

Part I

Recollections and Reminiscences

Central European History at Fifty: Notes from a Longtime Fan

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IN the mid-1960s, a small delegation of graduate students went to Theodore S. Hamerow's office at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. Noting that the *Journal of Central European Affairs* had ceased publication in 1964, James Harris, Stanley Zucker, and I asked our advisor why there was no academic journal dedicated to German history, a new field that had been developing rapidly. What could we do to create such an organ? The otherwise placid Hamerow wrinkled his brow and angrily asked who had put us up to this initiative! When we answered that this was just our idea, he relaxed and told us that he was the chair of a committee charged by the Conference Group for Central European History with doing just that, namely, founding such a new journal.¹ Douglas A. Unfug of Emory University had already put in a bid, in fact, and *Central European History* started to appear in 1968.² By using a variation of the previous name, the journal hoped to pick up prior subscribers and avoid being identified by its title with the erstwhile enemy—Germany.

According to historians of science such as Ludwig Fleck and Mitchell Ash, journals are the core that constitutes a field of academic specialization.³ They provide a regular form of communication that addresses its central questions of inquiry, presents debates about potential answers to those questions, and establishes a written record, accessible in faraway places and at distant times. By also giving a permanent form to fleeting oral presentations during conferences, they create a network of contributors and subscribers who share a particular intellectual interest. Since, as a loose affiliate of the American Historical Association (AHA), it met only once a year at the AHA annual conference, the Conference Group for Central European History needed a platform of exchange beyond its informal and intermittent newsletter. The venerable *American Historical Review* had too broad a coverage, and even the more specialized *Journal of Modern History* addressed the entirety of Europe. During the process of specializing along ethno-cultural lines in the 1960s, historians interested in German topics therefore wanted a periodical catering to their own interests.

The journal was founded the same year in which I defended my dissertation, creating for me in 2018 a double anniversary of half a century. *Central European History* first appeared during the high point of the youth rebellion and the protests against the Vietnam War—

¹Konrad H. Jarausch, "Contemporary History as a Transatlantic Project: Autobiographical Reflections on the German Problem, 1960–2010," *Historical Social Research* 24 (2012): 7–49.

²Philipp Stelzel, "The Second Generation Emigres' Impact on German Historiography," in *The Second Generation: Émigrés from Nazi Germany as Historians*, ed. Andreas Daum, Hartmut Lehmann, and James J. Sheehan (New York: Berghahn, 2016), 287–303.

³Ludwig Fleck, *Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache: Einführung in die Lehre von Denkstil und Denkkollektiv* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1960); Mitchell G. Ash and Josef Ehmer, eds., *Universität–Politik–Gesellschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

although the contents of the first issues did not reflect that turbulent time, since contemporary history was still viewed with suspicion by most members of the profession. Inspired by Fritz Fischer's lecture in Madison during the summer of 1965, my own doctoral research focused on the fifth German chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, who stood in the center of the controversy about German responsibility for the outbreak of World War I, as well as about the aims for which the latter had been fought.⁴ As a result of this coincidence in timing, the following remarks present a retrospective on the major stages of the journal's development as seen from my own personal traces in its pages. Though limited to only one set of scholarly experiences, these reflections are intended to offer a more general appreciation of *CEH's* impact and its role for historians of German-speaking Central Europe in the English-speaking world.

Beginning Years

The first task of the new journal was to establish a reputation as the leading organ in its own field of inquiry, helping to "fill a serious gap in the ranks of American scholarly periodicals." Unfug, its founding editor, had completed his dissertation on "German Policy in the Baltic States, 1918–1919" under Hajo Holborn at Yale University in 1961. Teaching at Emory University, he devoted twenty-three years of his professional life to *Central European History*, publishing nothing beyond the journal. He was so meticulous that, toward the end of his tenure, the journal fell behind in publication, with issues that bore the date of 1989 commenting on the course of German unification, which had not yet happened at the time the issue was scheduled to appear! To attract a wide audience, Unfug had initially promised that "the scope of *Central European History* will be broadly rather than narrowly defined," including neighboring regions and ranging all the way from the Middle Ages to the recent past. To keep the size manageable, *CEH* would print only review essays or bibliographical articles rather than standard book reviews.⁵ With its austere cover and traditional typeface, the journal suggested seriousness, seeking to convince even skeptical German academics of its quality.

