the examples of the USA and Japan, Germany's infamous *Weltpolitik*, the Reich's hopes of overcoming the double standards with which it was treated in the British-dominated international system, the naval arms race, economic and financial rivalries in the Caribbean, public disappointments surrounding German colonial efforts in Africa, responsibility for the outbreak of war in 1914, and, not least, the failure of the post-war Versailles settlement. In each case, Grimmer-Solem scrutinizes

[4] Max Weber, *Gesammelte politische Schriften* (Munich, 1921), 29.

particular academics' links to power with the aim of refining, and sometimes revising, conventional wisdom about German policies in the run-up to war. In this effort he succeeds, demonstrating that members of the broadly liberal German economics professoriate had a larger role in shaping German imperialism than has hitherto been appreciated. It is particularly noteworthy that the author resists the temptation of an ex post interpretation for most of the book, consistently grants his protagonists the benefit of the doubt, and does not use their judgements and recommendations for an expansive political course as direct evidence of German fantasies of omnipotence or war. Instead, he presents their experiences, perceptions, and expertise as the international state of the art of the time and treats their argumentation in the best sense of a Rankean tradition. Neither Weber nor Chamberlain thought of a European war in 1895 or 1897. For them, world power politics meant participation and protection of interests. Like most of their educated contemporaries, a conflict between European great powers would have struck them as against all reason, which they saw as having reached its historical zenith in the developed capitalism of the industrial nations. Time and again, the author stresses the enormous importance of the emerging powers—above all the USA—in the eyes of his key witnesses. At the same time, he succeeds in showing that the UK, as the dominant world power and with its course of self-assertion in the Far East, South America, and Europe, played a far greater part in the destabilization of the world before 1914 than the Kaiserreich, which was handicapped by its geopolitics, resources, restricted capacity for negotiation, limited instruments of power, and sometimes catastrophic political decisions. Germany, he makes clear, was a reactive power; however—and here Grimmer-Solem agrees with recent international historiography—it made disastrous decisions during crucial events, such as in the July Crisis of 1914 (pp. 496–509).[5]

Nevertheless, some questions remain—including whether the professors he chooses as protagonists offer a representative selection of the Empire's professorial elite. It is striking that moderate voices

[5] Nicholas Lambert, *Planning Armageddon: British Economic Warfare and the First World War* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012); Christopher M. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (New York, 2013).

and critics of the Empire such as Hans Delbrück and Lujo Brentano are largely overlooked by the study. The focus on the intellectual history of individual economists, especially during the 1870s, also overlooks the Peace of Frankfurt in 1871 as an essential and constitutive moment for Germany's role in the world economy, when Germany finally became part of the network of most favoured nations (Article XII).[6] The gold standard, like the most favoured nation principle, acted as a motor for global economic integration, helping to compensate for the disadvantages of international protectionism and making Germany the second-most closely integrated economy in the world behind Britain and just ahead of the USA.[7]

The focus on economics as a leading field of scholarly debate also automatically raises the questions of why the struggle for new resources was not known to have played a significant role in Bismarck's initial decision to acquire colonies, and how economists later justified the devastating balance sheet of German colonialism. It remains unclear where the author locates the boundary between economic expertise aimed at global economic penetration and the sphere of international relations. Grimmer-Solem rightly refers to recent studies of media and diplomacy before 1914 (p. 15). However, alongside many new findings on the interdependence of media and politics, the essential observation of these studies is that both fields followed their own rules. In this sense, Grimmer-Solem's impressive book clearly demands further research into the specific tensions between the economy and international politics as subsystems functioning according to their own rules, but nonetheless constituting integral components of an overall system of international relations.

[6] Andreas Rose, 'Otto von Bismarck und das (außen-)politische Mittel der Handels- und Schutzzollpolitik', in Ulrich von Hehl and Michael Epkenhans (eds.), *Otto von Bismarck und die Wirtschaft* (Paderborn, 2013), 77–96.
[7] Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton, 2015), 730-34.

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ROBERT GERWARTH, *November 1918: The German Revolution*, Making of the Modern World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), xxvi + 329 pp. ISBN 978 0 19 954647 3 (hardback). £20.00

Starting in the 1980s, a virtual silence reigned on the subject of the November Revolution for several decades, with the event losing its prominent position in both historical research and public memory. It seemed that the Revolution was gradually being forgotten. Yet in recent years, the trend has begun to reverse, with the major centenary commemorations in 2018–19 in particular helping to rekindle interest in the radical shifts of 1918–19. Likewise, a desire to understand the present moment and a new sense of socio-political insecurity have resulted in closer attention being paid to the revolutionary awakenings and transformations of a hundred years ago. These modern-day needs have helped breathe new life into the stagnant historiography of the November Revolution. As a result, after a long intermission, we are seeing the publication of new general surveys of the Revolution—a genre of text whose absence has long been lamented.[1]

Robert Gerwarth's *November 1918* stands out as one of the most successful such surveys. Paradoxically, its German translation was published almost two years before the English-language original.[2] A broad comparison of the two versions reveals subtle amendments, omissions, and clarifications, but otherwise there are no major differences. The English version lacks the short chapter on the collapse of the empires at the end of the First World War, and instead includes a substantial preface that sets out the author's core assumptions from the very beginning. Here, Gerwarth explains the period he has chosen to study, which extends far beyond the 'November 1918' of the title.

Trans. by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL)

[1] For a comprehensive overview of the historiography of the Revolution, see Wolfgang Niess, *Die Revolution von 1918/19 in der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung: Deutungen von der Weimarer Republik bis ins 21. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2013).

[2] Robert Gerwarth, *Die größte aller Revolutionen: November 1918 und der Aufbruch in eine neue Zeit* (Munich, 2018).

It also quickly becomes clear that he intends to paint the November Revolution in a more positive light than previous interpretations, which he sees as taking a more fundamentally pessimistic view. In so doing, he grants the Revolution a special status as 'both the first and the last revolution in a highly industrialized country worldwide prior to the peaceful revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe in 1989–90' (p. vii). In general, he makes the case for comparative perspectives, noting the importance of situating events in Germany within the broader context of the revolutionary era of 1917–23 in central and eastern Europe. He also argues that more room should be given to contemporary voices and to experiential history, which can help us to identify what options there were for the future. Finally, he convincingly suggests that the word 'revolution' itself should be detoxified, as it were, of its typical associations with totalistic fantasies of violent overthrow. Gerwarth's core focus falls quite rightly on the question of political regime change.[3] In this respect, the Revolution was successful, as in its wake, Germany adopted a democratic course for the very first time. In light of this basic fact, Gerwarth argues, it makes little sense to describe the German upheavals of 1918–19 as a 'minor revolution' (p. ix).

Gerwarth's study begins in the pivotal year of 1917, when the USA entered the First World War and the Bolsheviks successfully staged their coup in Russia. In Germany, after three years of war, there was little left of the national optimism of August 1914. Hunger strikes attested to the increasing weakness of the war-weary German Reich and highlighted a shift in the public mood that would later become obvious with the eruption of mass protests in January 1918. The systemic crisis of the monarchical order had been long in the making and gained urgency as the prospect of military defeat grew

[3] For more on this fundamental position, which I also share, see Alexander Gallus, 'Wiederentdeckung einer fast vergessenen Revolution: Die Umbrüche von 1918/19 als politische Transformation und subjektive Erfahrung', in Hans-Jörg Czech, Olaf Matthes, and Ortwin Pelc (eds.), *Revolution! Revolution? Hamburg 1918/19* (Hamburg, 2018), 14–31, esp. 15–16; and Alexander Gallus, 'Revolutions (Germany)', in Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, et al. (eds.), *1914–1918–Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (Berlin, 2014), at [http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10291].

increasingly inevitable. Among civilians and exhausted troops alike, the fervent longing for an end to the war became bound up with a desire for improved food supplies and the abolition of authoritarian command structures. Moreover, from 1917 onwards, new and sharper battle-lines were drawn, pitting democratic, Western, capitalist systems against socialist structures. Advocates of the latter in turn fought among themselves over the 'right' way to bring about a socialist state and society. While some sought to pursue a democratic, parliamentary path towards their goal, others advocated various forms of workers' councils and a sweeping revolution. The split among the Social Democrats, which became obvious in 1918–19, had a long gestation, and was further exacerbated by the new transnational ideological landscape from 1917 onwards.

