

# Rewriting German History

## New Perspectives on Modern Germany

Edited by

Jan Rüger

Nikolaus Wachsmann



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*Also by Jan Rüger*

THE GREAT NAVAL GAME: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire

*Also by Nikolaus Wachsmann*

HITLER'S PRISONS: Legal Terror in Nazi Germany

KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps

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Wachsmann 2015

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First published 2015 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

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Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN 978–1–137–34778–7

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

*For Richard J. Evans*

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# Preface

This volume of original essays is dedicated to Sir Richard J. Evans, to mark his retirement as Regius Professor of History at Cambridge University. *Rewriting German History* engages with key debates that have been central to his work and continue to shape our understanding of modern Germany.<sup>1</sup> Preceded by an introductory essay by Geoff Eley – like Evans a member of the small group of ‘cosmopolitan islanders’<sup>2</sup> who took the writing of German history into a new direction in the 1970s and 1980s – the essays presented here give a snapshot of the current state of scholarship. The last two decades have seen the growth of an exceptionally rich and diverse historiography that explains the rise, fall and re-emergence of modern Germany in more wide-ranging contexts than ever before. The twisted path from Bismarck to Hitler and beyond is now interpreted less confrontationally than a generation ago, when ‘the tones and terms of intellectual exchange’ were extremely bitter, as Eley reminds us in his introduction. At a time when old political orthodoxies have lost much of their certainty, the often vitriolic debates of the past have given way to more nuanced discussions. It is against this background that the essays in this volume invite us to think anew about modern Germany history.

Three issues stand out. First the question of scale, raised by the decline of ‘the nation’ as the main analytical and narrative tool of German history. Richard Evans was one of the early advocates of the shift away from the Prussocentric focus that used to dominate modern German historiography. ‘German historians’, he criticized, ‘have a habit of reading back the *kleindeutsch* version of a united Germany, without Austria and under the domination of Prussia, into the early and mid-nineteenth century and even further’.<sup>3</sup> Evans and his contemporaries challenged this habit. The aim was, in James Sheehan’s now classic formulation, ‘to remove the *kleindeutsch* Reich from its unique and privileged position as *the* subject of German history and put in its place the persistent struggle between cohesion and fragmentation’.<sup>4</sup> Evans’s *Death in Hamburg* (1987) was one of the most comprehensive studies to pursue this aim.<sup>5</sup> It showed an urban cosmos in which different layers of German history intersected, only some of them associated with the rise of Prussia and the Bismarckian nation state; indeed, one of its key findings was how little centralized and unified Imperial Germany was at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

Since then a number of historiographical developments have moved the emphasis further away from the formation of the nation state as the central,

foundational event of modern German history. The turn to local and regional history went hand in hand with the discovery of *Heimat* as a topic. Whether understood as 'a bourgeois-progressive alternative to the Wilhelminian order'<sup>7</sup> or as a 'patriarchal, gendered way of seeing the world',<sup>8</sup> *Heimat* has functioned in much of the historiography as an umbrella term under which to study the tensions between local, regional and national identity politics.<sup>9</sup>

Just as this scholarship questioned the centrality of the *kleindeutsche* nation state from a micro perspective, the rise of transnational and global history has challenged it on a macro level.<sup>10</sup> By situating Germany in the global nineteenth and twentieth centuries, transnational historians have brought to light the different ways in which migration, trade and communication determined the German past. Together with the 'new colonial history', this approach has been portrayed as mounting a sustained attack on the 'solipsism of national history'.<sup>11</sup> But the best examples of transnational history have engaged with, rather than pushed aside, national historiographies, showing how much 'the nation' was bound up with colonial and global contexts.<sup>12</sup>

The challenge for historians of modern Germany now lies in relating these different scales. The approach taken by the authors assembled in the first section of this volume suggests a combination of perspectives, allowing for national and transnational dynamics to be analysed in local and small-scale scenarios. This is particularly pertinent in the case of modern Germany, that 'nation of provincials',<sup>13</sup> whether it is to be found in Cologne (Astrid Swenson) or far away in the Himalayas (Tom Neuhaus). Another response to the question of scale has been the turn to Germany's borderlands. Any convincing attempt to write German history from the margins has to operate on a number of levels, questioning the separation between national and international histories and engaging with the small-scale contexts involved in the drawing and re-drawing of boundaries.<sup>14</sup> Three essays presented here follow this approach, focusing on Alsace and Moselle in the West (Elizabeth Vlossak), Silesia in the East (Hugo Service) and the island of Heligoland in the North (Jan Rüger). The combination of local, regional, national and transnational approaches which unites these chapters re-emphasizes the undetermined, open-ended character of what 'Germany' was in the modern period.

The second theme which characterizes current scholarship, and has long shaped Richard Evans's work, is the tension between social, political and cultural approaches to Germany's past. When his *Rituals of Retribution* appeared in 1996, it was one of the few key works in modern German historiography to employ a range of methodologies associated with the 'cultural turn' without losing sight of social and political specificities.<sup>15</sup> Evans engaged closely with Norbert Elias, Philippe Ariès and Michel Foucault to situate the history of the death penalty in a cultural context. But as important as experience, discourse and ritual were, Evans also held on to state power and the law,

politics and social structures, as key factors of historical explanation. 'The German experience of capital punishment', he concluded, 'differed from that in Britain and France not in terms of culture or civilization, but in terms of politics.'<sup>16</sup>

'Culture' has since become so enshrined as a paradigm in the historiography that it has all but replaced social and political history as the dominant approach. This shift has been lamented by those who see in cultural history little more than a 'playground of arbitrariness'.<sup>17</sup> But there is no compelling reason why one approach should have to be privileged over the other – 'there's no need to choose', in Geoff Eley's words.<sup>18</sup> A number of contributions to this volume echo this conclusion, discovering the political in culture and the cultural in politics. This is explicit in the historiography on the memory politics surrounding both German dictatorships, which two authors in this volume engage with directly: Bernhard Fulda on the post-1945 rehabilitation of the painter Emil Nolde, and Hester Vaizey on the conflicting memories of East Germans after reunification.

