

Bulletin of the GHI Washington

Issue 45

Fall 2009

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15TH TRANSATLANTIC DOCTORAL SEMINAR: GERMAN HISTORY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Seminar at the GHI Washington and Georgetown University, April 29-May 2, 2009. Co-sponsored by the GHI and the BMW Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University. Conveners: Roger Chickering (Georgetown University) and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI). Faculty Mentors: Jürgen Kocka (Free University, Berlin), Helmut Smith (Vanderbilt University), Corinna Treitel (Washington University, St. Louis). Participants: Uta Andrea Balbier (GHI), Tobias Becker (Free University, Berlin), Anthony Cantor (University of Toronto), David Brandon Dennis (Ohio State University), Norman Domeier (European University Institute), Steven Chase Gummer (Georgetown University), Jason D. Hansen (University of Illinois), Jasper Heinzen (Darwin College, University of Cambridge), Angelika Hoelger (Johns Hopkins University), Theo Jung (University of Bielefeld), Daniel J. Koehler (University of Chicago), Kerstin von der Krone (University of Erfurt), Yair Mintzker (Stanford University), Alexandra Ortmann (University of Göttingen), Daniel Reupke (University of the Saarland), Adam Rosenbaum (Emory University), Corinna Unger (GHI), Stefan Wünsch (Humboldt University, Berlin).

The 15th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar brought together sixteen doctoral students from North America and Europe who are writing their dissertations on topics in nineteenth-century German history. All the students submitted papers drawing on their dissertation projects, which were precirculated ahead of time so that the seminar could be fully devoted to comments and discussion among the doctoral students and faculty mentors. The participants asked hard questions of one another, but did so in a spirit of constructive criticism and collegiality, which made the seminar an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The first panel was devoted to two papers that examined the spatial dimension of nineteenth-century German history and nation-building. In his paper on the “The Defortification of the German City, 1689-1866,” Yair Mintzker examined defortification as a significant moment in the history of German cities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Defortification, he argued, signaled a fundamental transformation of the urban environment on three interrelated levels: the city’s ability to defend itself militarily, public security within the city, and the way burghers and foreigners imagined and

defined the city. Moving from the unmaking of boundaries in urban topography to the making of boundaries in national cartography, Jason Hansen's paper "Mapping Germans: Statistics and Cartography as Languages of a Personalized Nation" examined the use of maps and statistical tables in the second half of the nineteenth century. According to Hansen, statistics and cartography served as vehicles for creating images of the nation as a cultural body, thus counteracting economic and political forces that shaped national identity around the state. In particular, Hansen argued that in the last third of the nineteenth century the notion of the *Sprachgrenze* (language frontier) was transformed. Whereas it had previously been understood as something over which humans exerted little control, it now came to be conceived as a battleground among nationalities that could be aggressively pushed forward through assimilation or resettlement. The ensuing discussion debated the merits of the "spatial turn" and explored levels of analysis above and below the nation: the local causes of and responses to the demolition of city walls and the transnational dimension of cartography and statistics.

The second panel brought together two papers on different aspects of early and mid-nineteenth-century intellectual and cultural history. Theo Jung's paper "Signs of Decadence: Semantic Studies on the Emergence of Cultural Criticism in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" applied the methods of discourse analysis to examine the wave of cultural reflections (*Kulturkritik*) produced by the French Revolution and its aftermath. According to Jung, the concept of *Zeitgeist* played a central role in these reflections and quickly took on political significance. Though this spiritualizing interpretation of history was heavily criticized, by the end of the 1820s it was well established. Changing focus from discourse to institutions, Anthony Cantor's paper "Our Conservatories? Local, Regional, and National Conceptions of German Music Education, 1843-1933" explored the role that German conservatories played in creating or strengthening local, regional, and national identities. The conservatories, Cantor argued, were focal points for prestige and power and served as laboratories for the internalization of claims of loyalty and identity. The discussion of Jung's paper probed the differences between discourse analysis and *Begriffsgeschichte*, and the relationship of both to historical context and social history. The discussion of Cantor's project concentrated on how national identity or gender issues manifested themselves in the world of

music and whether it made sense to widen the focus beyond nation and gender.