The first issue of the second volume contained my first research article, which was recently exhumed by Christopher Clark in *The Sleepwalkers*.⁶ The Fischer controversy about German war-guilt, denied by traditionalists like Gerhard Ritter, had put the spotlight on Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, who was ultimately responsible for Berlin's political decisions. Though his *Nachlass* had been destroyed by the Red Army during the ransacking of the estate, I was able to gain access to the official records located in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and was even able to consult the controversial diary of his personal secretary, Kurt Riezler, which was in the possession of his daughter-in-law in Long Island, New York. By looking at a crucial individual, I tried to steer a middle course between apologies claiming a defensive struggle and critical accusations about a preventive war. I argued that the imperial government had pursued a course of "calculated risk" by endorsing Austria's

⁴Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Enigmatic Chancellor: Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg and the Hybris of Imperial Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973).

⁵"From the Editors" [Douglas A. Unfug], *Central European History (CEH)* 1, no. 1 (1968), 1. The initial price for an annual subscription was all of eight dollars! Also see James Van Horn Melton's memorial for Unfug in this commemorative issue of *CEH*, which includes as well a reprint of Unfug's inaugural letter.

⁶Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 418.

punitive action against Serbia, while hoping to localize the conflict—a strategy that disastrously misfired because of an escalation that drew in the major powers linked by competing alliances. As member of the editorial board, Gordon Craig was astonished by the chutzpa of a fresh PhD who dared to intervene in one of the most important questions of German history—but, with some corrections, he let the article pass.⁷

Beyond publishing significant research articles, the new journal also tried to be open to engaging new methods of inquiry.⁸ Encouraged by the development of statistical software packages like SPSS and access to mainframe computers, one such trend was the development of quantitative approaches to historical questions. Since I had been initiated into their potential during a postdoctoral year at the Davis Center at Princeton University, I contributed a reflection on the “promises and problems of quantitative research in Central European History” to the eleventh volume of the journal in 1978.⁹ As German historians were not exactly among the pioneers of quantification because of their preoccupation with the Third Reich, I wanted to alert readers to the possibilities that statistical methods offered for going beyond vague impressions to actual measurements, in order to resolve contested issues such as the voting base and social composition of the Nazi Party.¹⁰ A 1973 conference in Maryland had indicated the beginning of such interest in the United States, while, in Germany, the so-called QUANTUM group around Wilhelm Heinz Schroeder had begun to propagate such approaches. Belying its traditionalist appearance, *CEH* was therefore willing to venture into the new methodological territory of historical social science.

Another way it contributed to the field was the publication of review essays that informed readers about recent scholarship while evaluating it at the same time. In the first issue of the fifth volume in 1972, I surveyed some of the contentious publications triggered by the Fischer controversy. In his second book, *Krieg der Illusionen*, the Hamburg historian, propelled by critical students like John Röhl and Immanuel Geiss, had sharpened his thesis further by investigating the debate about German efforts to become a world power before 1914.¹¹ Conservative scholars like Eberhard von Vietsch rejected this charge, while East German colleagues weighed in with denunciations of Wilhelmine imperialism. When I asked Willibald Gutsche whether he and his East German colleagues had found a smoking gun that proved imperialist guilt, he shrugged his shoulders and pleaded “pedagogic reasons” for making such an argument. I then pointed out that a younger generation of scholars like Wolfgang J. Mommsen was ready to accept much of Fischer’s indictment without following him in every detail.¹² In subsequent review articles I addressed the question of continuity in

⁷Konrad H. Jarausch, “The Illusion of Limited War: Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg’s Calculated Risk, July 1914,” *CEH* 2, no. 1 (1969): 48–76.

⁸Konrad H. Jarausch, “German Students in the First World War,” *CEH* 17, no. 4 (1984): 310–29. Also see idem, *Deutsche Studenten, 1800–1970* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1984).