That the 'new cultural history' can be connected fruitfully to transnational and political contexts is also demonstrated in Rachel Hoffman's essay on the role of public rituals in nineteenth-century political assassinations.<sup>19</sup> Two further essays engage head-on with the intersection of cultural and social history, working their way outwards from biographical studies to broader questions: Lynn Abrams on marriage, religious dissent and early feminist thought in the nineteenth century; and Victoria Harris on the contrast between popular constructions of the 'pimp' and the everyday experiences of pimps in Imperial and Weimar Germany. Both explicitly enter into a dialogue with Richard Evans's early, pioneering work on women's history.<sup>20</sup>

The third overarching theme to which this volume speaks concerns what one might call the peculiarities of Nazi Germany. Historical approaches to Nazism have changed dramatically since the 1980s.<sup>21</sup> The longer the Third Reich has receded into the past, the more clearly its crimes have come into focus. Where scholars once argued about the politics of the Nazi capture of power in 1933, they now debate the regime's policy of annihilation.<sup>22</sup> Where they once concentrated on the formation of the Nazi movement and the structures of Hitler's rule, they now look beyond the German borders at Nazi 'ethnic reordering and eugenic cleansing', in the words of Richard Evans.<sup>23</sup> The Third Reich is seen as realizing its true nature during the Second World War, turning Germany from a racial state into a racial empire.<sup>24</sup> Propelled by the genocidal dreams of its leaders, it plunged much of Europe, especially the conquered east, into a nightmare of destruction and death. At the centre stands the Holocaust: the systematic extermination of European Jewry from 1941 onwards, once regarded as one crime among many, is now seen as the very essence of Nazism.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the 'vanishing point' in portraits of the Third Reich has moved from 1933 to

1941.<sup>26</sup> The perspective has, in other words, shifted from 'the coming of the Third Reich' to 'the Third Reich at war'.<sup>27</sup>

This new perspective has yielded crucial insights into Nazi occupation and extermination policy. Regional and local studies, in particular, have highlighted the complex relation between centre and periphery, between policy and practice.<sup>28</sup> David Motadel adds to this research in this volume, showing the contradictions between the official Nazi policy towards Muslims – positioning the Third Reich as a guardian of Islam – and the actions of Nazi executioners on the ground, who often struggled to distinguish between Jews, Gypsies and Muslims.

The rewriting of Nazi history – with its foregrounding of war, race and genocide – has also given new impulses to older debates about the singularity of the Third Reich. Influenced by the rise of transnational history, this scholarship explores Nazi domination and violence from a comparative standpoint. As Richard Evans recently put it, this approach no longer sees Nazism as 'the culmination of exclusively German intellectual traditions', but as shaped by wider developments in other nation-states.<sup>29</sup> So what can these new histories tell us about the uniqueness of Nazi Germany? The essays in this collection suggest four angles from which to approach this question.

First, there is the singularity of the Holocaust. Taken for granted by many historians, recent comparative genocide studies have integrated the Nazi Final Solution into a larger historical continuum, as one genocide among others.<sup>30</sup> Often, the starting point has been the Armenian genocide during the First World War, and, as Stefan Ihrig shows in his essay, the fierce Weimar debates about it left a dark legacy in Germany, with some sections of the nationalist Right actively condoning genocide.

Second, historians have increasingly placed Nazi policies against 'community aliens' into a wider international context, exploring the transnational entanglements of the 'German politics of race'.<sup>31</sup> Eugenics was a global phenomenon, and scholars have explored how foreign theories and precedents shaped Nazi racial policies, and how, in turn, these Nazi measures were understood abroad. Focusing on the latter, Bradley Hart outlines how the Nazi Sterilization Law of 1933 split the British eugenics movement, with some prominent members endorsing the radical German legislation. For them, like for many of their US colleagues, the Third Reich was still marching in step with mainstream Western science and civilization.

Third, totalitarianism studies have made a comeback, providing new perspectives on Nazism. After their heyday during the Cold War, attempts to draw parallels between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union had fallen out of fashion. The crass effort by Ernst Nolte to rekindle the debate in the 1980s by suggesting a causal connection between the Gulag and Auschwitz – and thereby provide Germans 'with an escape from Hitler's shadow', as Richard Evans wrote

at the time – failed, giving the ‘interlinked history of Nazism and Stalinism a bad name’, in the words of Mark Mazower.<sup>32</sup> Much has changed since then, however, with the publication of numerous important studies on similarities, links and differences between the two dictatorships, focusing especially on violence and repression.<sup>33</sup> But, as Nikolaus Wachsmann argues in his essay on Nazi camps from an international perspective, despite some superficial parallels with the Gulag, the evidence for any direct Soviet influence on German camps remains slim.

Fourth, and finally, the recent renaissance of comparative studies of fascist regimes has raised further questions about the peculiarities of the Third Reich. The conception of Nazism as a form of fascism, sharing key features with Mussolini’s regime, goes back to the pre-war period, and gained further prominence after the rise of the ‘New Left’ in the 1960s and 1970s. Only more recently, however, have historians embarked on more systematic and sustained comparisons between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in power, based on extensive empirical research.<sup>34</sup> This work has uncovered some striking similarities between both regimes, as we can see in the essay by Bianca Gaudenzi on the spread of the Hitler and Mussolini myth through advertising and the sale of commercial products. Similarly, historians are beginning to examine in greater depth the transfer of ideas and institutional connections between fascist movements, applying the methods of transnational history.<sup>35</sup> This approach informs the essay by Christian Goeschel, who challenges the supposed singularity of the Hitler myth by highlighting the influence of the Mussolini cult on Nazi propaganda.