Against this backdrop of war, defeat, and multifarious ideological ambitions, Gerwarth takes a positive view of the actions of Friedrich Ebert, the central figure in the German transformation of 1918–19. In Gerwarth's opinion, despite standing at the helm of an 'inexperienced government' (p. 130), Ebert achieved considerable success under distinctly unfavourable conditions ('his government succeeded in channelling revolutionary energies'; p. 19) and doggedly strove to establish a parliamentary political system with a liberal constitution. Ebert favoured the path of reform over a revolution that he feared would result in chaos, a loss of control, and conditions resembling those in Russia—a prospect that assumed the appearance of an imminent threat from 1917 onwards, though that perception proved to be exaggerated. In this context, Gerwarth interprets Ebert's oft-quoted remark that he hated the Revolution 'like sin' as a fundamental rejection not of change in general, but of a 'Bolshevik-style revolution' in particular (p. 69). Together with the Social Democrat majority, Ebert sought to bring about a socio-political transformation that avoided barricades or fighting in the streets.

Furthermore, Gerwarth rejects as misleading the idea that Ebert's use of the words 'No enemy has defeated you' in his address to returning soldiers before the Brandenburg Gate on 10 December 1918 helped promote the *Dolchstoßlegende*, or 'stab-in-the-back myth'. Instead, he argues, 'Ebert's words were born out of a desire to co-opt the army into supporting the new regime in the face of a potential

challenge by either right-wing opposition or those advocating a more radical revolution in Germany' (pp. 133–4). Ultimately, Gerwarth considers it a fallacy to interpret the agreements struck between the transitional government and senior army commanders in a phone call between Ebert and First Quartermaster General Wilhelm Groener on 10 November 1918 as a 'Faustian pact with the old imperial army' (p. 134). Instead, he describes the arrangement more soberly as a 'pragmatic agreement' (p. 134) that was entered into for understandable reasons on both sides.

Yet the reader would be mistaken to see these assessments as reflective of an uncritical approach to the government's recourse to military force from the end of 1918 onwards. Gerwarth passes particularly severe judgement on Gustav Noske (who referred to himself as a 'bloodhound') and the *Freikorps* he deployed. In his 2016 transnational comparative study *The Vanquished*, Gerwarth offers a detailed description and classification of the violence that took place in the defeated nations of the First World War.[4] In *November 1918*, he once again argues that a glance beyond the domestic German context will show that levels of violence in the November Revolution were relatively low, making its achievements all the more commendable.

Gerwarth has little time for the counterfactual reflections on missed opportunities and hypothetical alternative outcomes that have long shaped the critical debate surrounding the November Revolution. Instead of writing history as a collection of wistful 'what-ifs', he suggests it would be better to pay closer attention to the hopes, expectations, and disappointments of those who lived through the Revolution than has previously been the case. In particular, Gerwarth extensively quotes contemporary intellectuals in order to conjure up a lively picture of the upheavals, including Harry Graf Kessler, Victor Klemperer, Alfred Döblin, Thomas Mann, and the artist Käthe Kollwitz—with the latter's sensitive, meticulous diaries proving to be a superbly valuable source. Though Kollwitz's cautious, thoughtful arguments go back and forth, in general she welcomed the changes and the end of the war, was happy with the introduction of the right

[4] Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917–1923* (London, 2016).

to vote for women, and looked to the future with hope. In her view, there was no doubt that she had borne witness to a revolution.

For Gerwarth, voices like Kollwitz's are representative of the many contemporary observers who fundamentally approved of the Revolution and the end of the monarchy, but who spoke out in favour of pragmatism and muted radicalism during the events that followed. Building on this, his book offers a refreshing reminder that revolutions in modern societies should not primarily be defined in terms of armed and violent uprisings. Instead, he argues, true revolution consists in the introduction and implementation of new political principles and the expansion of civil and participatory rights. The Weimar Constitution set these things down in a single document, thereby creating 'probably the most progressive republic of the era' (p. 6). Yet to speak of a 'triumph of liberalism' (p. 160), as Gerwarth does in a dedicated chapter, seems somewhat exaggerated, since it underestimates the challenges and contradictions faced by a crisis-ridden liberalism at the onset of mass democracy in Germany.[5]

Gerwarth is correct, however, in emphasizing that the Weimar Republic was in no way a defenceless democracy, as his epilogue provides a cursory review of the 'defiant republic' (p. 212) between 1919 and 1923. Indeed, the German version of his book goes even further, with its talk of a 'militant democracy', and looking back from 1923, Gerwarth provides a summary that once again rails against the idea of a 'failed' or 'half-hearted' Revolution. On the contrary, he suggests that its achievements speak for themselves: 'Germany had a democratic government, a liberal constitution that granted its citizens wide-ranging basic political and economic rights, and a noticeably improving economy . . . Extremist minorities on the political Left and Right had been marginalized, and their attempts to violently topple the republic had failed' (p. 219–20). From a year of crisis in 1923, Gerwarth argues, the Weimar Republic emerged as a progressive democracy that was ready to face further tests. 'In fact', Gerwarth concludes, 'in late 1923, the failure of democracy would have seemed far

[5] On the difficult battles fought by liberals, who had been forced onto the back foot and still needed to strike a fundamental balance in their relationship with democracy, see the superb study by Jens Hacke, *Existenzkrise der Demokratie: Zur politischen Theorie des Liberalismus in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Berlin, 2018).

less probable than its consolidation. At that point, the future of the Weimar Republic was wide open' (p. 221). It was only in later years that the Republic would lose its way.

Gerwarth's solid and carefully considered account focuses on political history, but does not come across as old fashioned; rather, it takes communicational dynamics, experiential ambiguities, and transnational perspectives into account. All the same, much of his exposition feels familiar to the reader. Yet this cannot be held against him, given that detailed research into the November Revolution is still in its early, faltering stages, and that new findings are only gradually emerging.[6] Among the key strengths of Gerwarth's book are that it offers an account of the political transformation process that is polished and accurate in equal measure, and that it appropriately examines the use of violence during the Revolution from a comparative, transnational perspective. On the whole, he judges the rupture of 1918–19 positively as an important moment in the history of German democracy. Indeed, the German version of his book expresses this view in its title—'The Greatest of all Revolutions'—which quotes the early euphoric words used by the brilliant liberal journalist Theodor Wolff in the *Berliner Tageblatt* on 10 November 1918.[7]

By contrast, Gerwarth's former student Mark Jones offers a significantly more sceptical view of the events of 1918–19 in his book *Founding Weimar*.[8] Jones conjures up a terrifying landscape of violence backed by public and media support, which he lays primarily at the feet of the new government led by Friedrich Ebert. Given the violent birth of the Weimar Republic, Jones also draws a line of continuity from 1918 to 1933. In broad terms, Gerwarth and Jones represent different interpretive models, with each historian situating the juncture of the

[6] For other possible perspectives, see Andreas Braune and Michael Dreyer (eds.), *Zusammenbruch, Aufbruch, Abbruch? Die Novemberrevolution als Ereignis und Erinnerungsort* (Stuttgart, 2019); Klaus Weinhauer, Anthony McElligott, and Kirsten Heinsohn (eds.), *Germany 1916–23: A Revolution in Context* (Bielefeld, 2015).

