

WORKSHOP

Burdens and Beginnings: Rebuilding East and West Germany after Nazism

In Honor of Konrad H. Jarausch

Thursday to Friday, April 6-7, 2017

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Wilson Library, Pleasants Family Assembly Room

The rebuilding of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) after the end of the Second World War is often portrayed as a success story in the proconsul narratives of the United States. Even the initial reconstruction in the GDR is described as somewhat successful until real existing socialism began to fail. This perspective, however, contains significant gaps and overlooks the complexity of the transition from war to peace which the FRG as well as the GDR faced. It neglects the “burdens” of the Nazi past and its long-lasting impacts on German society and politics, the scars and problems caused by the Cold War division of Germany, and the many conflicts in both states and societies over the different paths to choose from for the new “beginnings.” It ignores, for instance, the opposition the mainstream policy faced in each newly

founded German state: In the West the Left, especially the Communist Party of Germany and the Social Democratic Party, rejected Adenauer's conservative domestic politics and his rapprochement with the West; in the GDR the Christian-democratic and conservative forces, such as the Protestant and Catholic Church, opposed the centralization and monopolization of state and society by the SED.

Moreover, new approaches in the scholarship such as the emphasis on the legacy of World War II in both post-war societies, the entangled transnational history of both German states and the new perspectives of cultural and gender history have cast doubt on the politic-centered male dominated success narratives of Cold War German history between 1945 and 1961. Until today a controversial debate amongst scholars on how to write the history of the two German states still prevails. Should one highlight the parallels and the similarities of the two German states at least until the GDR isolated itself after building the Berlin Wall in 1961? Or should differences and divisions be the dominant lenses to examine the history of the two Germanies? Or should one rather analyze the entanglement and interconnections between the two states and societies despite all their differences?

More than twenty-five years after the peaceful revolution and German reunification a fresh look at the competing efforts in East and West Germany to rebuilt their states and societies after 1945 is necessary in order to understand the roads taken and the alternatives missed in attempting to fashion "a better Germany" out of the wreckage of the 'Third Reich.' Since the very concept of German nationalism was discredited, statehood suspended and competing models of society envisioned, it will be especially important to look not only at mainstream trends, but also to examine more systematically the contesting voices of the respective oppositions which aimed to "demilitarize" and "democratize" societies and foster more "social justice" and "equality"—even though, the meaning of these political and social concepts was quite controversial.

A first set of issues the workshop will explore revolves around the toxic legacy of the Nazi dictatorship. How did the occupying powers seek to prevent World War Three, reorient a defeated enemy country towards a more peaceful future and deal with the humanitarian emergency of mass population movements? A second cluster of problems involves the construction of two competing states, the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic. Which traditions inspired these blueprints, what were their contrasting visions of citizenship and how did they try to reconstruct the gender order? A third set of questions addresses the challenges of dealing with the collapse of society and culture. How did intellectuals restructure their social theories, treat the toxic legacy of anti-Semitism and use the media to cope with problematic memories? A final set of themes concerns the growing estrangement of the victors in the Cold War since it distorted the efforts at a new start by

forcing the Germans to choose sides. What were the great power interests, how did the defeated justify their competing departures and what role did the transatlantic ties of a democratic left play? The result of these discussions ought to be a better understanding of the complexities of the post-fascist efforts at a new beginning.

With this workshop we want to honor of Konrad H. Jarausch a colleague, scholar and mentor and explore a theme that played and still plays an important role in his research and writing: postwar German history and its East-West entanglements.

Program

Thursday, April 6, 2017:

Luncheon Seminar for Graduate Students

Post-1945 German Histories: New Approaches – New Questions

A registration for the luncheon seminar is necessary. A registration for the luncheon seminar is necessary. Please send an email until **1 April 2017** to Tobias Hof: tobi@email.unc.edu

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Location: UNC Chapel Hill, Hamilton Hall, Room 569

Luncheon Seminar for Graduate Students with *Mary Fulbrook* (University College London, Department of German)

Public Keynote Lecture

Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism

Public event, no registration necessary.

5:00 – 7:00 PM

Location: UNC Chapel Hill, Wilson Library, Pleasants Family Assembly Room

5:00 PM: Welcome: *Karen Hagemann* (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History)

5:15 PM: Introduction of the Keynote Speaker and Moderation: **Konrad H. Jarausch** ((UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History)

- **Public Lecture:**

Mary Fulbrook (University College London, Department of German)
Reframing the Past: Justice, Guilt and Consolidation in East and West Germany after Nazism

Only a minority of individuals involved in Nazi crimes were prosecuted after the war; and the transnational history of trials is only beginning to be explored. Even less well understood are the ways in which those who were tainted by complicity reframed their personal life stories. Millions had been willing facilitators, witting beneficiaries, or passive (and perhaps unhappily helpless) witnesses of Nazi persecution; many had been actively involved in sustaining Nazi rule; perhaps a quarter of a million had personally killed Jewish civilians, and several million had direct knowledge of genocide. How did these people re-envision their own lives after Nazism? And how did they reinterpret their own former behaviors – their actions and inaction – in light of public confrontations with Nazi crimes and constructions of ‘perpetrators’ in trials? Going beyond well-trodden debates about ‘overcoming the past’, this paper explores patterns of personal memory among East and West Germans after Nazism.