In addressing these overarching themes, the authors gathered here, all of them former doctoral students of Richard Evans (with the obvious exception of Geoff Eley), reflect on the intellectual influence of their *Doktorvater*. At the same time, they complicate the idea of ‘cosmopolitan islanders’ writing German history from an Anglophone perspective.<sup>36</sup> When Evans first came to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s, it was still possible to speak of a distinctly British approach to the German past. This is far more difficult today, as Eley indicates in his introductory essay, pointing to the ‘complicated mix’ of languages, geographies and cultural origins represented by the contributors to this volume: cosmopolitan perhaps, islanders less decidedly so.

## Notes

1. The title of the volume refers to two landmark collections which embody the breadth of Evans’s engagement with those debates: Richard J. Evans, *Rethinking German History. Nineteenth-Century Germany and the Origins of the Third Reich* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Richard J. Evans, *Rereading German History: From Unification to Reunification* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997).

2. Richard J. Evans, *Cosmopolitan Islanders. British Historians and the European Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
3. Evans, *Rereading German History*, 6.
4. James J. Sheehan, 'What is German History? Reflections on the Role of the Nation in German History and Historiography,' *Journal of Modern History*, 53 (1981), 1–23, here 22.
5. Richard J. Evans, *Death in Hamburg. Society and Politics in the Cholera Years, 1830–1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
6. See especially Evans, *Death in Hamburg*, 11.
7. William Rollins, 'Heimat, Modernity, and the Nation in the Early Heimatschutz Movement,' in Jost Hermand and James Steakley (eds.), *Heimat, Nation, Fatherland. The German Sense of Belonging* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).
8. Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002), 1–2.
9. Celia Applegate, 'Localism and the German Bourgeoisie. The Heimat Movement in the Rhenish Palatinate before 1914,' in David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (eds.), *The German Bourgeoisie* (London: Routledge, 1991), 224–254; Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor. Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Jennifer Jenkins, *Provincial Modernity. Local Culture and Liberal Politics in Fin-de-Siècle Hamburg* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).
10. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).
11. Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Transnationale Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Erweiterung oder Alternative?', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 27 (2001), 469. Compare Hans-Ulrich Wehler, 'Transnationale Geschichte – der neue Königsweg historischer Forschung?', in Gunilla Budde, Sebastian Conrad and Oliver Janz (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). For the new colonial history, see most recently Geoff Eley and Bradley Naranch (eds.), *German Colonialism in a Global Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014) and Sebastian Conrad, 'Rethinking German Colonialism in a Global Age,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 41 (2013), 543–566.
12. For example, see Andrew Zimmerman, 'Race and World Politics. Germany in the Age of Imperialism, 1878–1914,' in Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 359–377; Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im deutschen Kaiserreich* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2006).
13. Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).
14. Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer and Mark Roseman (eds.), *German History From the Margins* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
15. On the 'cultural turn' and its impact on the writing of German history see Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line. From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).
16. Richard J. Evans, *Rituals of Retribution. Capital Punishment in Germany 1600–1987* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 897.
17. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, 'Ein Kursbuch der Beliebigkeit,' *Die Zeit*, 26 July 2001. See also the similarly defensive Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Die Herausforderung der Kulturgeschichte* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998).
18. Eley, *A Crooked Line*, 201.



19. On the 'new cultural history' see Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989) and Roger Chartier, *Cultural History between Practices and Representations* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988) as well the surveys by Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004) and Miri Rubin, 'What is Cultural History Now?', in David Cannadine (ed.), *What is History Now?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 80–94.
20. Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894–1933* (London: Sage, 1976); Richard J. Evans and W.R. Lee (eds.), *The German Family. Essays on the Social History of the Family in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century Germany* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).
21. Geoff Eley, *Nazism as Fascism. Violence, Ideology, and the Ground of Consent in Germany 1930–1945* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 13.
22. For the term, see Peter Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung. Eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung* (Munich: Piper, 1998).
23. Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory* (London: Little, Brown, 2015), 383.
24. For the Third Reich as a 'racial state,' see Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State. Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Recent studies of the Third Reich as an empire include Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire. Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London: Penguin, 2009); Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire. German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
25. On this shift, see also Eley, *Nazism*, 158–159.
26. Helmut Walser Smith, 'The Vanishing Point of German History. An Essay on Perspective,' *History and Memory*, 17 (2005), 267–295.
27. See Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Allen Lane, 2003); Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (London: Allen Lane, 2008).
28. Some pioneering contributions are collected in Ulrich Herbert (ed.), *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1998).
29. Evans, *Third Reich in History*, viii.
30. Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 206–222. One important contribution to the debate is Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
31. Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, 'Introduction,' in idem, Geoff Eley and Atina Grossmann (eds.), *After the Nazi Racial State. Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 17.
32. Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow. West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989), 32; Mark Mazower, 'Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands,' *Contemporary European History*, 21 (2012), 117–123, here 118.
33. For a judicious overview, see Michael Geyer, 'Introduction,' in Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1–40. Among the most influential recent contributions are Jörg Baberowski and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Ordnung durch Terror. Gewaltexzesse und Vernichtung im nationalsozialistischen und im stalinistischen Imperium* (Bonn: Dietz, 2006); Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Bodley Head, 2010).
34. For the historiography, see Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems & Perspectives of Interpretation*, 4th edn (London: Arnold, 2000), 20–21, 26–36.

35. 'Editorial,' in Sven Reichardt and Armin Nolzen (eds.), *Faschismus in Italien und Deutschland. Studien zu Transfer und Vergleich* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 9–27; Wolfgang Schieder, *Faschistische Diktaturen. Studien zu Italien und Deutschland* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), esp. 149–252.
36. Evans, *Cosmopolitan Islanders*.

# Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank the following institutions and rights holders for granting permission to use third-party material: Bayerisches Wirtschaftarchiv, Ministero per i Beni e le attività culturali, L'incorporation de force dans l'armée allemande and Gerard Schutz.

