

Bulletin of the GHI Washington

Issue 49

Fall 2011

Copyright

Das Digitalisat wird Ihnen von perspectivia.net, der Online-Publikationsplattform der Max Weber Stiftung – Stiftung Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland, zur Verfügung gestellt. Bitte beachten Sie, dass das Digitalisat urheberrechtlich geschützt ist. Erlaubt ist aber das Lesen, das Ausdrucken des Textes, das Herunterladen, das Speichern der Daten auf einem eigenen Datenträger soweit die vorgenannten Handlungen ausschließlich zu privaten und nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken erfolgen. Eine darüber hinausgehende unerlaubte Verwendung, Reproduktion oder Weitergabe einzelner Inhalte oder Bilder können sowohl zivil- als auch strafrechtlich verfolgt werden.

PREFACE

This *Bulletin* begins with the Second Gerald D. Feldman Memorial Lecture, delivered by Margaret Lavinia Anderson on Imperial Germany's reactions to the Armenian genocide. Taking Hitler's reported August 1939 remark "Who still talks nowadays about the extermination of the Armenians?" as her point of departure, Anderson examines the kinds of "talk" that the Turks' treatment of the Armenians had, in fact, provoked in Germany at the time. Despite the Ottoman-German alliance, by July 1915 the German ambassador to Turkey reported to the German Chancellor that the Turks aimed to "destroy the Armenian race." Even though censorship prevented any such statement in the German press, Anderson demonstrates that German elites—professors, businessmen, politicians—were well informed about the genocide. Prior to the Holocaust, she concludes, "events in Anatolia in 1915 set the international standard for horror." While Hitler regarded the genocide as a warning of the doom awaiting weaker peoples, other Germans expressed shame for Germany's share in this wrong.

The second feature article presents the work of Jan Surmann, the latest winner of Franz Steiner Prize, which the German Historical Institute and the Franz Steiner Verlag award biennially for the best German-language manuscript in transatlantic and North American studies. Surmann's examination of the international negotiations over the restitution of Holocaust-era assets that took place in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, argues that these restitution debates, conducted under the leadership of the United States, led to a transformation of Holocaust memory.

This issue also features a special forum on "The German Foreign Office and the Nazi Past." In the fall of 2010, the independent commission of historians appointed to investigate the history of the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) during the Nazi era and the postwar period published its report. *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* [The Foreign Office and the Past: German Diplomats in the Third Reich and the Federal Republic], by Eckart Conze, Norbert Frei, Peter Hayes, and Moshe Zimmermann, became a bestseller and triggered a vigorous public debate in Germany. In March 2011, the GHI Washington hosted a panel discussion about the book. To

introduce *Bulletin* readers to the book and the debate it prompted, this issue features an overview of the book by Norbert Frei and Peter Hayes along with four assessments, by historians from the United States, Germany, and Great Britain: Christopher Browning, Johannes Hürter, Holger Nehring, and Volker Ullrich. Controversial debate is a fundamental feature of academic life, and we are glad to present our readers with a range of different perspectives.

The two articles in the “GHI Research” section are also related to the history of National Socialism. Stefan Link, the GHI’s Doctoral Fellow in International Business History this past academic year, examines the multifaceted relationships of Henry Ford, the Ford Motor Company, and Fordism to National Socialism, arguing that Ford provided an “illiberal, productivist alternative” to liberal capitalism that the Nazis found appealing. Miriam Rürup, GHI Research Fellow, provides an overview of her research project on statelessness after the First and Second World Wars. Examining the lived experience of statelessness, its treatment on the national and supranational level, as well as its cultural representations, Rürup demonstrates that studying statelessness illuminates key aspects of political belonging, citizenship, and statehood in the twentieth century.

The conference reports in the remainder of this issue reflect the diversity of topics examined at our conferences, ranging from early modern history to the history of the 1970s, from business history to the history of criminal justice, from the history of religion to the global history of cash crops, from the history of regulation to German-Jewish history. In addition to the calendar included at the end of this issue, please consult our online calendar of events at www.ghi-dc.org to check for upcoming events. This coming spring, the German Historical Institute in Washington will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary. We hope to welcome you at some of the events that we are lining up for the anniversary year.

Hartmut Berghoff, Director