⁹Konrad H. Jarausch, “Promises and Problems of Quantitative Research in Central European History,” *CEH* 11, no. 3 (1978): 279–89; also see idem, ed., *Quantifizierung in der Geschichtswissenschaft: Probleme und Möglichkeiten* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1976).

¹⁰See Jürgen Falter, *Hitlers Wähler* (Munich: CH Beck Verlag, 1991); Michael Kater, *The Nazi Party: A Social Profile of Members and Leaders, 1919–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

¹¹Fritz Fischer, *Krieg der Illusionen: Die Deutsche Politik von 1911 bis 1914* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1969).

¹²Konrad H. Jarausch, “World Power or Tragic Fate? The *Kriegsschuldfrage* as Historical Neurosis,” *CEH* 5, no. 1 (1972): 72–92. Also see Klaus Große Kracht, *Die zankende Zunft: Historische Kontroversen in Deutschland nach 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

German foreign policy and returned once more to an examination of the imperial leadership.¹³ As a result of such involvement, I was appointed to the editorial board from 1980 to 1986.

Methodological Controversy

The second editor, Kenneth D. Barkin, who took over in 1991, was more willing to risk controversy by putting his personal stamp on the journal. Receiving his PhD at Brown University under the tutelage of Klaus Epstein in 1965, he published a well-received book, *The Controversy over German Industrialization, 1890–1902* (1970), which looked at the historical school of economists, also known as “Socialists of the Chair.” In his own articles he showed a preference for the new social history, with an affinity for the structural generalizations of the Bielefeld school. He set out to maintain the “reputation for high standards of scholarly excellence,” while making the journal more methodologically up to date than his predecessor. Lengthening each issue by thirty-two pages allowed him to add reviews of significant books on Central European history to the already existing practice of review essays, which expanded the intellectual reach of *CEH*. To attract a younger readership, Barkin also opened its pages to comparative history and to discussions of media like German films.¹⁴ As a result, the journal responded more quickly to intellectual currents and its tone became somewhat livelier.

An intellectual challenge to Barkin’s own approach came from an unexpected quarter: a special double issue of *CEH* on “German Histories: Challenges in Theory, Practice and Technique,” which had been commissioned by his predecessor. In a joint conference at the University of Chicago during 1989, Michael Geyer and I responded to the double challenge of the linguistic turn and the overthrow of communism, arguing that the impact of these recent methodological changes and historical developments required a fundamental rethinking of the leading interpretations of the German past. On the one hand, historians of Central Europe had been reluctant to respond to the rise of postmodern perspectives, which tended to undercut the grand narratives that ranged from national-apologetic to social-critical frameworks. On the other hand, the surprising collapse of Communism and the “rush to German unity” (to coin a phrase...) had introduced a different endpoint to existing narrations, namely, the unlikely revival of a chastened national state thought to have been obsolete. In three clusters of essays, the special issue concentrated on the crisis of master narratives (Jane Caplan, Isabel Hull, John Boyer, Michael Geyer), the impact of the linguistic turn (Rudi Koshar, Peter Jelavich, Tom Childers), and the emergence of a culturally inflected social history (David Crew, Eric Johnson, Konrad Jarausch).¹⁵ Our intention was merely to open debate.

Unsettled by the new vocabulary, Ken Barkin scathingly attacked postmodern perspectives during a packed session of the AHA conference in Chicago in 1984. To avoid being

¹³Konrad H. Jarausch, “From Second to Third Reich: The Problem of Continuity in German Foreign Policy,” *CEH* 12, no. 1 (1979): 68–82; idem, “Revising German History: Bethmann Hollweg Revisited,” *CEH* 21, no. 3 (1979): 224–43.