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# Abbreviations

ACS	Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome
ADBR	Archives départementales du Bas-Rhin
ADEIF	Association des Déserteurs, Evadés et Incorporés de Force
ANS	Stiftung Seebüll Ada und Emil Nolde
APJG	Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu Oddział w Jeleniej Górze
APK	Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach
APO	Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu
APW	Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu
BA	Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg
BayHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich
BOD	Bundesarchiv, Bayreuth, Ost-Dokumentation
BWA	Bayerisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, Munich
CalTech	California Institute of Technology
CuRep	Current Issues Report
DAV	Archiv des Deutschen Alpenverein
DBA	Dombauarchiv, Cologne
DTA	Deutsches Tagebucharchiv
EES	Eugenics Education Society
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GHI	German Historical Institute
GSStA PK	Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Dahlem
Head JGTA	Head of Jelenia Góra Town Administration
IFEO	International Federation of Eugenic Organizations
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich
IHK	Industrie- und Handelskammer
ILN	<i>Illustrated London News</i>
JG Chief	Jelenia Góra District's Chief Official
JGDA head S-PD	Head of Jelenia Góra District Administration's Social-Political Department
JGDA S-PD	Jelenia Góra District Administration's Social-Political Department

JG Dep Chief	Jelenia Góra District's Deputy Chief Official
JGTA	Jelenia Góra Town Administration
JWT	J. Walter Thompson advertising agency
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)
LA	Landesarchiv
MHIG	Minister für Handel, Industrie und Gewerbe
N	Niedergericht
NAS	National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
ODA S-PD	Opole District Administration's Social-Political Department
P	Präturen
P HStal	Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Leipzig
PA-AA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin
P-S	Polizeipräsidium Leipzig Straftaten
PCM	Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (Party of Democratic Socialism)
PP-V	Polizeiamt der Stadt Leipzig, Sittenpolizei
SD	Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (German Socialist Unity Party)
Sipo	Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police)
SiRep	Situation Report
SMB-PK ZA	Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Zentralarchiv
SPAB	Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German Social Democratic Party)
SS	Schutzstaffel (Protection Squad)
StAH	Staatsarchiv Hamburg
StAM	Staatsarchiv München, Munich
TNA	National Archives, Kew
UCL	University College, London
UFAC	Union Française des Anciens Combattants
VB	<i>Völkischer Beobachter</i>
WR	Witness report
WWA	Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, Dortmund
ZDV	Zentraler Dombau Verein



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# 1

## Crossing the North Sea – is there a British Approach to German History?

Geoff Eley

I open with Richard Evans's suggestion in *Cosmopolitan Islanders* that German history in Britain begins with the conjunction of two post-1945 experiences. One of these embraced the Central European Jewish emigration of the 1930s, whose youngest members contained a small but significant cluster of future historians. The other involved the generation of young men born in Britain itself a little earlier, for whom World War II became the decisive life-experience, sometimes via an anti-fascist politics, sometimes by an intense encounter with continental Europe, sometimes by working in British intelligence (often all three).<sup>1</sup> These two categories were quite distinct, overlapping perhaps in one especially distinguished instance, Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012).<sup>2</sup> In what follows I will venture some general thoughts on the formation and trajectory of German history as a later twentieth-century field of academic knowledge, focusing on several broad generational patterns. I will end in the 1970s and 1980s, when my own generation enters the story.

The first of the two categories, that of the émigrés, contained some who were already university students in the late 1930s, including Hobsbawm (who was born in Alexandria) and Werner Mosse (Charlottenburg, 1918–2001), plus a larger group entering university after the war, including Geoffrey Elton (Tübingen, 1921–84), Julius Carlebach (Hamburg, 1922–2001), Edgar Feuchtwanger (Munich, 1924–), Peter Hennock (Berlin, 1926–), Sidney Pollard (Vienna, 1925–98), John Grenville (Berlin, 1928–2011), and Peter Pulzer (1929–), along with the somewhat older Francis L. Carsten (Berlin, 1911–98) and Walter Ullmann (Pulkau, 1910–83). If the specifically Jewish presence among German historians in Britain came from this émigré generation who arrived as children in the 1930s, it was often apparent only in displaced and muted ways (two exceptions were Carlebach and Pulzer). In adult life, to a striking degree, those individuals chose not to identify as Jews. While for some this was clearly about politics (thus Hobsbawm, Carsten), it was more commonly a secularism closely bound up with the wish to be unobtrusive – to find

ways of not 'sticking out' in a host society that was not always unambivalent about giving the children who arrived via *Kindertransport* a new home. That desire not to be noticed, to avoid being accused of not fitting in, worked to efface the relationship to German history rather than to engage with it. One effect was to anglicize one's name: thus Gottfried Rudolf Ehrenburg became Geoffrey R. Elton; Siegfried Pollack became Sidney Pollard; Ernst Peter Henoch became Peter Hennock; Hans Guhrauer became John Ashley Soames Grenville. As scholars, they often deliberately stayed away from German history, at least for the bulk of their academic careers. Although Elton had always maintained a broad interest in German history, for example, it was only from the 1980s onwards that Feuchtwanger, Hennock and Pollard reconnected very directly and elaborately with their German pasts.<sup>3</sup>

My second category is harder to pin down, because the out-and-out *German* historians were very few – beside semi-professionals like John Wheeler-Bennett (1902–75) one might name only Michael Balfour (1908–95), author of *Four-Power Control in Germany and Austria 1945–46* (1956) and *The Kaiser and His Times* (1964). The more salient early post-war figures came from the wider context of writing about the earlier twentieth century by a number of liberals and social democrats who were rethinking European history from a self-consciously 'post-Nazi' perspective – usually from inside the Cold War, but sometimes from a dissentient standpoint outside or on the edges. One key nexus was in Oxford at St Antony's, notoriously a hotbed of British intelligence connections, under the Wardenship of William (F.W.) Deakin (1913–2005), former head of the SOE wartime mission to Tito, who published his two-volume study of the Hitler – Mussolini relationship, *The Brutal Friendship*, in 1962. His contemporary in Oxford, whose interests migrated from German to British history, was the Hitler biographer Alan Bullock (1914–2004). Like Deakin, Bullock had worked before the war as a literary assistant to Winston Churchill and then joined the European Service of the BBC. As Evans says, figures such as these (Carsten was also recruited to the British Government's Political Warfare Executive) found their interests enlisted for purposes and in directions they might not have anticipated: 'The war ripped a number of dons away from their normal academic pursuits and plunged them into an unfamiliar, exciting and in many ways extraordinary world that they naturally wanted to write about after the war was over.'<sup>4</sup>