The world of theater and popular entertainment was the subject of the third panel. In her paper “Pleasures in an Age of Policing: Taverns, Leisure, and Entertainment in Berlin, 1830-1869,” Angelika Hoelger analyzed the role of taverns as sites of leisure and entertainment for Berlin’s lower classes as well as the policing of such establishments. In nineteenth-century Berlin, Hoelger concluded, both leisure and policing were intrinsically tied to class affiliation and to discourses on the so-called dangerous classes. Chronologically picking up almost exactly where Hoelger left off, Tobias Becker’s paper “Inszenierte Moderne: Populäres Theater in Berlin und London, 1880-1930” focused on the connections between popular theater and department stores in Berlin and London around 1900. Already around the turn of the century, he contended, popular entertainment was commercialized and closely intertwined with the economy, so that the advent of mass consumption applied not only to material goods but also to entertainment. The discussion that followed revolved around how to combine cultural and social history, the role of class in popular culture and its policing, and how to assess the effectiveness of policing.

Moving from entertainment to religion, the fourth panel featured papers on Jewish and Protestant history. Kerstin von der Krone’s paper “Wissenschaft in Öffentlichkeit: Modernisierungsdiskurse in der Publizistik der Wissenschaft des Judentums” examined the origins of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as a major intellectual movement of German Judaism in the first half of the nineteenth century through the lens of its scholarly periodicals. Focusing on how Jewish scholars adapted the tools of the press to create a public scholarly discourse, von der Krone explored the debates about what the central subject of a *Wissenschaft des Judentums* ought to be as well as the failed attempts to establish the field at a German university and the eventual founding of a Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau in 1854. In the panel’s second paper, “The Wilhelmine Conversion Story: Time, Space, Community and the New Evangelical Subjectivity, 1885-1905,” Daniel Koehler analyzed the conversion stories that circulated among awakened Protestant communities in the *Kaiserreich*, primarily those from the generation born 1860-1880, who came of age around the turn of the century. With their treatment of motifs like style, speed, and temporality,

these conversion stories projected a newly awakened subject that was at ease with the world of fin-de-siècle urban life. This analysis, Koehler argued, not only helps to explain the success of revivalism in the Empire, but illustrates the dependence of that project upon the distinct modernity of the Wilhelmine period. The ensuing discussion included questions about Catholicism as an absent but perhaps fruitful reference point for both papers, definitions of *Öffentlichkeit*, and the extent to which Koehler's conversion stories were part of a broader phenomenon of contemporaries searching for meaning in a period of rapid change.

The fifth panel explored the connections between nineteenth-century cultural and economic history from two different perspectives. Daniel Reupke's paper "Die Grenzen des Kredits" applied the methods of historical network analysis to examine the mechanics of lending in three rural towns located in the Saar-Lor-Lux (Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg) border region. Using notarized debt certificates to construct a database spanning the whole of the nineteenth century, Reupke's project seeks to reconstruct the networks within which all lending took place in an age before bank loans became available. Among other things, his preliminary findings suggest that these networks and their lending activities regularly crossed the state boundaries between the Saarland, France, and Luxembourg. Adam T. Rosenbaum's paper "The Rise of Tourism and the Re-Mapping of Bavaria: Bad Reichenhall and the Struggle for Life, 1900-1920" examined early twentieth-century tourism in Bad Reichenhall, focusing on how the Upper Bavarian spa town was marketed via nature, modernity, and cosmopolitanism. Rosenbaum also showed how the First World War cut the city's tourism industry off from its international clientele, as the spas were converted into sick bays for German soldiers. To some extent, the discussions of the two papers mirrored one another. Just as participants wondered how Reupke's economic history might be supplemented by social and cultural history (by exploring the sociocultural aspects of his networks), they discussed how Rosenbaum's cultural history might integrate social and economic history (by examining the socioeconomic aspects of tourism).

The sixth panel brought together two papers on the imaginary boundaries (both internal and external) of Germanness in the *Kaiserreich*. In his paper "Ex-Servicemen's Associations and Prussian State-Building in the Province of Hanover, 1866-1914," Jasper Heinzen presented

a case study of the incorporation of new areas into German territorial states. In the case of Hanover's incorporation into Prussia, he argued, a careful balance between top-down indoctrination and creative appropriation of military patriotism by ex-servicemen changed Hanoverian self-perception, thus transforming Prusso-Hanoverian kinship from an "imagined" to a "lived community." David Brandon Dennis's paper "Deserteurs, Syphilitic Sailors, and Prodigal Sons: Transnational Masculinities and the Foreign Port City" examined how Wilhelmine authorities interpreted merchant mariners' experiences abroad via three transnational masculinities—that of the deserter, syphilitic sailor, and prodigal son. These masculine countertypes, Dennis argued, were structured around transgressions involving the crossing of national boundaries and served to uphold the goals of *Weltpolitik* even as they constructed a gendered line between nation and "overseas." The panel prompted a vigorous debate on identity and gender as categories of historical analysis, and on the merits and problems of continuing to focus on national identity in writing nineteenth-century German history.

