

Bulletin of the GHI Washington

Issue 29

Fall 2001

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Reviewing the history of Germany since the fall of the Wall, Marion Deshmukh pointed out that Faller-Walzer's introspective examination of Berlin's past and present recalls the "juxtaposition of hope and despair" that gripped many German artists in 1945. At that time an art critic asked: "Is there any decomposition more surrealistic than the pictures of the devastated cities?" And Winston Churchill once remarked that "First we shape buildings, then they shape us." Beyond this observation, the further question that Berlin's history of construction, destruction, and reconstruction poses is how long we continue to be shaped by that which has vanished or been absorbed by subsequent structures. Artists such as Faller-Walzer are chronicling the disappearance of a world quickly overtaken by the new cultural politics of urban reconstruction, even as they contribute to the persistent power of the invisible.

The exhibition of Faller-Walzer's photographs at the GHI will run for the next two years. Contact the Institute for information on the artist and his works.

Cordula Grewe

PRUSSIA—YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

Symposium at the GHI, March 27, 2001. Conveners: Dieter Dettke (Friedrich Ebert Foundation), Christof Mauch (GHI). Speakers: Manfred Stolpe (minister president of Brandenburg), David E. Barclay (Kalamazoo College). Moderator: Robert Gerald Livingston (GHI).

The year 2001 marks the three-hundredth anniversary of the Kingdom of Prussia. When, on January 17, 1701, Frederick William III, elector of Brandenburg, had himself crowned king in Königsberg, the state was insignificant. Over the next 170 years Prussia struggled under talented monarchs like Frederick the Great (1712–86) to establish its supremacy in Germany, an effort brought to a successful conclusion when the Prussian King Wilhelm I was proclaimed German emperor on the same day in 1871. The "Prussian Year" has been only modestly commemorated in Germany, even in Prussia's core territory, the states of Brandenburg and Berlin, as Manfred Stolpe observed. In the United States, David E. Barclay added, the once negative image of Prussia among Americans has now given way, but to—nothing. Even among historians in this country the prevailing reaction to this long-extinguished state, once so splendid, is indifference. The GHI's symposium may not have revived general interest in the splendor of Prussia but it did engender a lively discussion, initiated by the two speakers, on Prussia's record and in particular on Prussia's famous virtues, primary and secondary.

Even today, Stolpe noted, Prussia can serve to polarize in Germany, although far less intensely than was once the case. Too seldom considered are its contributions: rejection of religious discrimination on its territory, its orientation toward the Western centers of Holland and England, its modern immigration and settlement policy, and Frederick the Great's support for American independence in the early 1780s. The once great fear of Prussia has vanished, Stolpe continued. This is true even in Poland, Barclay added. Any fear of a successor to Prussia in contemporary Germany is groundless, Stolpe argued, for German federalism is much more balanced than it was before Prussia disappeared from the map.

Even at the height of its power, Barclay thought, Prussia was more complicated, more subject to contradictions, its history characterized by more discontinuities than has commonly been supposed. It is even difficult to say what was typically Prussian: The dynasty, the bureaucracy, the military? None of them, in Barclay's view. Rather, typically Prussian was its ability to renew itself after defeat. The commentator ventured the view that this may have been a lesson that the Federal Republic, for all the anti-Prussian sentiments of its Rhenish and Bavarian leadership, took subconsciously to heart as it rebuilt West Germany after World War II. In the United States the image of Prussia, positive in the eighteenth and on into the nineteenth century, turned negative after the establishment of the German Reich in 1871. Along with Winston Churchill, who thought Prussia "the root of all evil," the United States came to subscribe to the Allied war aim of dissolving Prussia, which was then accomplished by Allied Control Council Law 46 in 1947—a move that the historian Golo Mann called "a kick which the victorious asses delivered to a long dead lion."

The discussion following the presentations by Stolpe and Barclay centered on two questions. First, when did Prussia expire? Was it with the administrative fiat of the Control Council? Perhaps it was with the establishment of the Reich in 1871, which Wilhelm I called "the saddest day of my life, for we are burying the Prussian kingdom." Perhaps it was the Nazis' takeover of Prussia in 1933 and Hitler's attempt to portray himself as the natural successor to Frederick the Great, Otto von Bismarck, and the Prussian Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg. The second issue, more intensively debated, concerned the so-called Prussian virtues. Did those officers and officials who felt themselves working in the Prussian tradition far too easily allow the "secondary" virtues of achievement, sense of duty, and self-discipline to be perverted by the Nazis for their own purposes, which were antithetical to that tradition? And what happened to those "primary" virtues of decency, honor, tolerance, and a sense of responsibility during the years of Nazi barbarism? Stolpe insisted on the present validity of at least one legacy of Prussia, the insistence that "there is no honor and

no merit [in an achievement] if it does not include a benefit for the country and the people.” But Prussia too, he went on to say, makes one consider that values can degenerate into extremes—Prussian sobriety into emotional coldness or practical reason into the cynicism of power, or patriotism into fanaticism. Seen from that vantage point Prussia represents true tragedy, victimized by its own virtues. In his concluding observations Barclay identified such “tragic dimensions” of Prussian history as giving it significance beyond Germany for people everywhere.

Robert Gerald Livingston

EUROPE IN CROSS-NATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Conference at the University of Cincinnati, April 6–7, 2001. Co-sponsored by the Taft Fund of the University of Cincinnati. Conveners: Deborah Cohen (American University), Vera Lind (GHI), Christof Mauch (GHI), Maura O’Connor (University of Cincinnati). Participants: Peter Baldwin (UCLA), Susan R. Grayzel (University of Mississippi), Nancy L. Green (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales), Michael Miller (Syracuse University), Maria Paschalidi (University College London), Marta Petrusiewicz (Hunter College, CUNY), Glenda Sluga (University of Sydney).

On the first weekend in April the University of Cincinnati hosted a conference to explore themes of, practices in, and approaches to cross-national and comparative studies in European history during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The goal was to bring together a group of scholars who work across national and disciplinary boundaries using these kinds of approaches. The conference participants were asked to deliver papers in which they discussed the advantages of as well as the obstacles to using comparative and cross-national approaches and methods in their own research. Papers were circulated before the conference, permitting a generous allotment of time for discussion.

In the first session Marta Petrusiewicz presented a case study of the comparative history of three countries, where she found remarkable similarities in their quest for modernization: Ireland, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and the Kingdom of Poland between 1820 and 1870. She reflected on the experience of “doing” comparative research but also addressed the question of “what, why, and how do we compare?” She observed that most