¹⁴Kenneth D. Barkin, “Editor’s Letter,” *CEH* 24, no. 1 (1991): v; idem, *The Controversy over German Industrialization, 1890–1902* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

¹⁵Michael Geyer and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds., “German Histories: Challenges in Theory, Practice, Technique,” *CEH* 22, no. 3/4 (1989): 227–457. Also see Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

accused of a conflict of interest, he chose to publish his critical remarks in the *German Studies Review* (GSR) under the title, “Bismarck in a Postmodern World.” Liking the proponents of the new methods and approaches to leaders of rival gangs, each seeking to carve out its own academic territory, he mused about the profound changes in historical discourse since his time in graduate school during the early 1960s. Curiously enough, he chose his own attempt to write a review essay on recent Bismarck biographies to express his discomfort about the disappearance of “great men,” as well as of readable “narratives” of the past. One of his key charges was the loss of referentiality in postmodern theory, which seemed inappropriate to him in light of the catastrophes associated with German development that had plagued much of Europe in the twentieth century. Typical of the reaction of the majority of German historians, his polemic culminated in the accusation that proponents of the linguistic turn had forsaken the rationality of the Enlightenment, the very basis of a progressive approach to history. He nonetheless promised to steer a middle course in his editorial practices.¹⁶

Feeling misunderstood, Michael Geyer and I responded with a programmatic statement in favor of a more open-ended approach to “writing German history in times of uncertainty.” Given space in the GSR as well, we sought to understand some of the anxieties of the skeptics about a loss of coherence, and pointed to the new possibilities that French theories offered as a potential answer to changes in the contemporary context. We thought that the nostalgic defense of traditional methods stemmed from fears about a loss of leisurely scholarship and a deterioration of standards, as well as a sense of discomfort about the growing diversity of the student body. Instead, we stressed that a multiplicity of perspectives was an asset in dealing with the repeated ruptures of regime change, with the two world wars and the Holocaust, as well as with the many differences among the experiences of German speakers. The particular Cold War context of the West German success story of recovery and democratization appeared to have come to an end. Moreover, Western triumphalism viewed the development of the GDR as preordained to failure. Our appeal to the younger generation was summed up in the injunction to “retreat or renew.”¹⁷ We subsequently elaborated this position with a series of historiographical and substantive essays that appeared in *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*—only to be attacked in a similar vein in a lengthy review essay in the GSR by William W. Hagen.¹⁸

Continuity and Innovation

The third editor, Kenneth D. Ledford, who assumed control in 1995, sought to serve the field with an “editorial strategy of continuity and innovation.” With a JD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he had practiced law for four years before turning to the graduate study of history, completing his PhD at Johns Hopkins University

¹⁶Kenneth D. Barkin, “Bismarck in a Postmodern World,” *German Studies Review* (GSR) 18, no. 2 (1995): 241–51.

¹⁷Michael Geyer and Konrad H. Jarausch, “Great Men and Postmodern Ruptures: Overcoming the ‘Belatedness’ of German Historiography,” GSR 18, no. 2 (1995): 253–73; idem, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

¹⁸William W. Hagen, “Master Narratives beyond Postmodernity: Germany’s ‘Separate Path’ in Historiographical-Philosophical Light,” GSR 30, no. 1 (2007): 1–32; Konrad H. Jarausch, Michael Geyer, and William W. Hagen, “Reply to William W. Hagen [With Response by the Author],” GSR 30, no. 2 (2007): 242.

in 1989. Because his dissertation was a fine study of the legal profession in Prussia, *From General Estate to Special Interest: German Lawyers 1878–1933* (1996), I asked him to contribute an essay to my coedited volume, *German Professions, 1800–1950*. His goal for the journal was that *CEH* “simultaneously reflects and drives the intellectual direction(s) of its eponymous field” by adding more review essays and serving even more as a setting for debate. He wanted the journal to be “the unchallenged first-choice forum” in the history of the German-speaking world, opening its pages beyond the mainstream of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to early modern and Habsburg research. Just as important, he also set out “to integrate the journal better into the new possibilities presented by electronic publishing,” getting its contributions listed by JSTOR so that they could be more easily found by searches on the internet.¹⁹