Far more significant in shaping German historiography, with influence more subtly enabling as well as direct, were three generalists, who inspired the kinds of questions, as well as the temperamental posture (an instinct toward intellectual heterodoxy), which the first generations of specifically German historians were then to adopt: Alan John Percivale (A.J.P.) Taylor (1906–90), also based in Oxford; Geoffrey Barraclough (1908–84) of Liverpool (1945–56) and London (1956–62), before moving to the US and returning to Oxford in 1970; and the

rather younger James Joll (1918–94), who moved from St Antony's (1950–67) to hold the Chair of International History at LSE. Though Taylor published widely in German history as such, with *Bismarck* (1955) and *The Course of German History* (1945), it was as a generalist that he was better known; and he was known best of all as a rather remarkable public intellectual, political provocateur, and historical controversialist, most notoriously in *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961).<sup>5</sup> Barraclough was by early career a German medievalist, but remade himself by the early 1960s as a proto-global historian, notably with *An Introduction to Contemporary History* in 1964, which must count as a pioneering text of its kind, quite remarkably prescient in relation to more recent calls for prioritizing the global.<sup>6</sup> Though quite brilliant, Joll's writings on the history of socialism and anarchism, the origins of the First World War, and above all *Intellectuals in Politics* (1960), on Léon Blum, Walther Rathenau and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, were perhaps less influential for the German field as such than the fact that over many years he jointly ran the German history seminar of the University of London along with Carsten.<sup>7</sup>

What can we say about this constellation of individuals and influences? In background and credentials, the contingent of the native-born were impeccably establishmentarian. Bullock, Barraclough, and Taylor were partial exceptions, coming from well-off northern Nonconformity rather than the privately educated Home Counties bourgeoisie, but they too came up through Oxford and served significantly in the war effort. Thus Taylor joined the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) as an expert on central Europe, while Joll served in SOE. While Taylor's *Course of German History* had begun as an essay on the Weimar Republic commissioned by the PWE for a dossier to advise the future British occupying administration of Germany, in its more elaborate book form it supplied a narrative conspectus for what we now call the long nineteenth century, divided roughly equally between the pre- and post-unification eras, with a double coda on the Weimar Republic and Third Reich.<sup>8</sup> If peppered with its author's characteristically anti-German observations, it was remarkably well-attuned to the pre-Nazi scholarship, including exactly the works eventually to be rediscovered by West German social-science historians in the 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

The potential conservatism of this habitation inside the interconnected institutional precincts of metropolitan influence of a small, old country was mitigated by two things – not just the political culture of the post-war settlement with its social democratic bent, but the genuinely world-historical experience of fighting a war together to preserve democracy. This intense wartime legacy literally dislocated each of my two founding categories, the émigrés and the native-born, from their origins. While the two experiences were hardly comparable, there was an interesting equivalence between the Jewish men who came to Britain as children and who might have become historians in quite some other way, if they had not had to leave their countries of

origin, and the English-born, whose probable establishment destinations and associated proclivities were more subtly remade by wartime and post-war experiences. For that indigenous cohort, it was precisely the 'non-Britishness' of their wartime experience that paradoxically endowed the 'Britishness' of their adopted approach to history, because the encounters with a wider world of fascist dangers and anti-fascist solidarities impelled much reflection on the rootedness of what was being defended.<sup>10</sup> That experience created a certain political porousness that worked against the tendency of insiderly affiliations to congeal and harden. Networks of conversation and friendship across political differences remained relatively open and elastic too, eased by the same tracks of connections and influence.<sup>11</sup>

This generation sought to make sense of the first half of the twentieth century within an ethico-political framework of liberal values I have already called 'post-Nazi' on the basis of their vividly dramatic firsthand experiences, often in avowedly autobiographical ways.<sup>12</sup> Somewhat against their own inclinations, interestingly, they offered strong support for thinking critically about the conception of German history we now know as the *Sonderweg* – Taylor by his extreme provocations, Joll and Barraclough by incitements to think comparatively. This was unexpected, as Taylor and Barraclough had each insisted originally on an especially vociferous version of German exceptionalism – Taylor by the iron determinism of his geopolitical perspective in *The Course of German History*, Barraclough by arguing an unbroken continuity stretching forward from the tenth century. There is no deeper version of the *Sonderweg* than Barraclough presented in his earliest works, from *Medieval Germany, 911–1250* (1938) to the post-war trilogy of *Origins of Modern Germany*, *Factors in German History* (each 1946), and *The Medieval Empire* (1950). Yet by the 1960s, he had effectively disavowed, or at least moved on from, that earlier extreme version of a *Sonderweg* perspective, while continuing to hold broadly to its nineteenth-century ground. In a series of three programmatic articles in 1972, for example, he affirmed strong support for the particular form of the *Sonderweg* thesis then being developed by social-science historians in West Germany.<sup>13</sup>

## I

The big higher education expansion of the 1960s changed the profile of the German field in Britain, as the space suddenly widened for studying Germany inside a British university history department. Some of the new Germanists were recruited from the generation around five to ten years older than my own, including Timothy W. (Tim) Mason (1940–90), who taught first in York (1964–66) and then Oxford; Jeremy Noakes (born 1941, Hull 1965, then Exeter from 1969); Jonathan Wright (1941, Christ Church, Oxford from 1969); Ian Kershaw (1943, teaching at Manchester from 1968, though originally as a

British medievalist); Jill Stephenson (1944, teaching at Glasgow in 1969–70, Edinburgh from 1970); Terry Cole (1944, Edinburgh from 1970); Robin Lenman (1945, Hull 1970–71, Warwick from 1971). Others were somewhat younger: John Breuilly (1946, Manchester from 1972); W. Robert Lee (1946, Liverpool from 1972); Richard (Dick) Geary (1945, Lancaster from 1973); Richard J. Evans (1947, Stirling 1972–76, then University of East Anglia from 1976). This company was completed by several slightly older colleagues: Anthony J. (Tony) Nicholls (born 1934, St Antony's, Oxford from 1968); Jonathan Steinberg (1934, Cambridge from 1967); John Röhl (1938, Sussex from 1964); Volker Berghahn (1938, UEA from 1969, then Warwick from 1975); Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (1938, Sussex from 1970).