[7] See n. 2 above.

[8] Mark Jones, *Founding Weimar: Violence and the German Revolution of 1918–1919* (Cambridge, 2016). See also the substantially reworked German edition, which goes far beyond a mere translation: id., *Am Anfang war Gewalt: Die deutsche Revolution 1918/19 und der Beginn der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin, 2017).

November Revolution differently within the development of modern German history. The paradigm of the emergence of democracy competes with one focused on violence and dictatorship. Yet Gerwarth's survey is successful above all because it emphasizes the opportunities for democratic development in 1918 without overlooking the early stresses on the Weimar Republic. Just as he is reluctant to fit the foundation of the Weimar Republic into a narrative of a German *Sonderweg*, or special path, towards the establishment of the Third Reich, he also refuses to put the beginning of democracy in Germany on a pedestal. In this respect, the sober title of Gerwarth's original English book does more justice to its contents than that of the German translation.

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ANNA HÁJKOVÁ and MARIA VON DER HEYDT, *Die letzten Berliner Veit Simons: Holocaust, Geschlecht und das Ende des deutsch-jüdischen Bürgertums* (Leipzig: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2019), 140 pp. ISBN 978 3 95565 301 9. €17.90
ANNA HÁJKOVÁ and MARIA VON DER HEYDT, *The Last Veit Simons from Berlin: Holocaust, Gender, and the End of the German–Jewish Bourgeoisie*, trans. from the German by Justus von Widekind and Jos Porath (Leipzig: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2019), 140 pp. ISBN 978 3 95565 316 3. €17.90

In July 1945, 27-year-old Etta Veit Simon wrote a letter to her mother Irmgard, giving her some insights into her survival in Theresienstadt concentration camp. She recalled her first year of imprisonment, when she had 'had one sickness after the other, and with a fever of more than 40°C every time: dysentery, angina, scarlet fever, kidney inflammation, jaundice, tonsillitis and abdominal typhoid!' (p. 120). She also provided her mother with details about the death of her older sister from tuberculosis in 1943, one year after their deportation to Terezín: 'By the end Ruthchen had galloping consumption, the larynx, lungs and intestines were flooded with tuberculosis bacteria. She ran a high fever for six months before her heart finally failed' (p. 120).

Quite a few letters of this kind were sent around that time. Many more could no longer be written because the majority of inmates, like Etta's sister Ruth, did not survive the German concentration and death camps. Some survivors had no one to write to because they were the last living members of their family.

In Etta's case, her mother survived the war as the Gentile widow of a Jewish man in Berlin. Somewhat unusually, Etta's letter to her mother contains the following remark: 'I believe I have made a good name for ourselves in Terezín; VEIT-SIMON is a name with a solid reputation here' (p. 120).

Who were the Veit Simons and why, despite everything she had experienced, was it still important for Etta to have a name with a reputation? The publication under review here, *The Last Veit Simons from Berlin*, sheds some light on the matter. Anna Hájková, Associate Professor at the University of Warwick and a historian of

the Holocaust, and Maria von der Heydt, Affiliated Researcher at the Center for Research on Antisemitism in Berlin and a partner in a Berlin law firm, have researched the background of the Veit Simons. In their book, they tell the dramatic story of one of the oldest and best-known Jewish families in Berlin.

The Veit Simon family had been living in Berlin since the seventeenth century, when one 'Jew Simon' received official permission to settle there. During the eighteenth century, the family started to consolidate their position as members of the upper middle class. For generations, family members worked as merchants and bankers and were also involved in Berlin's cultural life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After 1933, in spite of their former wealth, they fled their hometown or were deported and murdered in Auschwitz or Theresienstadt. The Holocaust marked the irrevocable end of the family's roots in Berlin, as was the case for almost all German Jewish families there.

Hájková and von der Heydt focus on the family's history, starting with Hermann Veit Simon (1856–1914), a well respected *Justizrat* (Judicial Councillor) who successfully combined his legal training with his family's commercial tradition. He and his wife Hedwig (1861–1943), née Stettiner, had four children. Their two daughters Eva (1884–1944) and Katharina (1887–1944) were deaf-mute as the result of a childhood infection with measles. The sisters lived together in *Katharinenhof*, a house specially designed for them north of Berlin, which was also used as a weekend home and meeting place for the whole family. With their mother Hedwig, Eva, a painter, and Katharina, a trained gardener, were deported to Theresienstadt three months after their nieces Ruth and Etta. Neither Hedwig nor her two daughters survived the Holocaust.

Ruth and Etta's father was Hermann Veit Simon's son Heinrich (1883–1942). Despite his father's opposition, Heinrich married Irmgard (1889–1971), née Gabriel, the Gentile daughter of a Protestant family friend. Though she herself remained Protestant, Irmgard raised their children in the Jewish faith and celebrated their bat and bar mitzvahs. The family lived a progressive liberal Jewish life of the kind represented by the prominent rabbi Leo Baeck, a friend of the Veit Simon family.

With their siblings Harro (1911–2011), Ulla (1915–2004), Rolf (1916–1944), and Judith (1925–2016), Ruth and Etta grew up in a typical bourgeois household with a maid, cook, and gardener in their villa in Dahlem, Berlin. The family hosted large dinners and parties with dancing and enjoyed travelling abroad. Their wealth was the result of the father's professional success as a lawyer and notary. His law firm in the heart of Berlin established itself as one of the most renowned, including far beyond the metropolis. He successfully protected his family from the economic crises after the First World War and managed to maintain a secure and comfortable lifestyle until he was murdered in 1942.

By the end of 1938, however, culminating in the events of the November Pogroms, the family had lost its social status. That same year, three of the Veit Simon children fled Germany. Ulla moved to London with her husband and their newborn daughter, Rolf emigrated to the Netherlands, and Judith found refuge in the United Kingdom through the *Kindertransport*. Since the oldest of the siblings, Harro, had already left for Spain in the early 1930s, only Ruth and Etta stayed behind in Berlin with their parents. Both were trained graphic designers, and Ruth illustrated a children's book before struggling with tuberculosis. She had to undergo treatment in various clinics over the years. Meanwhile, Etta was obliged to do jobs she hated, such as helping out in a Jewish school and doing twelve-hour shifts at the Zeiß-Ikon lens factory.

As *Geltungsjuden* (who were considered to be Jewish by virtue of their membership of the Jewish religious community), the sisters were fully exposed to persecution and were threatened by the Berlin deportations, beginning in October 1941. From 19 September 1941, they were required to wear the yellow star in public. Seven months later, Etta tried to flee with the help of her father—a vain attempt which resulted in their arrest and, ultimately in Heinrich's murder. Not long after their arrest, both sisters, Ruth and Etta, ended up in Terezín, whereas their Gentile mother Irmgard stayed in Berlin until the end of the war.

Hájková and von der Heydt's book reveals the story of an almost forgotten German–Jewish family that was well known and socially recognized until the Holocaust broke it apart. As one of the few wealthy bourgeois families, the Veit Simons might not be a typical

example of the German–Jewish fate. But they show how sooner or later a family's wealth and social status faded during the Holocaust, leading to escape or persecution.

The story is engagingly written, highlighting the biographies of selected family members, and draws on interesting personal primary sources in order to reconstruct the family's fate. The main body of this rather slim book is divided into twelve sections, each focusing on a specific topic relating to one family member, such as 'Ruth's Tuberculosis' or 'Heinrich's Murder'. The sections are roughly chronological, making it easy to follow the course of events. The authors also provide a helpful family tree at the beginning of the book (I would have preferred additional dates of birth and death for better orientation) and many images to illustrate the narrative. Unfortunately, they do not use the historical photographs as a primary source, leaving them a little disconnected from the text. An outstandingly concise appendix contains selected personal letters from the family's private papers, giving us an insight into the treasure trove that Hájková and von der Heydt have uncovered. Given that this is a short study of only about 100 pages in length, the reader is left curious to learn more about the last Veit Simons from Berlin.