The addition of Catherine Epstein as review editor also expanded the discussion of new books in number and scope. A granddaughter of the refugee scholar Fritz Epstein and daughter of German historian Klaus Epstein, who was tragically killed in a car crash in 1967, she grew up with discussions about the German past at her family’s dinner table. Moreover, her graduate training at Harvard University and her own monographs, *A Past Renewed: German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933* (1993), *The Last Revolutionaries: German Communists and Their Century* (2003), and *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (2010), gave her a broad base to select important books and find appropriate reviewers.²⁰ Since I had moved from the history of the professions to East German history as a result of my directorship of the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung (ZZF) in Potsdam, I contributed reviews of some of the major publications on the GDR and German unification. They included a handful of titles on the economic dynamics of the transformation, Timothy Garton Ash’s critical reflection on the paradoxes of West German *Ostpolitik*, Norman Naimark’s thorough investigation of the Soviet occupation of East Germany, Mary Fulbrook’s pathbreaking effort to understand the dynamics of the SED dictatorship, and Ulrich Herbert’s magisterial synthesis of twentieth-century German history. Only toward Peter Merkel’s attempt to analyze German unification in a European context was I a bit more critical, since it was largely confined to analyzing published opinions.²¹

¹⁹Kenneth D. Ledford, “From the Editors,” *CEH* 38, no. 1 (1995): 1–4; idem, *From General Estate to Special Interest: German Lawyers 1878–1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); idem, “Conflict within the Legal Profession: Simultaneous Admission and the German Bar, 1903–1927,” in *German Professions, 1800–1950*, ed. Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 252–69.

²⁰Catherine Epstein, *A Past Renewed: German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); *The Last Revolutionaries: German Communists and Their Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2003); *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²¹See Konrad H. Jarausch “The Economic Dynamics of German Unification,” *CEH* 24 no. 4 (1991): 446–49; and reviews of: Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Random House, 1993), in *CEH* 27, no. 2 (1994): 257–59; Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), in *CEH* 29, no. 1 (1996): 142–45; Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), in *CEH* 30, no. 2 (1997): 344–46; Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck Verlag, 2014), in *CEH* 48, no. 2 (2015): 249–51; Peter H. Merkl and Gert-Joachim Glaessner, *German Unification in the European Context* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), in *CEH* 27, no. 1 (1994): 121–23.

For a thoughtful analysis of my own work, *Central European History* has proven to be an excellent forum, since many of its lengthy reviews have successfully combined praise with careful criticism. Eric Weitz, for example, welcomed *Dictatorship as Experience: Toward a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, the first collection of essays from the ZZf, as a “realm of vibrant historical inquiry,” pointing out that it went beyond the totalitarianism paradigm; he nevertheless found my neologism of “welfare dictatorship” not quite adequate to capture the many paradoxes of the GDR. Similarly, Robert Moeller was kind enough to applaud the effort by *Shattered Past* to initiate a methodological debate about the potential benefits of the linguistic turn for destabilizing accepted master narratives. Suggesting a number of additions, such as religion, to the “plurality of stories,” he concluded: “Prompting us to think critically in these terms is a major contribution of *Shattered Past*.” Graciously calling *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995* (2006) an “outstanding new book,” David Crew appreciated that its thesis of a postwar learning process did not present a triumphalist Western account—in contrast to a failure narrative about the East—since the future remained open-ended. Finally, Dieter Buse used his review of “*Das stille Sterben...*” *Feldpostbriefe von Konrad Jarausch aus Polen und Russland 1939–1942* (2008; appeared in English translation as *Reluctant Accomplice: A Wehrmacht Soldier's Letters from the Eastern Front* [2014]) to add comments about his own father's fate as an ethnic German at the Eastern front—thereby responding to my suggestion to personalize narratives of suffering and disaster.²²

With advancing age, one of the pleasures of perusing a journal like *CEH* is the encounter with important articles of one's own students. The publication of these pieces has not only helped advance their academic careers, but also enriched the discussion about the German past. One outstanding example has been the work of Elisabeth Heineman on the role of women in the Third Reich and especially during the postwar era, when they had to mend broken families and help their members survive bombing, defeat, expulsion, and reconstruction. Thomas Pegelow Kaplan's pathbreaking analysis of the linguistic separation of Germans and Jews shed light on an essential precondition for the Holocaust. Similarly, Michael Meng's exploration of the East German response to Jewish sites and spaces has contributed an important dimension to our understanding of postwar legacies of genocide. Equally important is Philipp Stelzel's analysis of American views on German postwar historiography, which played a major role in the liberalization of scholarship during the Fischer controversy, as well as the formation of the Bielefeld school. Other articles include Benjamin Pearson's reconstruction of the democratization of the Protestant Church during the postwar *Kirchentage*; Stephen Milder's exploration of the role of Petra Kelly as a leader of Green Party politics; and Scott Krause's interesting discovery of a transatlantic network that supported the moderate wing of the Social Democratic Party in Berlin and