In large part, these 'intermediates' (as a generational grouping, that is) now became the scholars who trained the coming cohorts during the 1970s and 1980s. Before I say something about what, if anything, might allow us to speak of a distinctively 'British' approach to German history in this period, spanning these two broad groupings (the 'intermediates' and the 'subsequents' who were trained by them), six quick points can be made. *First*, the British German history contingent, even post-expansion, remained quite small. The list of colleagues I invited to the gathering that created the German History Society in 1979 was 37 strong, around half of whom were in the senior and intermediate generations. Thus the number of 'younger' German historians getting jobs in the 1970s came to around twenty, including Richard Bessel, David Blackbourn, Jane Caplan, Geoff Eley, Richard Evans, Dick Geary, and so forth. Not many of those 37 at the GHI were necessarily very active either as trainers of graduate students or in the profession at large. *Second*, the principal influences on graduate students, not necessarily as titular advisors but as a general intellectual presence, were as follows: Röhl at Sussex; Pogge von Strandmann at Sussex and then from 1978 in Oxford; Berghahn at UEA and then from 1975 at Warwick; Evans at UEA in succession to Berghahn from 1975, then at Birkbeck from 1989; and finally Mason in Oxford. *Third*, the *really* decisive influence during the 1970s came from the various seminars, including the London German history seminar run by Carsten and Joll; the Kershaw–Breuilly seminar in Manchester; the traditional centre of activity in St Antony's; and an extremely intense scene in Cambridge during the later 1970s.

*Fourth*, German historians became organized nationally for the first time. Crucial here was the founding of the German History Society, which grew from a preparatory meeting at the London German Historical Institute (GHI) on March 16, 1979. Even better for collective discussion, collective identity, and collective esprit, was the 'Research Seminar Group on German Social History' organized by Richard Evans at UEA, which met ten times between 1978 and 1986, leading to seven volumes of essays plus a special issue of a journal during 1981–91. Thus, for the first time British German historians found themselves in

some regular conversation together. The launching of the GHI in 1976 vitally helped, because its first fully appointed Director Wolfgang J. Mommsen made its resources so directly and generously available, especially via its many conferences, which Mommsen soon made a point of taking out of London itself into the provinces. Two early instances especially stand out: the GHI's inaugural event of its kind held in Mannheim on 'Social Structures and Political Decision-Making Processes in Imperial Germany' (December 1977); and the Cumberland Lodge conference on 'Structures of Rule and Society under the Third Reich' (May 1979). If the former brought together almost anyone then working on the *Kaiserreich* on either side of the North Sea, precisely in order to compare and contrast the differing national historiographies, then the latter notoriously staged the conflicts between 'intentionalists' and 'structuralists' over analysis of Nazism, thereby naming these two camps as such for the first time and shaping a lasting field of disagreement.<sup>14</sup> Mommsen's tenure as GHI Director (1978–85) mapped closely onto the most intense period of the activity I am describing.

*Fifth*, the interaction with colleagues in Germany was far closer than before. The GHI was a vital bridge, as were links running through St Antony's; such collaboration was built into the basic architecture of the Evans Research Seminars in Norwich; funding for exchanges was modestly growing; the special German issue of *Social History* in May 1979, edited with Lutz Niethammer and Dirk Blasius in Essen, was a showcase for new West German scholarship coming from beyond the Bielefeld nexus.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, before any Europeanizing of the British universities had remotely begun, the presence of several energetically well-connected Germans became especially vital, notably Berghahn and Pogge von Strandmann, together with Mason, whose German embeddedness was just as deep.<sup>16</sup> They were the first bridgehead for what has become since the mid-1990s an increasingly rich infusion. *Finally*, this was also an especially intense time for historians more generally.<sup>17</sup> For present purposes I will mention only the impact of the History Workshop movement and the Oxford and Cambridge Social History Seminars, along with new journals such as *History Workshop Journal*, *Social History*, and a variety of others, all of which offered a home for much specifically German discussion. *Social History's* 1979 special German issue is relevant here. For a while, in all of these and other ways, including the giddily expanding list of the freshly established maverick publisher Croom Helm, there developed a profusion of publishing opportunities.

What, in all of this, was characteristically British? At one level, I would argue, there was not very much. Take two emblematic volumes of essays that appeared in Britain in 1978, marking the breakthrough to new forms of social and cultural analysis: *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* and *The Shaping of the Nazi State*.<sup>18</sup> In the first volume, edited by Richard J. Evans, there was very little that bound the ten contributors together. Half were either to leave the profession soon thereafter or never actually published their books. There

was certainly no common project, beyond the editor's own Introduction. The second volume, edited by Peter Stachura, shows the same absence, this time without even the editor's programmatic framing. In the Evans volume, it was only three contributors – Blackburn, Eley, Evans – who might be attributed a common stance, and even then with major divergence, whether by primary interests, intellectual formation, or political outlook. Moreover, beyond the 1980s, the field was about to undergo the kind of sea change – in the defining questions, in the opening outwards of legitimate subject matters and approaches, in the available methodologies, in the receptiveness to theory – that in any case made any limited coherence detectable in the 1970s redundant. For one thing, German-Jewish relations were in that earlier moment nowhere to be seen, and for another, questions of gender had yet even to ruffle the surface. In the meantime, the sociology of the profession has also changed: Evans had no women at all among his contributors, Stachura two out of nine. Thus if the 1960s brought a cohort of grammar school boys into the field, it was mainly the 1980s that brought in the girls. Within this longer perspective, moreover, now that the field is so dense with *German* German historians (a quite striking phenomenon of especially the past decade), it becomes entirely unclear where the 'characteristically British' might any longer reside.