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HANS WOLLER, *Gerd Müller oder wie das große Geld in den Fußball kam: Eine Biografie* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2019), 352 pp. 29 ills. ISBN 978 3 406 74151 7 (hardcover). €22.95
HANNAH JONAS, *Fußball in England und Deutschland von 1961 bis 2000: Vom Verlierer der Wohlstandsgesellschaft zum Vorreiter der Globalisierung*, Nach dem Boom (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 314 pp. ISBN 978 3 525 37086 5 (hardcover). €60.00

Though the history of football, the most popular global sport, has a life of its own, it can also provide important insights into broader social trends. Evidence for this can be found in two recent books which tackle the history of the West German affluent society from the 1960s onwards through the lens of sport in different, yet complementary ways. One is a scholarly but elegantly written biography of Gerd Müller by a now retired senior historian at Munich's Institute of Contemporary History, and the first such book on football from the flagship history publisher C. H. Beck—a welcome development that suggests sports history is now a fully accepted branch of cultural history. The other book is a meticulously researched comparative history of football in Germany and England from the 1960s until the end of the twentieth century that takes in the post-Fordist shift towards the 'individualized consumer society'. This Ph.D.-cum-monograph by a more junior historian is one of the outstanding products of the Nach dem Boom research cluster at the history departments of the universities of Tübingen and Trier, and equally suggests a recognition among leading German historians that it has become impossible to write contemporary history without paying attention to the histories of sport and leisure.

The main context of Woller's excellent biography of the 'nation's bomber'—the FC Bayern Munich player who still holds the records for most goals scored in a Bundesliga season (40 in 1971/72) and best ever goal-to-game ratio (365 goals in 427 German top-division games)—is the professionalization and commercialization of football in the Federal Republic following the foundation of the Bundesliga in 1963. These processes were accompanied by a combination of important factors which have already been explored in depth in other scholarly publications, but which are given a specific regional

focus and grounding here. They included the oft-repeated assertion by Bundesliga clubs that the main reason for their existence was to benefit the public (*Gemeinnützigkeit*) by also catering for a host of amateur sports under their umbrella. This allowed them to claim tax relief despite operating as businesses and delayed the full professionalization of German football by more than a century compared to England, where clubs were run along corporate lines from the nineteenth century onwards. Other factors going hand in hand with the late professionalization of the game in the Federal Republic were various kinds of (often shady) tax avoidance schemes, under-the-table payments to players, and mutually beneficial relationships between clubs and local and regional politicians. While clubs benefited from these relationships in financial terms, politicians reaped political rewards by demonstrating their similarity to a mostly male electorate through their real or pretend love of the game.

Woller's most damning insight into the special treatment Bayern Munich received from regional politicians emerges from his access to the personal papers of the Bavarian finance minister Ludwig Huber, since the ministry's official documentation remains closed to his and other researchers' eyes. Woller shows that the Bavarian finance ministry actively encouraged the leadership of Bayern Munich to engage in illegal practices, such as hiding profits made during lucrative tours abroad to South America and elsewhere. Ironically, the club became a victim of its own success, as the income from these tours was urgently needed to foot a constantly rising wage bill. While these often extremely tiring trips revealed the players to be 'slaves of their own demands' (p. 105), the practice also deterred them from moving abroad in lucrative transfers to Spain or Italy.

In practice, this meant that, upon their return from foreign tours, the club's charter flights often made stopovers in Zurich to deposit cash in Swiss bank accounts. After arriving in Munich, the players were then smuggled through German customs with pockets full of dollars by a high-ranking politician who had accompanied the team on their tour abroad. Before television money became the dominant factor in club finances that it is now (which forms one of the central topics in Jonas's chapters on the hypercommercialization of football since the 1990s), practices such as this—along with other factors such as the newly built

80,000 capacity Olympic stadium and the ability to retain players like Müller, Uli Hoeneß, Paul Breitner, and Franz Beckenbauer—were instrumental in Bayern's rise to international fame and success in the 1970s. Arguably, they also laid the long-term foundations for Bayern to become the hegemon at the top of the German football pyramid and join the ranks of European super-clubs like Real Madrid and Manchester United. Such illegal practices came to a partial end in the late 1970s, prompting Müller and Beckenbauer to run from the taxman and continue their careers in the USA. Given the long shadow they cast over Bayern's success, it is surprising that hardly an eyelid was batted among German football officials and club functionaries after Woller's revelations—a fact that suggests Bayern and the Bavarian regional government were not alone in such behaviour.

Woller elucidates these broader contexts of the 1960s and 1970s while telling the story of the meteoric rise of the youngest son of a day labourer from a childhood in very modest circumstances in an industrial town in northern Bavaria to international superstardom, which culminated in Müller scoring the winning goal for West Germany in the 1974 FIFA World Cup. With much sympathy and understanding, Woller tells a tale of riches easily gained, but also quickly lost. He shows the heavy price Müller had to pay for his stellar career: constant press intrusion into his private life due to his status in West German society; serious injuries, which were given only a quick fix to make him match-fit, thereby causing long-lasting physical damage; and severe mental health problems, including a long battle with alcoholism. Combining archival work with oral history, the book follows Müller's career from provincial Bavaria to Bayern, then the Fort Lauderdale Strikers in Florida, and back to Bayern as a youth coach. All of this makes for fascinating reading. In essence, it shows a player who—much like the recently deceased Diego Maradona, the global football icon of the following generation—was happiest on the pitch. Yet unlike Maradona, when Müller hit rock bottom, he could rely on the help of his former club—especially Uli Hoeneß, his former partner in the Bayern frontline, who grew into the role of club strongman and patriarch from the 1980s.

Hoeneß, of course, was to become a key figure in the radical commercialization and marketization of German football and in shaping

the football boom from the 1990s, following a period of relative decline in the 1980s—a decade now mostly remembered for hooliganism and disasters like Heysel and Hillsborough. Providing a convincing comparative analysis of this recent and still ongoing process in England and Germany is perhaps the main achievement of Jonas's monograph, whose analysis rests on an in-depth study of German and English football association files, press coverage, and economic and other research on the game in both countries. Jonas interprets the history of professional football in Germany and England as a facet of a new wave of globalization during a neo-liberal age in which football is not only a metaphor, but one of the driving forces of globalization. Jonas takes a variety of factors into account to explain the hypercommodification of the game through the symbiosis of football, the media, and the economy over the past three decades. In the process, she also elucidates its accompanying symptoms, which are comparable in both countries, such as the rise of football people to global celebrity; the heightened importance of advertising; the influx of businesspeople into the clubs; an aestheticized presentation of the game which is now broadcast from televisually optimized 'football cathedrals'; and critiques of commercialization and the search for an 'authentic' football, which is itself often quickly marketized and turned into a simulacrum.

As other scholars have also recognized, football's 'big bang moment' in England was the foundation of the Premier League in 1992, which led to a massive influx of funds for the clubs in this newly formed division as a result of the competition for broadcast rights between commercial television stations. The German equivalent was the sale of broadcast rights to Springer and Leo Kirch's ISPR agency one year earlier. The second catalyst for the hypercommodification of the sport came with the 1995 Bosman ruling of the European Court of Justice, which concerned players' freedom of movement between European countries. The substantial increase in player mobility that resulted from this led to the internationalization of football clubs and—because clubs now competed against each other for personnel—an explosion in player salaries at the top level. It will be interesting to see whether freedom of movement for this particular European workforce will be included in a trade agreement between the UK and the European Union and, more generally, if and how the Premier League will be affected by Brexit.

With Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United acting as trail-blazers, many football clubs in England were floated on the stock market after 1995 to raise funds. In Germany, the professional sections of football clubs were finally permitted by the German FA to become corporate entities in 1998, with some, like Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund, also issuing shares. However, an important limit was imposed with the '50+1 rule', which makes takeovers by foreign investors like that of Roman Abramovich at Chelsea FC in 2003 impossible—though, as the current example of RB Leipzig shows, there are ways around such regulations. Interestingly, as Jonas argues, many of the developments of the 1990s were rooted in the 1960s and 1970s—for example in the removal of salary caps in England in 1961 and Germany in 1972 and the beginning of sponsoring. However, as the 1980s showed, without a new generation of business-minded managers and club directors in full control, and without commercial television or a new spectator boom, the hypercommodification of football was impossible at that time.

In the end, the hypercommercialization of football ought to be read as a lesson about the economization of areas of society in which economic factors previously played only a minor role. As Jonas quite rightly points out, these processes of marketization produce both winners and losers, and can also be observed in other areas, including higher education.

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Law and Consent in Medieval Britain. Workshop organized by the German Historical Institute London in co-operation with the History of Parliament Trust and held online on 30 October 2020. Conveners: Hannes Kleineke (History of Parliament Trust) and Stephan Bruhn (German Historical Institute London).

On Monday, 2 November 2020, a video posted on Twitter showed the owner of a soft-play centre in Liverpool rejecting Covid-19 regulations, citing Clause 61 of Magna Carta. This historical agreement between the English king and his magnates was first concluded in 1215. In the opinion of the owner, the police had no right to close down his business since the medieval document showed that government authorities were bound by law and had to be resisted if they encroached on central personal liberties. This claim immediately provoked reactions from historians of the Middle Ages, who rightly pointed out that although parts of Magna Carta are, indeed, still part of English law today, Clause 61 is no longer in force. In fact, it was removed in 1216, when the agreement was revised after King John's death.

This case not only points to contemporary tensions which in turn show that societal acceptance of regulations can become extremely fragile at times of crisis, especially when they touch on personal liberties. It also highlights the function of the medieval past as a repository for current ideological and political debates. Although Magna Carta—an agreement between a monarch and his noble elites, not the people as a whole—has nothing to do with democratic ideals governing decision-making processes, it is, paradoxically and anachronistically, regularly cited as evidence for the continuous

This report is based on a post published previously on the GHIL's Blog, at [https://ghil.hypotheses.org/236#more-236]. I would like to thank Marcus Meer (GHIL) for his help, which has greatly benefited the text.

primacy of popular consent and the rule of law from the medieval past to the present. The example shows that our picture of law and consent in medieval Britain is far from accurate, which is why this topic was suitable for a one-day workshop, jointly organized by the History of Parliament Trust and the German Historical Institute London and held on 30 October 2020.

Stephan Bruhn and Hannes Kleineke opened their welcome address by observing that 'consent' is seldom explained, let alone defined—as if it were self-explanatory. Yet on closer examination, questions arise. Is there only one type of consent? For instance, does the term apply to all practices of collective decision-making? How can consent be achieved? Who needs to give their consent, and in what circumstances? Does it follow the principle of majority rule, or is there a need for unanimity? Is consent a means to an end, or can it also be an end in itself? Is it an essential prerequisite for action, or just a topos used to legitimize decisions already made by others, whether by a single ruler or a small elite? The workshop tackled these issues by focusing on the creation and application of law in medieval Britain. It brought together historians of different periods (early to late Middle Ages) and from different research contexts (England and Germany). Speakers addressed diverse topics, ranging from Anglo-Saxon synods to the parliaments of the later Middle Ages.

The first session was dedicated to ecclesiastical attitudes towards consent, with a focus on assemblies. Stephan Bruhn (GHIL) analysed how archbishops' claims to monarchical leadership were brought into line with pre-existing patterns of collective Church government at synods in early medieval England. Consent, understood as an essential Christian concept, played an important role in this process as it had different meanings and thus could be used for various purposes, such as promoting archiepiscopal authority.

Daniel Gosling (The National Archives, Kew) widened this perspective in the second paper by looking at the influence of ecclesiastics on the legislative processes of the English Parliament in the later Middle Ages. While MPs were concerned about the influence of the Church, actual attempts by members of the clergy to influence parliamentary processes remained the exception and had limited success. Although itself affected by secular legislation, especially when it

came to the holding of benefices, the clergy seldom used its vote in Parliament, preferring instead to appeal to the king directly and thus circumventing an institution that was supposed to ensure broadly based consent.

The question of the actual importance of processes intended to ensure consent was then raised in the discussion following the papers: to what extent did synods, parliaments, and other assemblies merely rubber-stamp decisions taken by powerful individuals eager to create the illusion of popular approval?

The role of consent in the royal succession was at the heart of the second session. The first paper, by Alheydis Plassmann (University of Bonn), addressed the role of consent during Stephen of Blois's rise to kingship. Although there were no formal elections in England at this point, the barons clearly had a say in the appointment of a new king, as their decisive influence on Stephen's path to kingship shows. This was far from straightforward in dynastic terms. Had Stephen ultimately prevailed in the dispute over the throne, Plassmann suggested, his reign could have been crucial for the magnates' claim to the right to hold formal elections.

Stephen Church (University of East Anglia) identified similar tendencies for the succession after the death of Henry II. As Henry's oldest living son, Richard I clearly had a solid claim to the English throne. Nonetheless, he had to secure this position by winning over the magnates, since his younger brother John or his Guelph nephew Otto of Brunswick could have been viable alternatives. Consent also mattered when it came to the actual enthronement, when the acclamation of the commons added another layer of consent, if only as a formality.

The following discussion indicated that the papers diverged from current scholarship—most notably Robert Bartlett's recent *Blood Royal*, which stresses the dynastic dimensions of royal succession.[1] In contrast, both papers showed just how important ideas of consensus were in the processes of English royal succession, and thus pointed to clear similarities with practices in Germany.

[1] Robert Bartlett, *Blood Royal: Dynastic Politics in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2020).

The last session was dedicated to the broader issues of consent in debating and making decisions. Adrian Jobson (University of Bristol) took a fresh look at the First Barons' War (1215–17), highlighting the importance of consent-seeking for both the baronial and Montfortian reform programmes. Still, for the reformist movement, the desire for unanimity and self-serving pragmatism were not mutually exclusive, and there was no contradiction in its agenda between altruistic goals and self-interest.

Mark Whelan (King's College London) opened the perspective to the Continent in his paper on Cardinal Beaufort's struggle to raise an Empire-wide tax in Germany to finance the Hussite Wars. Drawing on new archival findings, he emphasized the complex nature of the consent that had to be negotiated and secured from various layers of the Holy Roman Empire's hierarchy. While different actors accepted some aspects of Beaufort's plan, the cardinal's efforts ultimately failed because the ambitious project could not be realized simply by seeking consent from the Imperial Diet alone, as Beaufort's English background might have led him to believe.

The last paper in the workshop returned to ecclesiastical lawmaking. By focusing on William Lyndwood's *Provinciale* (*c.*1432), a commentary on the decrees of the Canterbury province, Paul Cavill (Pembroke College, Cambridge) analysed how a local body of canon law was received and adopted in late medieval England. While Lyndwood seldom applied the idea of consent to law, later readers added glosses which downplayed the archbishops' importance within the provincial synod. On a 'national' level, the *Provinciale* mirrored the cross-fertilization of ideas between Church and state as it also commented on the relationship between ecclesiastical and secular governments and later found its way into the statutes passed by Parliament.