²²Eric Weitz, review of *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), *CEH* 36, no. 3 (2003): 490–94; Robert G. Moeller, review of *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), *CEH* 37, no. 3 (2004): 461–65; David F. Crew, review of *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), *CEH* 41, no. 3 (2008): 541–43; Dieter K. Buse, review of “*Das stille Sterben...*” *Feldpostbriefe von Konrad Jarausch aus Polen und Russland 1939–1942* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008), *CEH* 42, no. 4 (2009): 781–83.

eventually propelled its leader, Willy Brandt, into the chancellorship.²³ The high standards of the peer-review process are a validation for young scholars seeking to make a name for themselves.

Current Trends

The present editor of the journal, Andrew I. Port, who took over the reins in 2014, continues “to publish high-quality scholarship” while opening the journal further to new methods. Receiving his PhD at Harvard University in 2000, he has written an acclaimed book, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (2007), which attracted a good deal of media attention when translated into German (*Die rätselhafte Stabilität der DDR* [2010]); he also coedited with Mary Fulbrook an interesting essay collection, *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler* (2013). Drawing on his current work on German reactions to genocide in other geographic regions such as Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia, he also contributed a critique of German troop deployment decisions to my recent volume on *United Germany: Debating Prospects and Processes* (2013). This research has not only sensitized him to the fierce debates about GDR history but also involved him in global issues that address the worldwide consequences of German developments.²⁴ The new book review editor, Julia Torrie, a fellow Harvard PhD, adds another dimension of transnational breadth with her comparative work, *For Their Own Good: Civilian Evacuations in Germany and France, 1939–1945* (2010). Conscious of the illustrious tradition of the journal, this new team intends “to set the agenda and propose new and innovative directions for the study of historiography of German-speaking Central Europe.”²⁵

The realization that the field of German history has existed for more than half a century in the United States has inspired some critical stocktaking in order to reflect on its future viability. In a controversial 2013 piece based on AHA statistics, Catherine Epstein pointed out that the number of historians working on Germany (605) was clearly smaller than those working on Britain (990) and France (668), while being almost tied with specialists on

²³Elizabeth Heineman, “Complete Families, Half Families, No Families at All: Female-Headed Households and the Reconstruction of the Family in the Early Federal Republic,” *CEH* 29, no. 1 (1996): 19–60; Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, “‘German Jews,’ ‘National Jews,’ ‘Jewish Volk,’ or ‘Racial Jews’? The Constitution and Contestation of ‘Jewishness’ in Newspapers of Nazi Germany, 1933–1938,” *CEH* 35, no. 2 (2002): 195–221; Michael Meng, “East Germany’s Jewish Question: The Return and Preservation of Jewish Sites in East Berlin and Potsdam, 1945–1989,” *CEH* 38, no. 4 (2005): 606–36; Philipp Stelzel, “Working Toward a Common Goal? American Views on German Historiography and German–American Scholarly Relations during the 1960s,” *CEH* 41, no. 4 (2008): 639–71; Benjamin Pearson, “The Pluralization of Protestant Politics: Public Responsibility, Rearmament, and Division at the 1950s *Kirchentage*,” *CEH* 43, no. 2 (2010): 270–300; Stephen Milder, “Thinking Globally, Acting (Trans-)Locally: Petra Kelly and the Transnational Roots of West German Green Politics,” *CEH* 43, no. 2 (2010): 301–26; Scott Krause, “*Neue Westpolitik*: The Clandestine Campaign to Westernize the SPD in Cold War Berlin, 1948–1958,” *CEH* 48, no. 1 (2015): 79–99.