Nonetheless, there are certain things to say. In the Evans volume we certainly *thought* we were making an intervention whose terms were enabled by the particularities of the place from which we wrote. In Evans's rendition, the distinctiveness was all about a certain tradition of social history, one that 'emphasize[d] the...grass roots of politics and the everyday life and experience of ordinary people'.<sup>19</sup> This contrasted with the prevailing approach he saw emerging among social-science historians in West Germany:

Political processes, changes, and influences are perceived [there] as flowing downwards – though now from the elites who controlled the State, rather than from the socially vaguer entity of the State itself – not upwards from the people. The actions and beliefs of the masses are explained in terms of the influence exerted upon them by manipulative elites at the top of society. The German Empire is presented as a puppet theatre, with Junkers and industrialists pulling the strings, and middle and lower classes dancing jerkily across the stage of history towards the final curtain of the Third Reich.<sup>20</sup>

He then drew contrasting illustrations of how scholars in Britain conceived the social history of politics from a wide range of fields: the revisionist historiography of the English Civil War, with its devolution onto the 'county study'; the 'new school of "people's history"' associated with History Workshop; new histories of Victorian politics typified by John Vincent's *Formation of the Liberal Party* (1966); George Rudé and the study of 'riots, protest, crime, and other expressions of discontent among the common people'; Richard Cobb's



influence; and so forth.<sup>21</sup> In the resulting ‘history from below’ Evans contrasted British preference for the empirical-analytical embeddedness of theory with the tendency of West German colleagues to front-load their chosen theoretical orientation. West German preference for a state- and elite-driven model of politics was counterposed against British efforts at enlarging the definition ‘to include many areas of life which German historians... assign to the category of the “unpolitical”.’ ‘In this widened concept of politics,’ Evans argued, ‘social and political history find their meeting place.’ *Society and Politics* was meant to explore the dynamics ‘between the two, from the politics of everyday life to the social foundations of political and administrative processes at the highest level’.<sup>22</sup>

In the context of the 1970s, there was much to this. We might add the importance of community studies and sensitivity to place: ‘one of the great strengths of British historiography lies in its tradition of local history, a subject which has no real equivalent in Germany, where local historical studies are still often antiquarian in nature.’<sup>23</sup> The overweening Prussocentrism of the salient West German historiography of the time contrasted with the readiness of British historians to write from the provinces at large, and it was no accident that *the* pioneering regional study of Nazism, Jeremy Noakes’ study of Lower Saxony, should be produced in Britain.<sup>24</sup> Another vital element was the impact of the British Marxist historians – Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, Edward Thompson, George Rudé, Rodney Hilton, John Saville, Victor Kiernan, and last but not least Raphael Samuel – whose collective example inspired British social historians far beyond the ranks of the avowedly Marxist younger generation themselves. There was no West German counterpart for either of these two groupings, whether the more senior mentors or the newcomers claiming the inheritance.

Something like this combination of elements formed the broad intellectual ground, embracing quite specific and heterogeneous methodologies, standpoints, choices of question and preferences for one kind of theory over another, from which young British German historians of the 1970s were as likely as not to think. There were two particular ways in which this worked. It probably made British Germanists more receptive to *Alltagsgeschichte*, not least because Edward Thompson, History Workshop, and British social anthropology were all such crucial influences on the West German scholars then in process of fashioning an everyday-life approach, beginning in the later 1970s with the work of Adelheid von Saldern, Lutz Niethammer, Hans Medick, Alf Lüdtke, Detlev Peukert, Jürgen Reulecke and more. During the 1980s, inside West Germany itself, the advocates and practitioners of *Alltagsgeschichte* faced varieties of sceptical and dogmatic opposition from the ascendant generation of social-science historians freshly securing their professional power, who acted increasingly as gatekeepers to certain key journals, publishing outlets, funding

sources, and appointments. Without having to worry in the same way about such professorial hierarchies, while rising rapidly to positions of influence of their own and enjoying readier access to resources, legitimacy and intellectual space, British specialists on Germany could explore the possibilities of *Alltagsgeschichte* more eclectically and with greater degrees of freedom. Debates that came in West Germany fraught with tendentiousness and acrimony could occur in Britain without the same high professional and political stakes.<sup>25</sup> The two new journals, *History Workshop Journal* and *Social History*, each opened a space for *Alltagsgeschichte* in the English language, as did the later meetings of the UEA Research Seminar Group. British dissertations under way during the 1980s soon registered the impact of the new approaches.