A formal response by Levi Roach (University of Exeter) opened the workshop's concluding discussion. In summing up the participants' different approaches, Roach stressed the benefits of Anglo-German comparisons and conceptual work on key terms such as 'consensus', 'consensual rule', and 'law' to further bridge gaps between the past, the present, and different historiographical traditions. By adopting a broad, comparative perspective of this sort, differences that are

taken for granted can quickly be replaced by surprising similarities, just as a closer look can reveal unexpected differences. Given that the papers highlighted the many and varied manifestations of consensus and its procedural dimensions, several issues remained to be addressed—a statement which the participants agreed with in the final discussion. One of these issues relates to Roach's observation that by the fourteenth century, there seemed to be increased interest in conceptualizing ideas such as consent. The notion of an 'oven-ready' concept of law and consent in the Middle Ages—however desirable this may seem to contemporary students of the past—does not do justice to the nuances and evolution of these two notions during the medieval period. Putting contemporary debates and discourses into a historical perspective thus still promises to broaden our views of present-day phenomena.

Stephan Bruhn (GHIL)

Archiving, Recording, and Representing Feminism: The Global History of Women's Emancipation in the Twentieth Century. Second meeting of the International Standing Working Group on Medialization and Empowerment, held online, 10–12 December 2020. Conveners: Christina von Hodenberg and Jane Freeland (German Historical Institute London), alongside partners at the Max Weber Stiftung India Branch Office, the German Historical Institute Washington DC, the German Historical Institute Rome, and the Orient Institute Beirut.

Bringing together twenty-nine scholars from Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North America, this conference explored how processes of narrativization and the cataloguing of knowledge—whether in the media, the archive, or in historical practice—have shaped the development and understandings of women's emancipation. The conference was organized as part of the international research project 'Knowledge Unbound: Internationalization, Networking, Innovation in and by the Max Weber Stiftung', which is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

The first panel asked how historians can work within and around archival spaces to recover the history of women's emancipation. Claudia Roesch (GHI Washington DC) examined the case of the German family planning association Pro Familia. Although the personal papers of Hans Harmsen, one of the co-founders of Pro Familia, can be found at the German Federal Archives in Koblenz, the records of the three other (female) co-founders have not been retained. Roesch argued that although this has resulted in a historiography dominated by Harmsen, by paying attention to the spaces and roles historically inhabited by women in organizations, historians can address this imbalance. Jane Freeland's paper examining the East German women's group the Weimar Women's Tea Parlour (Frauenteestube Weimar) similarly explored how the history of women's activism under socialism has been shaped by the Cold War, the trajectories of Western women's movements, and the memory politics of reunified Germany. In contrast, Freeland showed how focusing on women's

This report is based on a post published previously on the GHIL's Blog, at [https://ghil.hypotheses.org/330], and on the Wissen Entgrenzen blog, at [https://wissen.hypotheses.org/2491], both accessed on 11 Feb. 2021.

'on-stage' and 'offstage' voices, their goals and political work, might help historians resist these normative forces.

The focus of the second panel was feminist archival practices, with four papers examining the strengths and limitations of visual and digital sources and methodologies for writing the history of women's activism. Maissan Hassan (Women and Memory Forum, Cairo) outlined the implementation of a feminist curatorial strategy where the creation of emotionally engaging narratives of women's work were prioritized over linear histories in an exhibition on Egyptian women's labour. As Hassan showed, this approach not only helped to engage audiences with the struggles of women activists, but also drew attention to the everyday documents and objects that might otherwise be ignored by historians. Monica di Barbora (Istituto per la storia dell'età contemporanea, Milan) similarly critiqued the hesitancy among historians to take visual sources seriously, who instead prefer to use them as supporting evidence to written sources. Rachel Pierce (University of Borås), meanwhile, examined the use of historical visual sources in a digital context. Tracing how the metadata connected with images of Swedish women's rights activist Kerstin Hesselgren changes depending on the collection, Pierce demonstrated the way digital spaces can contribute to a decontextualization and deradicalization of women's labour. D-M Withers (University of Sussex) focused on the value of business archives for a history of feminist knowledge production in twentieth-century Britain. Working within the archives of Virago Press, a key feminist publishing house formed in 1973, Withers was able to reconstruct the processes by which feminist ideas were formalized and organized over time. Till Grallert's (Orient Institute Beirut) comment centred on the role of the digital as a mediator between researcher and archive, and on the importance of digital literacy for the future of feminist archiving and research.

The first day ended with a keynote lecture by Durba Ghosh (Cornell University), who explored the tension between the need for social movements to create their own archives to preserve and legitimize their legacy, and how doing so can feed into normative historical narratives that erase the radical and diverse histories of women's political engagement. Following the historical traces of various activists over time, Ghosh argued that despite explicit attempts to fashion

their own political image, activists' legacies are often taken up in ways that affirm patriarchal, nationalist narratives. Moreover, she asked whether by attempting to make sense of the past, history writing also contributes to the deradicalization of past activist movements.

Day two began with a joint keynote from the internationally acclaimed artist Sheba Chhachhi (Delhi) and the media anthropologist Laila Abu-Er-Rub (Merian-Kolleg ICAS:MP, Delhi). The presentation reflected on their collaborative work to build a feminist archive of Chhachhi's photographs. From the early 1980s, Chhachhi participated in and documented feminist street protests against dowry practices and domestic and communal violence against women. More recently, Chhachhi's practice has moved to 'annotated installation': staged portraits of feminists surrounded by objects that reflect their lives and activism. In this way, Chhachhi reflects on the way photography—although seemingly a neutral, objective record—can perpetuate power imbalances through exclusion, silence, and (mis)interpretation. Chhachhi's current project with Abu-Er-Rub aims to preserve the contextualization and prevent the misuse of her images by constructing a long-term repository. However, as Abu-Er-Rub outlined, there are considerable challenges inherent in such a project, ranging from multilingual annotation, a lack of metadata standards, technological and funding limitations, issues of data protection, and the power of corporate giants who control search engines and hosting platforms.

The next panel examined feminism at the intersection of law and the media. Focusing on the case of Rukhmabai in 1880s colonial India, Kanika Sharma (SOAS) argued that official legal archives contain few traces of women's own voices. Rukhmabai, a wealthy Hindu woman, contested the restitution of conjugal rights to her husband. Although the case was fought over her body, as Sharma highlighted, Rukhmabai's proto-feminist motives were never recorded in the legal archive, only in her letters to the media. The next paper by Alexandra Fergen (University of Oxford) dealt with a very different legal case from 1970s West Germany. In 1978, ten women sued the bestselling illustrated weekly *Stern* for its use of sexist cover images. While Hamburg's Regional Court dismissed the case, the legal battle sparked a media debate about the objectification of women. Next, Laura Lammasniemi (University of Warwick) analysed two 'alternative

legal archives' from early twentieth-century Britain. The meticulous records kept in the archives of the National Vigilance Association and the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene not only reveal the way middle-class women accessed professional roles at a time when these were officially denied to them, but also show that while some women used that power to challenge patriarchal legal structures, others used it to reinforce them. In her commentary, Isabel Heinemann (WWU Münster) drew attention to the way that the highly regulated, male-defined, and performative space of the courtroom contributed to the silencing of women's voices in the legal archive. The discussion centred on the definition of feminism, conservative women activists, and how historians can supplement legal texts with media sources.

The day concluded with a presentation by Luke Blaxill (University of Oxford) and Kaspar Beelen (Alan Turing Institute, London) on digital humanities research methods. Blaxill and Beelen are currently developing two online modules for the International Standing Working Group in order to familiarize historians of feminism with text mining and statistical methods. Text mining can be used to follow the development of the language of feminism in the media, to differentiate between the ways men and women have addressed certain topics over time, and to quantify absences in the archive. Blaxill illustrated this using the Hansard record of British parliamentary proceedings. He combined close and distant readings, zooming in and out to discern patterns in the corpus. While the computerized analysis of such large text corpora (from media, parliamentary, or legal sources) offers huge analytical potential, scholars need to be trained in their assemblage, use, and potential biases. Also discussed were the limitations generated by faulty scanning, copyright restrictions, and the scarcity of non-English-language corpora.

