

*New Research and Writing in Modern German History*. University of California Press,

**Reviewed by** Christina von Hodenberg

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This conference, which was intended to bring together scholars working on modern German history throughout California, was opened on Friday, February 27th, by Gerald D. Feldman. The director of the Center for German and European Studies at UC Berkeley greeted more than 60 participants from the eight general University of California campuses, from Stanford and St. Mary's College. Among the guests were UC Berkeley chancellor Robert M. Berdahl, the incoming president of the American Historical Association, James Sheehan, and the next president of the German Studies Association, Katherine S. Roper. Scholars working on Early Modern Germany, such as Peter H. Reill, Thomas A. Brady Jr. and David W. Sabeau, also joined the conference in an effort to foster contacts between the existing network of Early Modernists and the emerging network of Modernists. Graduate students attended from the UC campuses Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside, Santa Barbara, Berkeley, and from Stanford. Also participating were colleagues from the Department of German at Berkeley. The workshop was convened by Gerald D. Feldman and Christina von Hodenberg, both UC Berkeley historians, and sponsored by the DAAD and the Center for German and European Studies at Berkeley.

William Hagen, a specialist on Prussian history (UC Davis), gave the keynote lecture on "German History Beyond the Sonderweg." Integrating modern and early modern history, Hagen discussed the emergence of new grand narratives

and new narrative styles in the aftermath of the Sonderweg historiography. He tackled the core question of modern German historiography, drawing on recent contributions by historians (such as Jarausch and Geyer, Wehler and Nipperdey) and contemporary philosophers. The lively discussion following the lecture confirmed that nowadays, a plurality of narratives reigns. Among the issues discussed were the dangers of teleology and causality, the nation as a paradigm, a specifically German authoritarianism, and the integration of current challenges like multiculturalism and globalization into historiography.

Session I, chaired by James Sheehan, presented new work on post-1945 Germany. Robert Moeller from UC Irvine, who recently published two books on the history of the Federal Republic, talked on how to use B-movies from the 1950s as sources for the mass culture of the time. Choosing one film as an example ("Kinder, Muetter, und ein General," 1955), he pointed out how the movie and its reception mirrored changing gender roles, Cold War tensions and rearmament debates. The second speaker, DAAD professor Christina von Hodenberg from UC Berkeley, presented findings from her forthcoming book on the public sphere in West Germany. She attributed the swift politicization of the mass media during the long sixties mainly to generational changes, arguing that the protest generation of the student movement teamed up with the earlier "45er" generation to proselytize the masses to democracy. She stressed

that a critical public sphere emerged already during the late fifties, well before the "Spiegel affair." Next, Frank Biess from UC San Diego outlined the results of his prize-winning (and soon to be published) dissertation on returning prisoners of war. Comparing how East and West Germany dealt with these millions of returnees, he emphasized the post-war nature of both societies, their strategies of transforming POWs into loyal citizens, and the privatization of the widespread experience of violence, mass death, and survival. Finally, Harold Marcuse from UC Santa Barbara gave insights into his new research project about the role of age cohorts in dealing with the Nazi past in West Germany. He tried to identify the "mythic legacies" of victimization, resistance and ignorance among four generations he called the "1933ers," "1948ers," "1968ers" and "1979ers." <p> The ensuing discussion centered on the legacy of war and National Socialism in West and East German society. Questions focused on the function of memory, taboo subjects, and the more recent creation of a common German past through narratives such as Guenter Grass' novel "Im Krebsgang." Another subject of lively debate was the generational paradigm and, especially, the role of the so-called "45ers" or "48ers" in the democratization of West Germany. <p> On Saturday, February 28th, session II centered on 19th and early 20th century research. Marc Cioc, an environmental historian from UC Santa Cruz, explained how the river Rhine gradually was made into a human artifact. He described how German engineers transformed and controlled every part of the river since the early 19th century, and how this became a model in other parts of the world. The discussion concentrated on profiteers, protesters, and the idea of progress. Then, Ann Goldberg from UC Riverside introduced her new project on defamation lawsuits in imperial Germany. She stressed how honor disputes promoted conflict, reinforced existing power hierarchies, but also took on positive functions by fostering populist movements and fighting antisemitism. Her talk sparked a lively debate