7:00 PM: Dinner

Friday, April 7, 2017:

Workshop

Burdens and Beginnings: Rebuilding East and West Germany after Nazism

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Location: UNC Chapel Hill, Wilson Library, Pleasants Family Assembly Room

8:30 – 9:00 AM: Welcome Coffee and Registration

9:00 – 10:45 AM: **Panel I: Burdens and Beginnings**

Chair and Moderation: **Tobias Hof** (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History)

Presentations

- **Noah Strote** (NC State University, Department of History)
Lions Lay down with the Lambs: The Weimar Generation and the Ideological Preconditions of Post-Fascist Germany

A recent study by a group of historians led by Axel Schildt and Alexander Gallus found that German intellectuals across all levels of the Federal Republic in the 1950s demonstrated a “readiness to discuss” as compared to the ideologically “fissured and hostile” environment of the 1920s. The shift they traced—from a will to power to a will to dialogue—was not confined to any one realm of political discussion, but rather pervaded the culture of post-Nazi Germany. This paper will focus on the so-called Weimar generation, those intellectuals born around the turn of the twentieth century who worked as young professionals (lawyers, economists, advisers, and educators) during the collapse of the Weimar Republic and went on to contribute decisively to the reconstruction of liberal democracy in the Federal Republic. It will demonstrate how the same cohort of Germans who once described their visions for the German future as mutually incompatible began, over the course of Nazi rule, to imagine new conciliatory ways forward based on an ideology of “partnership” and a will to find a common denominator of values out of a mix of competing worldviews. The resulting ideology, I will argue, must be understood as profoundly Christian despite its sometimes secular language of reconciliation and cooperation.

- **Peter Gengler** (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History)

“Germany’s Nr. 1 Problem”: Sympathy Narratives of “Flight and Expulsion” and the Struggle for Recognition, 1945-1952

Standard assessments of the postwar absorption of some eight million German expellees in the Western Occupation Zones stress factors such as the “economic miracle” and the 1952 “equalization of burdens” law as crucial milestones. What is often overlooked is that expellees and their advocates made a concerted effort to educate both domestic and international audiences of the experiences suffered during the “flight and expulsion.” These “sympathy narratives” sought to convince audiences to recognize German victimhood and alleviate the suffering of refugees. By examining the strategies of expellees and politicians, we are granted insight into how the tremendous humanitarian crisis that threatened the fragile postwar order was overcome, and the effects of these narratives on the cultural memory of Germany that continue to resonate today.

- **Derek Holmgren** (Wake Forest University, Department of History)

“Papers or Humanitarianism?”: The Friedland Refugee Camp and Management of Displaced Populations in Postwar West Germany

Using the refugee transit camp located in Friedland, Lower Saxony as a case study, this paper examines the efforts in West Germany to aid and resettle millions of persons displaced by World War II. These uprooted populations included, among others, foreign victims of the Nazi regime,

and Germans evacuated from bombed-out cities, fleeing or expelled from Eastern Europe, and released from prisoner of war camps. Indeed, the camp at Friedland—established by order of the British military government in September 1945—functioned as the lynchpin in a system designed to collect, aid, register, and resettle displaced populations as quickly as possible. After discussion of the camp’s operation within context of the broader history of humanitarianism, analysis of the interplay between imperatives for control (registration, categorization, and transit restrictions) and amelioration (aid distribution and medical services) shows how this regulatory form of humanitarians served the state and displaced individuals.

Commentator: **Michael L. Meng** (Clemson University, Department of History)

10:45 – 11:00 AM: **Coffee Break**

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM: **Panel II: New States**

Chair and Moderation: **Adam R. Seipp** (Texas A&M University, Department of History)

Presentations

- **James Chappel** (Duke University, Department of History)
Revisiting the Welfare Dictatorship: Volkssolidarität, East German Eldercare, and the Socialist Style of Welfare in the 1950s

This presentation will question Konrad Jarausch’s influential depiction of the East German state as a “welfare dictatorship” through a close study of *Volkssolidarität*, the Communist organization devoted to care for the elderly. While his depiction certainly captures something important about East German statebuilding, it is important to note that socialists developed their own concept of “welfare” [*Fürsorge*], and one that is quite different from the one articulated in West Germany and in contemporary political science. Archival research in the recently-opened collection of *Volkssolidarität* shows in detail how East Germans in the 1950s theorized a uniquely socialist approach to the problem of aging—one that bore little similarity with the more traditionally “welfarist” approach present in the West.