The final day started with a panel on archival practices, homing in on the act of collecting and its feminist possibilities. The panellists reflected on their double roles as creators and interpreters of archives. Reshma Radakrishnan (University of Erfurt) explored the limitations of official archives and their inability to fully capture the experiences and actions of women. Using oral histories and individual interviews, she reflected on women's experiences of making history and the active and engaged presence demanded by the interview

situation. Including museum collections among possible archival spaces, Sophie Kühnlenz (University of Cologne) asked how heteronormative gender roles can be challenged through curatorial practice. While showing awareness of the role of changing perspectives on exhibitions and curatorial choices, she emphasized that these concerns should not confine women's issues to women's museums, but instead lead to an overall reflection of gendered practices in the use of objects. Dipti Tamang's (Darjeeling Government College) paper similarly engaged with the challenge to existing archival practices, with a focus on the decolonization of knowledge. Her project focused on rewriting the women's history of the Darjeeling Hills by centring hidden conflicts and marginalized voices. Finally, the contribution by Christina Wu (Panthéon-Sorbonne) examined the history of feminism in 1950s Singapore, emphasizing the importance of language and of reading between the lines in order to understand women's reluctance to use the term 'feminist' in the context of colonial struggles. Fiammetta Balestracci's (LMU Munich) comment outlined the need to proactively and constructively consolidate smaller counter-archives and their specific narratives with the material in state and official archives.

The last panel investigated an intersectional approach to archives, asking how historical ideas of race and gender have shaped the keeping of records. The first contribution by Kirsten Kamphuis (WWU Münster) focused on the place of women in (post-)colonial Indonesian educational organizations. Rather than simply adding women to these histories, Kamphuis read magazines and other documents against the grain to unravel the contribution and thought of women activists. Johanna Gehmacher (University of Vienna) emphasized the need to consider not just what we find in the archive, but also how the archive itself is produced—how documents are consciously chosen, collected, and sometimes destroyed or excluded—in order to better understand the role of the past and archives in feminist movements. Anaïs Angelo (University of Vienna) explored absences in the archive, confronting the exclusion of Kenyan women who (unsuccessfully) ran for office. Instead of perpetuating a patriarchal and colonial narrative of political history read through state archives, Angelo's work shows the importance of finding new sources and archival practices that can challenge and complement existing records. Finally, Jennifer

Rodgers's (Caltech) presentation on the transformation of German birthing practices across the second half of the twentieth century emphasized the interstitial character of the transnational feminist archive of childbirth.

Across the three days, discussion ranged from questioning the ongoing importance of historical recovery to asking how to make sense of historical actors—especially when they do things we find confronting—and how to put feminist histories into a narrative form in a way that reflects the often complicated politics of women activists. Moreover, it became clear that recording and archiving remain practices that prioritize, label, and exclude. Based as they are in knowledge practices steeped in violence, power, and oppression, as historians of women and feminism, we must take up the challenge of finding inventive ways to recontexualize the material in order to redress the power imbalances engrained in different archival media, be they born-digital, aural, visual, or paper-bound.

Jane Freeland, Christina von Hodenberg, and Emily Steinhauer
(GHIL)

NOTICEBOARD

Scholarships Awarded by the GHIL

Each year the GHIL awards a number of research scholarships to German postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers to enable them to carry out research in Britain. The scholarships are generally awarded for a period of up to six months depending on the requirements of the research project. Scholarships are advertised on [www.hsozkult.de] and the GHIL's website. Applications should include a CV, educational background, list of publications (where appropriate), and an outline of the project, along with a supervisor's reference confirming the relevance of the proposed archival research. Please address applications to Dr Stephan Bruhn, German Historical Institute London, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2NJ, or send them by email to stipendium@ghil.ac.uk. **Please note that due to the United Kingdom leaving the EU, new regulations for research stays apply. Please check the scholarship guidelines for further information.** If you have any questions, please contact Dr Stephan Bruhn. German scholars present their projects and the initial results of their research at the GHIL Colloquium before or after their stay in Britain. In the first round of allocations for 2021 the following scholarships were awarded for research on British history, German history, and Anglo-German relations:

Katharina Breidenbach (Jena): Kommissare, Gesandte, Diplomaten, Geistliche, Agenten: Netzwerke, Handlungsspielräume und Machtkonstellationen von Mittelspersonen innerhalb protestantischer Emigrationsbewegungen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts
Oscar Broughton (Berlin): Guilds at Home and Abroad: Guild Socialism Reconsidered from a Transimperial Knowledge Perspective
Isabel Eiser (Hamburg): Becoming an Emblem. Von kolonialer Propaganda zu dekolonialer Gegenbewegung: Eine diskursanalytische Untersuchung der 'Benin-Bronzen'

Kassandra Hammel (Freiburg): Frauenkörper, Gesundheit und die weibliche sexuelle Revolution in Großbritannien und Westdeutschland, ca. 1968–1989
Marco Helmbrecht (Munich): Eine Globalgeschichte der Hafenstreiks in den 1940er und frühen 1950er Jahren
Bertille James (Munich): Europe and China in the Age of Globalization (1978–1992)
Julia Reus (Bochum): Verwandschaft, Sexualität und Devianz: Inzestdiskurse in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Annika Stendebach (Giessen): Not Our Place? Changing Youth Culture and Social Spaces in Ireland, 1958–1983

Postgraduate Students Conference

The German Historical Institute London held its twenty-fifth postgraduate research students conference in an online format on 7–8 January 2021. Its intention was to give postgraduate research students in the UK and Ireland working on German history an opportunity to present their work in progress and to discuss it with other students working in the same field. In selecting students to give a presentation, preference was given to those in their second or third year who had already spent a period of research in Germany. The Institute also introduced the participants to its role as a research centre for German history in London, the facilities it offers (conference and lecture programme, library, and so on), and the Institute's Research Fellows.

As well as discussing their subjects and methodologies, the participants exchanged information about practical difficulties, such as how to locate sources or find one's way around German archives. The German Historical Institute can also offer support by facilitating contact with German archives and providing letters of introduction, which may be necessary for students to gain access to archives or specific source collections.

The virtual coffee and lunch breaks offered ample opportunity for informal contact and networking. On Thursday evening all participants were invited to a reception, also online.

Next year's postgraduate research students conference, which is open to all postgraduate students enrolled at a British or Irish university, will take place on 13–14 January 2022.

If you are interested in attending, please email PGconference@ghil.ac.uk by **30 November 2021** and include the following details:

- full contact details (including email address and telephone number),
- the exact title of your project,
- the date you started your project (and whether you are studying for a part-time or full-time Ph.D.),
- the name, address, email address, and phone number of your university and supervisor, and
- confirmation of whether you have undertaken research in Germany.

Please note that all second and third-year students are encouraged to present a paper on their Ph.D. project. Applicants will be contacted as soon as possible.