²⁴Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); idem, with Mary Fulbrook, eds., *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler* (New York: Berghahn, 2013); Andrew I. Port, “‘To Deploy or Not to Deploy’: The Erratic Evolution of German Foreign Policy since Unification,” in *United Germany: Debating Processes and Prospects*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 267–77.

²⁵Julie Torrie, *For Their Own Good: Civilian Evacuations in Germany and France, 1939–1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Andrew I. Port, “From the Editor: Changing of the Guard,” *CEH* 47, no. 3 (2014): 481.

Russia (592).²⁶ Since the United States and the United Kingdom share the same language and many similar traditions, it is understandable that interest in the former mother country remains strong among its erstwhile colonies. The intellectual attraction of the Enlightenment and the connections within the Atlantic World might also explain the continuing vitality of French Studies. By contrast, Russian scholarship was promoted by Cold War opposition to Soviet expansion. Since they were dealing with a former enemy, German scholars had to rely on public fascination with the two world wars, as well as on the emergence of interest in the Holocaust. On the one hand, this set of motives lacked the positive emotional bonding to Britain and France, while, on the other, Germany was no longer considered to be a major foreign policy threat. In any event, and even though exact figures depend largely upon classification decisions (e.g., were Austrian historians or Holocaust scholars included?), the foregoing statistics suggest both the continuing strength and the numerical limitations of interest in German history.

Addressing instead the content of the articles in *CEH*, Andrew Port undertook another retrospective: a statistical comparison of contributions that appeared between 1968 and 1987, with ones that were published between 1990 and 2014. To some degree, the distribution of topics has been determined by outside events, such as the overthrow of Communism, but to a considerable extent it was also a result of methodological shifts within the historical profession. During the most recent quarter century, submissions have noticeably shifted from the pre-1900 to the post-1900 era, reflecting the rise of contemporary history, and, even within this shift, from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich. While social history has remained strong, the new cultural histories, with topics such as memory, have increased to about a quarter of the articles; the related fields of gender, women's, and family history have expanded as well. Accounting only for a trickle in the earlier period, the number of articles on the Holocaust and antisemitism, and also, more surprisingly, on religion, has grown considerably: "The only approach besides gender and the 'new' cultural history that seems to have gained real traction in *CEH* is transnational/comparative history," Port concludes. Since interest in the German past has been driven more by substance than methodology, "new" approaches to the history of Germany have "largely followed the lead of scholars working in other fields."²⁷

The power of an editor to shape an area lies not only in the selection of articles to be published, but also in initiating debates about central interpretative issues. One such initiative was the recent forum on "Holocaust Scholarship and Politics in the Public Sphere" to mark the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the *Historikerstreit* and the twentieth of the Goldhagen debate. Andrew Port invited Gerrit Dworok, Richard Evans, Mary Fulbrook, Wendy Lower, Dirk Moses, Jeffrey Olick, and Timothy Snyder to discuss the lasting importance of these academic debates and media events for German historians. The commentators agreed that both controversies were "part of a political struggle for cultural hegemony" between critical postnational and apologetic conservative voices in German political culture. But they disagreed about whether the debates had made any constructive contribution to scholarly knowledge, with some stressing the impetus of even problematic books for

²⁶Catherine Epstein, "German Historians at the Back of the Pack: Hiring Patterns in Modern European History, 1945–2010," *CEH* 46, no. 3 (2013): 599–639.

²⁷Andrew I. Port, "Central European History since 1990: Historiographical Trends and Post-*Wende* 'Turns,'" *CEH* 48, no. 2 (2015): 238–48.

further research, and others denying that they had had any empirical value since more nuanced research had already been well under way. In many ways, the two controversies were better understood as memory conflicts and forms of identity “positioning.”²⁸ By stimulating debate, special issues such as the forthcoming “Burdens and Beginnings,” which highlights the transition from the troubling Nazi legacy to a fresh Communist and democratic start (and which Karen Hagemann, Tobias Hof, and I will coedit), play an essential role in focusing discussion on the central themes that constitute an academic field.²⁹