- **Brittany Lehman** (Charleston College, Department of History)
Naturalization and Ethnic Minorities in West Germany: Exceptions to Jus Soli, 1949-1974

The provisional West German *Grundgesetz* from 1949 connected German citizenship explicitly with German ethnicity, rejecting the idea that non-German migrants or their children could naturalize. Basing citizenship on blood, the West German law echoed Nazi statutes rather than reflecting pre-1933 German citizenship laws and traditions. West German officials argued that West Germany had to maintain its exclusive citizenship law in order to prevent cases of dual citizenship in accordance with international agreement. This stance proved impractical. The

West German government was forced to reconsider its inflexibility first for Displaced Persons, living in West German as a direct consequence of Nazi action and later for as the number of children with ethnic German mothers and foreign fathers climbed into the hundreds of thousands. Exploring those early exceptions to the connection between citizenship and paternity, this paper argues that many West German politicians used that international law to excuse continued exclusionary behavior until forced to change.

- **Alexandria Ruble** (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History)
Postwar Paternalisms: Combating Fascism Through the Family in 1950s East and West Germany

After 1945, Germans on both sides of the Iron Curtain inherited a Civil Code that dated back to 1900 and designated women as second-class citizens in marital property, spousal rights, and parental authority. East and West German politicians and female activists pursued parallel reforms of the longstanding law as part of their larger postwar reconstruction projects. This paper compares how East and West German legislators envisioned the role of women, gender, and the family in their new, post-fascist German states. It demonstrates that in both states, Nazism's treatment of women and the family served as a negative reference point for legislators. As the Cold War intensified, East and West German politicians often went one step further and cast the other Germany's policies on gender and the family as "fascist" in nature in an attempt to distance themselves from the past and from each other.

Commentator: **Helga Welsh** (Wake Forest University, Department of Politics and International Affairs)

1:00 – 2:00 PM: **Lunch Break** (for invited guests at HM 569)

2:00 – 3:45 PM: **Panel III: New Societies and Cultures**

Chair and Moderator: **Richard Langston** (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literature)

Presentation

- **Jakob Norberg** (Duke University, Department of Germanic Languages and Literature)
Adorno and the Nation

Theodor W. Adorno was one of the most important and influential public intellectuals in the Federal Republic of Germany from his postwar relocation to Germany until his death in 1969. By looking at a lesser-known text about his decision to return to Germany, this paper reconstructs Adorno's thoughts on nationhood. It argues that Adorno has a keen eye for the individual psychological benefits of national belonging and something we could call the philosophical status of the nation in modernity, but that he remains peculiarly blind to the crucial institutional

dimensions of nation-building, such as the importance of a national (and nationalizing) schooling system.

- **Andrea A. Sinn** (Elon University, Department of History and Geography)
Returning to Stay? Jews in Germany after the Holocaust

Jews returning to Germany experienced various forms of isolation and stigmatization in the postwar period. The paper explores these experiences and the ways in which they contributed to the process of democratization and rehabilitation of Germany into the family of nations. Moreover, it argues that competing and conflicting German, Jewish, and international conceptions of Jewish life in Germany that were voiced during the early postwar years play an important role in understanding the process of development within individual Jewish communities in the Federal Republic and the position that German-Jewish organizations occupy within the German as well as the Jewish environment today.

- **Priscilla Layne** (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literature)
Zwischen Halbstarcken und Rowdys: Depictions of Consumerism, Rebellion and Gender in the 1950s

In the late 1950s, several American rock 'n' roll films took West Germany by storm. Though these films addressed the problem of delinquent American youth, their themes and music resonated with German audiences. And though these films were not screened in the East, the open border between East and West allowed for both populations of young people to see these films and as a result adopt American clothing style and music. In 1956 and 1957 respectively, the West German film *Die Halbstarcken* and the East German film *Berlin-Ecke Schönhäuserallee* addressed this youth problem in a German context. I will compare these two films regarding their portrayal of femininity specifically. Although both films link the problem of delinquent youth to consumerism, pop culture and "weak parents," they take a strikingly different approach to young women. I argue that while consumerism in the West German film is clearly gendered and linked to femininity, in the East German film consumerism is linked to class.