Victoria Gierok (Oxford): The Super-Rich and the Have-Nots: Wealth Inequality in Pre-Industrial Germany, 1350–1800
Felix Schaff (LSE): The Unequal Spirit of the Protestant Reformation? Religious Confession and Wealth Distribution in Early Modern Germany
Davide Martino (Cambridge): Hydraulic Philosophy in Three Early Modern European Cities
Katherine Arnold (LSE): 'Great' Men of Science? German Naturalists at the Cape of Good Hope
Philipp Heckmann-Umhau (Cambridge): Urban Planning in Imperial Strasbourg and Sarajevo, 1848–1918
Constantin Kilcher (Cambridge): The Zurich Moment of European Eugenics
Aidan Jones (KCL): A Transnational Prince: Lost Inside the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle
Verity Steele (Southampton): Tensions between the Transnational and the Diasporic, the Local and the Global, within Modern Orthodox

Religious Zionism: The Case of the German–Jewish Pioneering Movement Brit Chalutzim Dati'im (Bachad), 1928–1962
Jake Thomson (UEA): British Germanophobia and the First World War, 1914–1918
Mathis Gronau (UCL): Surrounded by Enemies? The Experience of the German Minorities in France and Britain between 1914 and 1924
Ann Gillan (Open University): Promoting the Aims of the Third Reich to an International Audience: A Study of the National Socialist Journal *Freude und Arbeit*, 1936–1939
Alberto Murru (Newcastle): The Collaboration between the Political Police of Fascist Italy and the Third Reich
Jessica Cretney (De Montfort/Leicester): The Concentration Camp, Spatial Experience, and Architectural Modernism, 1933–1945
Uta Rautenberg (Warwick): Homophobia in Nazi Camps
Matthew Hines (Birmingham): 'Writing a New Society': Aufbau in East German Literature, 1945–1961
Rory Hanna (Sheffield): Putting Democracy into Practice: Student Activism in West Germany, 1949–1965

Prize of the German Historical Institute London

The Prize of the GHIL is awarded annually for an outstanding Ph.D. thesis on German history (submitted to a British or Irish university), British history (submitted to a German university), Anglo-German relations, or an Anglo-German comparative topic. The Prize is 1,000 Euros. Former winners include Jan Lambertz, Arun Kumar, Simon Mee, Marcel Thomas, Benjamin Pope, Mahon Murphy, Chris Knowles, and Helen Whatmore. To be eligible, applicants must have successfully completed doctoral exams and vivas **between 1 August 2020 and 31 July 2021**. To apply, send one copy of the thesis with:

- a one-page abstract,
- examiners' reports on the thesis,
- a brief CV,
- a declaration that the author will allow it to be considered for publication in the Institute's German-language series, and

that the work will not be published before the judges have reached a final decision, and
- a supervisor's reference

to reach the Director of the GHIL, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2NJ, by 31 July 2021. The Prize will be presented on the occasion of the GHIL's Annual Lecture on 5 November 2021.

For further information, please visit:
[https://www.ghil.ac.uk/prizes/prize_of_the_german_historical_institute_london.html].

Email: prize@ghil.ac.uk
Tel: 020 7309 2050

Forthcoming Workshops and Conferences

Please consult the website for updates on forthcoming conferences and dates, as these may be subject to change owing to Covid-19-related restrictions.

Migration and Migration Policies in Europe since 1945. Conference to be held at the GHIL, 30 June–3 July 2021 (tbc). Organized by the German Historical Institute London in co-operation with the London School of Economics and Political Science. Convener: Ulrich Herbert, Gerda Henkel Visiting Professor 2019/20.

This four-day event aims to provide an overview of the pivotal developments and crucial problems of migratory currents in European countries since the Second World War. It will establish the basis for a comparison of the transnational processes, driving forces, central shifts, and direct impacts of migration in Europe. The conference will focus mainly on historical research, with diachronic developments in different countries forming the core of the analysis, which will cover around fifteen nations. A few overlapping processes, such as the migration policies of the European Union and

the UNHCR, will complement what will otherwise be a predominantly nationally oriented comparative approach.

Connecting Themes Conference – Knowledge Unbound: Internationalization, Networking, Innovation in and by the Max Weber Stiftung. To be held on 16–17 September 2021 in Berlin.

Knowledge Unbound is a collaborative project involving partners at the German Historical Institutes in London, Rome, Washington DC (and the Pacific Regional Office), Moscow, and Warsaw; the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo; the Orient Institutes in Beirut and Istanbul; the China Branch Office; and the India Branch Office. The conference brings together the five submodules of Knowledge Unbound in an exploration of the boundaries, networks, and entanglements of knowledge and knowledge production. It is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Chronopolitics: Time of Politics, Politics of Time, Politicized Time. Conference to be held at the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History (ZZF), 16–18 September 2021. Organized by the ZZF, the Arbeitskreis Geschichte+Theorie, the GHIL, and the Fritz Thyssen Foundation. Conveners: Tobias Becker (GHIL), Christina Brauner (University of Tübingen), and Fernando Esposito (University of Konstanz).

Time is so deeply interwoven with all aspects of politics that its importance is frequently overlooked. Politics takes place in time, needs time, and brings forth time; time can be an instrument and also an object of politics. Political actors use time as a resource both to legitimize and delegitimize policies and politics—for instance, when differentiating between conservatives and progressives, or when constructing 'primitives' who exist outside of (modern) time as objects of civilizing missions, development aid, and modernization projects. More generally, politics aims to create futures in the present—or to prevent them. The politics of time is strongly connected to the question of how social change is understood and managed. This international conference will

engage with these issues and questions in an interdisciplinary framework and attempt to produce an initial systematization of debates on chronopolitics, temporality, and historicity. The emphasis on chronopolitics will connect traditional fields of historical inquiry—politics, society, and the economy—with the history of temporalities, thereby demonstrating the importance of reflections on time and temporality for all historians and historiographical practice. We also wish to further discussions on the chronopolitics of historians and historiography—not least our own. How do historians and other scholars create and contribute to what Charles Maier has called 'images of history and temporal order'? Both time and history have their own histories and are thus in need of historical investigation.

Contemporary Historians and the Reuse of Social Science-Generated Data Sets: An International Dialogue on the Challenges Presented by 'Social Data'. Workshop to be held at the GHIL, 28–30 October 2021. Organized by the DFG project 'Sozialdaten als Quellen der Zeitgeschichte: Erstellung eines Rahmenkonzeptes für eine Forschungsdateninfrastruktur in der zeithistorischen Forschung'. Conveners: Lutz Raphael (Trier University), Sabine Reh (Research Library for the History of Education, BBF-DIPF Berlin), Pascal Siegers (GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences), Kerstin Brückweh (Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin), and Christina von Hodenberg (GHIL).

Historians working on the second half of the twentieth century are increasingly confronted with new types of sources: so-called social data. They are the remains of state-sponsored data collection or social science and humanities research projects, such as tax data, polls, interviews, and recorded participant observations. In the course of the 'scientization' of the social that took place in the twentieth century, these sources have become ever more numerous and complex, but they are often preserved in obsolete formats such as punchcards, old statistical software, or magnetic tapes. They can also include tables, texts, card indexes, transcriptions, video interviews, questionnaires, photographs, and so on. These sources may be found in retired researchers' or pollsters' attics rather than in state archives, and their

reuse may pose unresolved questions of ownership and data protection. If scholars of the social, gender, and economic history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are to do justice to their task of providing a critical appraisal of the recent past, they cannot bypass social data as a source. They have to tackle the ethical, legal, methodological, and conceptual challenges tied to these heterogeneous, complex, research-generated sources. So far, the reuse of social data by contemporary historians is still rare, but this is bound to change over the coming decade. The upcoming workshop at the GHI London aims to establish an international dialogue between curators of data, contemporary historians, digital humanities experts, and practitioners in related social science disciplines. It will take stock of existing projects in both the social, gender, and economic history and in the history of education of the post-1945 era which use social data, and will compare approaches, methods, and archival holdings across national boundaries.

A sortable list of titles acquired by the GHIL Library in recent months is available at:

https://www2.ghil.ac.uk/catalogue2/recent_acquisitions.php

For an up-to-date list of the GHIL's publications see our website:

https://www.ghil.ac.uk/publications