Secrets of Success

Celebrating half a century of existence is an impressive achievement both for an academic journal and for an individual scholar. To achieve this milestone, *CEH* has had to overcome multiple challenges. The support of the Conference Group for Central European History, now the Central European History Society, has, no doubt, helped to provide a stable base. But the journal’s publisher has changed several times from Emory University to Brill and the Humanities Press, before finally landing at Cambridge University Press.³⁰ Moreover, rival journals have emerged that cover the same territory—such as *German History*, published by Oxford University Press in Great Britain since 1982. Other competitors focusing more on the recent period include the *Journal of Contemporary History* (since 1966) and *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History* (since 2004). At the same time, the emergence of Holocaust Studies has created a whole series of new publications, such as the conference volumes on *Lessons and Legacies*.³¹ The shift from print to electronic communication has also redirected many debates into faster and livelier forums, such as H-German or H-Soz-Kult (Clio-online). Having persisted as a printed journal in an intellectually and technologically changing environment is therefore no mean feat.

The chief reason for *CEH*’s success has been a fortuitous blend of traditionalism and innovation. Initially, the conservative green cover and classical typeface suggested academic respectability. With time the appearance evolved to a more modern design—until even the cover became colorful, shedding its somewhat stodgy image. On closer examination, the articles and reviews also reveal a more thematically open and methodologically venturesome content than its traditional reputation might suggest. More important, however, was the intellectual vitality of German history in North America, which assured a continued input of high-level submissions. Finally, the series of dedicated editors has played a crucial role in making judicious decisions about maintaining a disciplinary focus, while reflecting the changing interests of scholarship without succumbing to faddishness. The late Douglas Unfug, Kenneth Barkin, Ken Ledford, and Andrew Port deserve enormous thanks for their unselfish service, which has nurtured the journal by maintaining its quality and focus while, at the same time, allowing its appearance and content to evolve.

²⁸Andrew I. Port, ed., “Holocaust Scholarship and Politics in the Public Sphere: Reexamining the Causes, Consequences, and Controversy of the *Historikerstreit* and the Goldhagen Debate: A Forum with Gerrit Dworok, Richard J. Evans, Mary Fulbrook, Wendy Lower, A. Dirk Moses, Jeffrey K. Olick, and Timothy Snyder,” *CEH* 50, no. 3 (2017): 375–403.

²⁹Karen Hagemann, Tobias Hof, and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds, “Burdens and Beginnings: Rebuilding East and West Germany after Nazism,” *CEH* (forthcoming).

³⁰See the contributions by Kenneth Ledford and Kees Gispén in this commemorative issue.

³¹*Lessons and Legacies* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991–pres.) publishes the proceedings of the biennial Holocaust conference.

During the past half century, *Central European History* has become a trusted companion and intellectual reference for many German historians like me. Not only has it published many of our own articles and reviews, but it has also reviewed our own work and supported the publications of our students. Moreover, the journal has quietly served, over the years, as a central focus for a field that played an important transatlantic role in liberalizing conceptions of the German past, reshaping the debate from a nationalist to a more pluralist direction. Maintaining a sympathetic and yet critical perspective from the outside has been its most important achievement, enriching English-speaking scholars through a deeper understanding of the Central European past and keeping a check on German debates, lest they slip back into problematic traditions. As a historian who has sought to foster transatlantic dialogue and stimulate a critical *Zeitgeschichte*, I am grateful for its existence. While the ritual of *Festschriften* can honor an individual scholar such as me, there is no accepted form for celebrating a collective enterprise like a journal.³² These foregoing remarks have therefore tried to express a profound sense of gratitude for its past work, as well as best wishes for its future.

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³²Thomas Lindenberger and Martin Sabrow, eds., *German Zeitgeschichte: Konturen eines Forschungsfelds. Konrad Jarausch zum 75. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016); Michael Meng and Adam Seipp, eds., *Modern Germany in Transatlantic Perspective* (New York: Berghahn, 2017); Karen Hagemann, ed., “Festgabe in Honor of Konrad H. Jarausch” (Chapel Hill, NC: ms., 2017).