Commentator: **Jonathan Hess** (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literature)

3:45 – 4:00 PM: **Coffee Break**

4:00 – 5:45 PM: **Panel IV: New National and International Orders**

Chair and Moderator: **Holger Moroff** (UNC Chapel Hill, The Department of Political Science)

Presentations

- **Andrew Port** (Wayne State University, Department of History):

Memory and Successful Redemption: A Non-Cold War Narrative of the Federal Republic

The Federal Republic has indeed been a “success story”—depending on how one defines that phrase and even without using the foil of the “failed” GDR. One reason for that success—e.g. socio-political stability, economic prosperity, a commitment to democracy and respect for human rights—has been the willingness of political elites and civil society to engage in “memory work” about the two earlier German dictatorships. My current project focuses on German responses to genocide in other countries after 1945, and my paper will focus on reactions to mass murders that took place in the 1990s. I will look at how consideration of Germany’s own fraught history affected domestic debates and foreign policy decisions in ways that went beyond the parameters of the Cold War. No single term captures the complexity of any nation’s long-term development, but a new narrative history of the FRG must take into account the role memory has played from the beginning of the postwar period and to the present in the postwar *Vergangenheitsbewältigungsgesellschaft(en)*.

- **Lorn Hillaker** (UNC Chapel Hill Department of History)
Forging a “Better Germany”: Competing Images of West and East Germany, 1949-1960

The early years of FRG and GDR cultural diplomacy were largely defined by the need to establish a role within their respective Cold War alliance blocs. The importance of competition, particularly among Western states and the so-called “Third World,” was further reinforced by the FRG’s Hallstein Doctrine of 1955 which strained relations between the two states even as the GDR sought international recognition. Cultural diplomacy offered a route outside of traditional channels of diplomacy to attempt to convince foreign citizens to support or at least have favorable views of either German state. Thematically, much of the cultural diplomatic media from this early period described the rebuilding of each state, adherence to international treaties such as the Potsdam Agreement, and worked to counter the immediate legacy of the Second World War among audiences who had only recently been enemies. As division progressed in to the later 1950’s the GDR and the FRG began to focus more on cultivating an image of a peaceful, friendly state superior to both the Nazi past and each other, ultimately setting the terms for the image-building contest to continue throughout the Cold War.

- **Scott Krause** (ZZF Potsdam)
Revisiting Willy Brandt’s Berlin: The German-American Campaign to Reintroduce an Anti-Fascist Activist as a Cosmopolitan Cold Warrior, 1946-1966

Willy Brandt enjoys iconic status as the Chancellor who implemented the détente “Neue Ostpolitik.” Yet the Nobel laureate rose to prominence as West Berlin Mayor in the Cold War, denouncing the Wall as “barriers of a concentration camp.” Contextualization of Brandt’s years in Berlin, from arrival during the Allied occupation until departure as West German Foreign Minister, reveals that he sculpted a public persona utilizing the city’s rancorous urban politics. Brandt emerged as **standard**-bearer of former “revolutionary Socialists” who had returned under the banner of “anti-totalitarianism.” Hounded by accusations of disloyalty in exile, Brandt and a support network of local Social Democrats and American officials introduced him as a dependable anti-Communist to local voters and steadfast ally to American diplomats. Through friendly news coverage, high-profile travel itineraries, and commissioned autobiographical

works, the anti-fascist activist Brandt reinterpreted his exile past, offering a post-Nazi electorate the kind of internationalism it craved.

Commentator: **Thomas Pegelow-Kaplan** (Appalachian State University, Center for Judaic, Holocaust and Peace Studies)

A publication of selected and rewritten workshop papers in a **Special Issue of the journal *Central European History* under the title “Burdens and Beginnings: Rebuilding East and West Germany after Nazism and War—Comparative and Entangled Perspectives”** is planned. *The special issue will be edited by Karen Hagemann, Tobias Hof and Konrad H. Jarausch and*

Reception in Honor of Konrad H. Jarausch German History in Transatlantic Perspective

A registration for this event is necessary.

6:30 – 8:00 PM

Location: UNC Carolina Club, Carolina Club, 150 Stadium Dr, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

- Welcome by **Karen Hagemann** (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History)
- Welcome by the Chair of the UNC Chapel Hill History Department **Fitz Brundage**
- Welcome by the Director of the UNC Chapel Hill Center for European Studies **John Stephens**
- Laudatio: **Chris Browning** (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History)
- Laudatio: **Elizabeth Heineman** (University of Iowa, Department of History)
- Presentation of the Festschrift “**German History in Transatlantic Perspective**” by **Michel L. Meng** (Clemson University, Department of History) and **Adam R. Seipp** (Texas A&M University, Department of History)

8:00 PM: Reception

8:30 PM: Dinner

Co-Conveners and Sponsors of the Workshop:

- NCGS Seminar and Workshop Series
- UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History
- UNC Chapel Hill, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literature
- UNC Chapel Hill, Center for European Studies
- UNC Chapel Hill College of Art& Sciences
- UNC Chapel Hill, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies (?)
- Duke, Department of History
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (?)

Organizers:

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- Dr. Tobias Hof (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History), email: tobi@email.unc.edu
- Dr. Brittany Lehmann (Charleston College, Department of History)
- Larisa Stiglich, M.A. (UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History)