on the differences between German and Anglo-Saxon law and procedure, and the concept of honor in imperial Germany. The third speaker, Katherine S. Roper (St. Mary's), talked about mobilized crowds in Weimar cinema and reality. She asked how films shaped the way ordinary people saw the actions of crowds and their own possibilities, and spelled this out in detail regarding "Doctor Mabuse." Questions for Ms. Roper dealt with the reception of the movie, and concepts of evil and order in Weimar cinema. <p> Session III, chaired by Margaret Lavinia Anderson (Berkeley), focused on intellectual history and the history of intellectuals. David S. Luft (UC San Diego) outlined the book he is currently writing: an intellectual history of Austria since the 18th century. He drew mainly on examples from literature, philosophy, and the social sciences, with Vienna at the center. Luft's paper fostered an engaged discussion of the question whether and from when on Austria can be regarded as intellectually separate from Germany. The next speaker, Cathryn Carson from UC Berkeley, traced the emergence of the paradigm of science as an instrumental, technological force in post-war Germany's intellectual discourse. Discussing the views of Heidegger, Habermas, and Heisenberg, she argued that from the mid-century on, older concepts of science waned rapidly. Questions from the audience addressed convergences of Habermas' and Heidegger's positions, and the 1960's and 1970's culture of technocracy. Finally, Kenneth D. Barkin (UC Riverside) explained W.E.B. Du Bois' lifelong passion for Germany and the Germans with his biographic experience as a black student in the Berlin of the 1890's, where he escaped racism and, among other things, adopted the dress of a Wilhelminian upper-class gentleman. Discussion focused on the differences between antisemitic and anti-black sentiment, and compared Du Bois' experiences with those of African-American GI's in Germany after 1945. <p> Session IV, chaired by Christina von Hodenberg, provided a forum for graduate student research. David Marshall from UC Riverside presented the

findings of his dissertation, which is about to be printed. He described how the Berlin Zeughaus, as the official historical museum of the GDR, told German history to its visitors from 1953 on. School classes, children, and tourists were educated about the origins of the nation, fascism, Holocaust, and the people's struggle against oppression—in strict accordance with the party line. The second talk, by Edith Sheffer (UC Berkeley), conceived of the German-German division as a gradual process that built up walls along the border, but also in the minds of people. Her dissertation is a case study of the neighboring towns Neustadt and Sonneberg, separated by the border, and tells the story of the division and reunification of these sister cities as a story not only of isolation, but also of tension-ridden interaction. Following Sheffer's presentation, Alan Rosenfeld (UC Irvine) spoke on left-wing terrorism in 1970's West Germany. He emphasized the gendered subtext of contemporary debates and linked the overreaction by state and society to the ongoing struggles over women's liberation. In the ensuing discussion, professors and fellow students asked how RAF terror was also a reaction to the Nazi past, how the German division was mirrored in everyday life, and how East Germans reacted to the activities of the Zeughaus museum. 

A fourth project, by Benjamin Wurgaft (UC Berkeley), dealt with 18th century Jewish intellectuals in Germany. Wurgaft read the philosophy of Maimon and Mendelssohn as a discourse on colonization and otherness. His presentation stimulated a lively exchange about the virtues and problems of the colonization paradigm when applied to German-Jewish history. 

The last session on Sunday morning, chaired by Gerald D. Feldman, introduced two dissertation projects on Weimar Germany. Eric Bryden from UC Davis questioned the narrative of Weimar's inevitable failure and set out to explore the republic's chances of success by investigating the political culture of the system's supporters. Adopting a Weberian approach, he zeroed in on republican symbols, such as the constitution and the flag.

Joshua Sternberg (UCLA) then traced the history of the music journal, *Echo der Welt*, from 1928 to 1934. He treated this periodical, which promoted jazz but sought to create a Germanized version of it, as an example of the contradictory reception of American music in Weimar and Nazi Germany. The following debate addressed how Weimar political symbols were gendered, personalized, and received by the masses. It also dealt with jazz music as a medium of sexual expression, generational differences, and international cultural transfer. 

Finally, conference participants discussed how to set up a state-wide network of graduate students and how to foster close contact between the campuses. Faculty and graduate students alike expressed great interest in making this workshop a more permanent institution. Some suggested merging the network of Early Modernists and Modernists, and alternating annual or bi-annual meetings between Southern and Northern California. These proposals were not decided on and are currently under debate.

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