The seventh panel was dedicated to sex and crime. Alexandra Ortmann's paper "Die Multiperspektivität juristischer Texte um 1900: Mehr als nur Quellenkritik" showed that judges had considerably more discretion in interpreting Imperial Germany's code of criminal procedure (Reichsstrafprozessordnung) of 1879 than has often been assumed. After examining how differing interpretations of criminal procedure were related to contemporary debates on juridical methods and on substantive (as opposed to procedural) criminal law reform, Ortmann concluded that the interpretive leeway regarding procedure made it possible for some judges to conduct criminal trials in ways that came close to the old "inquisitorial" model rather than the reformed "adversarial" one. Stefan Wünsch's paper "Heinrich Dreuw und die moderne Prostituiertenkontrolle" provided an analysis of a medical text by the physician Dr. Dreuw, who conducted medical examinations of prostitutes for the Berlin police. Wünsch focused on how the text produced gender difference. After relating Dreuw's treatise to other texts as part of a larger discursive network, Wünsch concluded that it revealed more about the author's fragile masculinity than about prostitution. The ensuing discussion centered on questions of context: for instance, whether differences over criminal procedure can be related to party-political positions, and, more generally, the question to what extent a textual analysis like Wünsch's needs to be embedded in a historical context.

Different aspects of the political history of the *Kaiserreich* were the subject of the eighth and final panel. In his paper “Im ‘Reich der Gottesfurcht und frommen Sitte’: Der Eulenburg-Skandal als moralischer Skandal,” Norman Domeier examined reactions to the Eulenburg affair, which involved allegations of homosexual conduct among members of Kaiser Wilhelm’s entourage. When the foreign press reacted to the scandal by demolishing German pretensions to moral superiority, this foreign criticism failed to create a united patriotic response among Germans. Instead, the Eulenburg scandal polarized Wilhelmine society into two hostile camps. This polarizing effect, Domeier argued, marked the Eulenburg affair as a “moral scandal,” as opposed to a mere “political scandal,” which unites a society. In his paper, “Oriental Sympathies, Occidental Rebellions: German Turcophilism and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1875-1914,” Steven Chase Gummer investigated German public discourse and news reporting on the Great Eastern Crisis, especially the reception of religious violence between Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, arguing that the contours of the German debate were influenced by the ideology of the *Kulturkampf*. The discussion of the papers included questions about the distinction between “public opinion” and “published opinion,” the extent to which parts of the *Kaiserreich*’s press functioned as a medium of state propaganda, comparisons between the Eulenburg and Dreyfus affairs, and the effect of the Eulenburg scandal on attitudes toward homo- and heterosexuality.

Vigorous debate in a collegial atmosphere made this seminar an extraordinary intellectual experience. The concluding discussion reflected on the predominance of cultural history—in the broad sense of the word—at the seminar, in both the North American and European dissertation projects. While some noted that the search for meaning had certainly not replaced the search for explanations (and, in that sense, a narrower conception of cultural history had not prevailed), others expressed concern that, even so, the cultural-history slant of most projects neglected social history and the role of class in particular. Others disagreed, arguing that most of the dissertation projects were supplementing their cultural-history focus with social history. Everyone agreed that virtually all of the presenters responded positively to suggestions to strengthen social-history aspects of their projects. Other critical observations called attention to the absence of master narratives in the projects as well as the discussions, and also expressed concern that most of the cultural

history being written lacked political relevance. In response, one of the conveners noted that while the political relevance of social-historical work focusing on social inequalities was more salient, the fact that topics such as the history of music education, popular entertainment, tourism, merchant sailors, criminal trials, prostitution, and a sex scandal were now regarded as legitimate topics of historical research was also of political significance.

Richard F. Wetzell (GHI)