Second, many of the questions moving German historiography in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s were consciously shaped via the debates in British history through which the emergent generations had been schooled and often inspired. In one very much cruder sense that had long been true, because the *Sonderweg* thesis itself specifically adopted British (and French) history as the measure by which German failings and omissions could be gauged, applying this to the German past as a kind of a schematic and narrative developmental grid. But rather than naively abstracting British history in that way into the normative instance of a desirable and fully realized liberal-democratic modernization (as in 'Why was Germany not England?'), critics of the *Sonderweg* proceeded no less comparatively but on the basis of more carefully delimited questions.<sup>26</sup> Why, in Bismarckian or Wilhelmine politics, for example, did it never prove possible to shape some workable equivalent of the 'Gladstonian coalition' that anchored Britain's parliamentary liberalism during the last third of the nineteenth century?<sup>27</sup> Similarly: how did the differing political opportunity structures bequeathed by the respective political settlements of the 1860s influence and constrain the divergent trajectories of British and German liberalism in the ensuing decades?<sup>28</sup> Shifting the focus to the gendered dimensions of politics before 1914: how did those divergent circumstances affect the manner in which claims for women's citizenship might be raised?<sup>29</sup> Or, in another area of German-British differences: what were the specific features of capitalist industrialization in Germany before 1914 that enabled and secured the distinctively authoritarian labour relations of heavy industry in the Ruhr and the Saar?<sup>30</sup> Bringing a more educated grasp of British historical studies to the German discussion – better-informed, that is, than the vicariously derived and woodenly schematic versions of British history presupposed by the *Sonderweg* thesis – has been a decisive feature of the 'British' approach to German history during the past four decades. Indeed, the very title of *The Peculiarities of German History* owed its origins to such engagement.<sup>31</sup> Much British work in the German field has been implicitly and necessarily comparative in that sense. As Evans remarks, it was no accident that *Peculiarities* was written from the

British side of the North Sea: 'Its basic starting-point was not a feeling that British history was uniquely blessed, but a horror that Germans should see it as a superior experience from which it was their historical misfortune to have deviated.'<sup>32</sup>

## II

Richard Evans has some claim to being the emblematic figure in this story. If the university expansion of the 1960s was the founding moment in the phase of British higher education that lasted roughly until the early 1990s, then Evans was part of the first broad cohort recruited into the profession under its auspices: an undergraduate in Jesus College, Oxford (1966–69) and a graduate student in St Antony's (1969–72), he emerged in 1973 with a Ph.D. supervised by Tony (A.J.) Nicholls and examined by F. L. Carsten and Agatha Ramm, placing him on the borderline of the two later post-war generations ('intermediates' and 'subsequents' in my earlier notation). He started his teaching career at just the right time: appointed in 1972 at the University of Stirling, he moved laterally to the University of East Anglia in 1976 (replacing Berghahn), just ahead of the academic job market's contraction. Unlike some others – Eley left for the US in 1979, Caplan in 1980, Blackbourn in 1992 – he also remained in Britain for the duration. After previously holding chairs at UEA (1983–89), Birkbeck (1989–98), and Cambridge (1998–2008), he was elevated to the Cambridge Regius Professorship in 2008, from which he retired in 2014. Across that period, he has always published prodigiously. His 26 books comprise seven edited volumes and 19 under his own exclusive authorship, including six monographs, five historiographical works, four volumes of his own essays, an edition of police reports on working-class attitudes before 1914, and his imposing three-volume history of the Third Reich.<sup>33</sup> If his wider public resonance falls mainly in the later part of these five decades, likewise his training of graduate students (as this volume's roster of contents eloquently attests), then the main weight of the scholarship falls earlier on, stretching from the pioneering trilogy on women's emancipation movements to the two massive research works, *Death in Hamburg* (1987) and *Rituals of Retribution* (1996), each an analytical *tour de force* of empirical knowledge and historical erudition.<sup>34</sup> Along with the edited volumes, these works are a valuable barometer of what was happening to German history in Britain at the time.<sup>35</sup> What do they tell us?

First, Evans was a notable pioneer of women's history. Present at the foundation, so to speak, his first three books and allied essays and reviews helped mark out the German ground of women's political presence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whether as actors in their own right or as political addressees. His work also revealed the rapid passage of women's history out of its early concern with reclamation (recuperating ideas and

movements previously 'hidden from history') toward more challenging studies of the gendered bases of political life, a process that mapped onto the concurrent opening outward of understandings of 'the social' in social history. Thus, if *The Feminist Movement in Germany* kept a mainly institutional, programmatic, and intellectual framework for approaching women's public activity, that was an indispensable starting point for an area of inquiry only then being rendered visible, and by the time Evans picked up the labour movement aspects of his topic in *Sozialdemokratie und Frauenemanzipation* the conceptual shifts were already becoming apparent.<sup>36</sup> Two essays of this time, his equally pioneering treatment of prostitution under the *Kaiserreich* and a revealing dissection of the SPD's thinking and practice on the working-class family, also registered the change. Evans's contribution remains all the more notable for being produced by a man, no small accomplishment given the potential fraughtness of so much discussion in those early years. It also held up over time.<sup>37</sup> The same might be said of the article on prostitution: a pioneering treatment in the German field, it was succeeded by a wealth of historiography across the intervening years, whose most recent additions include the work of his own former student Victoria Harris.<sup>38</sup>

Second, among German historians in Britain no one did more between the later 1970s and early 1990s than Richard Evans to make the case for definite kinds of social history. As always, this required not only the demonstration effects of the excellence of his own scholarly writings, but even more the practical work of advocacy and institution-building, via the organizing of seminars, conferences and workshops, the encouragement of graduate students and younger colleagues, and simply the enabling of a common conversation. It is impossible in this regard to exaggerate the role of the UEA 'Research Seminar Group on German Social History' (1978–86) and its resulting volumes, whose themes neatly captured the emergent ground of the social history being practiced over those years – from the family, the working class, rural society and popular religion to mass unemployment, crime and criminality, and the study of the bourgeoisie. Generationally, nearly all the contributors to these volumes were born in the 1940s and mostly after World War II. The seminar's goal of furthering exchange and building intellectual community, both within Britain itself and via links to the two Germanies, was brilliantly realized.<sup>39</sup> No less vital was the launching in 1984 of *German History*, originally as the newsletter-journal of the German History Society, for which Evans was again the moving spirit from his base at UEA. 'Conceived as a vehicle for the fostering of contacts, the exchange of ideas, and the stimulation of debate among members of the Society', it graduated after four years into a fully-fledged scholarly journal, becoming eventually the premier English-language journal of the field, not least via its creative furtherance of debate.<sup>40</sup> In all of this activity, Evans was at the centre. He was also an exceptionally prolific, discerning, formidable and

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