

**PAST AND PRESENT RATES
FOR 1995**

Subscriptions

	UK and Europe	Rest of World
Individual	£26.00	\$60.00
Students or Retired (over 60)	£16.00	\$32.00
Institutional	£58.00	\$130.00
Schools	£32.50	\$61.00
<i>Single Issues</i>		
Individual	£8.00	\$18.00
Institutional	£18.00	\$39.00

Prices include postage by surface mail or, for subscribers in the USA and Canada by Airfreight or in Japan, India, Australia and New Zealand by Air Speeded Post. Airmail rates are available upon request.

Past and Present is published quarterly by Oxford University Press. Subscription is \$130.00 per year. Second class postage paid at Newark, NJ and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address corrections to *Past and Present* c/o Virgin Mailing and Distribution, Cargo Atlantic, 10 Camptown Road, Irvington, NJ 07111-1105, USA.

New subscriptions may be registered at any time during the year, but will be reckoned as running from January 1st of the year in which the subscription is received.

Claims regarding non-receipt of issues must be received within 4 months of publication or date of order, whichever is later.

Back issues are available — for information contact Journals Customer Services Department, Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.

Order Information: Payment is required with all orders and may be made by the following methods:

Cheque (made payable to Oxford University Press)

National GiroBank (Account 500 1056)

Credit Card (Access, Visa, American Express, Diners Club)

Direct Debit—details on request

UNESCO Coupons

Bankers: Barclays Bank plc, PO Box 333, Oxford.
Code 20-65-18. Account 00715654.

Please send orders and requests for sample copies to Journals Marketing Department, Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.
Tel: +44(0)1865 267909, Telex 837730 OXPRESG, Fax: +44(0)1865 267773.

Advertising

Advertisements are welcomed and rates will be quoted on request. Advertisers should address their enquiries to Jane Parker, Advertising Sales Manager, Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP, UK.
Tel: +44 (0)1865 56767; Fax: +44 (0)1865 267782.

Address any enquiries regarding 1995 subscriptions to:

**JOURNALS CUSTOMER SERVICES DEPARTMENT,
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS,
WALTON STREET,
OXFORD OX2 6DP**

ISSN 0031-2746

PAST & PRESENT

NUMBER 148

AUGUST 1995

CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
LANGUAGE, POWER AND IDENTITY IN ANCIENT PALESTINE: <i>by Seth Schwartz</i>	3
THE CULTURE OF CHILDREN IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND: <i>by Nicholas Orme</i>	48
THE ENGLISH REFORMATION AND THE EVIDENCE OF FOLKLORE: <i>by Ronald Hutton</i>	89
CONTESTING ILLNESS IN EARLY MODERN NAPLES: <i>MIRACOLATI, PHYSICIANS AND THE CONGREGATION OF RITES: by David Gentilcore</i>	117
SLAVE CLOTHING AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES: <i>by Shane White and Graham White</i>	149
VIEWPOINT: HISTORIANS AND NATION-BUILDING IN GERMANY AFTER REUNIFICATION: <i>by Stefan Berger</i>	187

Published by
Oxford University Press,
for the Past and Present Society

VIEWPOINT

HISTORIANS AND NATION-BUILDING IN GERMANY AFTER REUNIFICATION

German historians have been forced to take stock of their subject by the reunification of their country in 1990. Its implications for German historiography are considerable, in that reunification threatens the plurality of views on German history and poses the serious danger of a return to the narrow concern with "national history" and "national identity" which characterized German historiography for almost two centuries. The first section of this article is devoted to reviewing the tradition of German historiography in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a discipline designed to create German national identity. Next I shall turn to the break with this tradition in the 1960s. After a brief reassessment of the historians' controversy (*Historikerstreit*) of the mid-1980s, I shall then consider the impact of reunification on efforts to put the topic of the "national identity" of the Germans firmly on the agenda in the 1990s. The renationalization of German identity is not only discussed amongst historians — it can be found prominently in other areas, such as literature, philosophy and film. Writers like Martin Walser and Botho Strauss,¹ philosophers like Dieter Henrich and Karl Heinz Bohrer,² and film-makers like Hans Jürgen Syberberg,³ have all contributed to what is one of the most hotly debated public issues in Germany today.⁴

¹ Martin Walser, "Deutsche Sorgen", *Der Spiegel*, 28 June 1993, pp. 40-7; M. Walser, "Über freie und unfreie Rede", *ibid.*, 7 Nov. 1994, pp. 130-8; Botho Strauss, "Anschwellender Bocksgesang", *ibid.*, 8 Feb. 1993, pp. 202-7.

² Dieter Henrich, *Nach dem Ende der Teilung: Über Identitäten und Intellektualität in Deutschland* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1993); Karl Heinz Bohrer, "Warum wir keine Nation sind. Warum wir eine werden sollten", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 Jan. 1990.

³ Peter Glotz, "Die Bewaffnung mit Identität: Eine Analyse des deutschen Normalisierungs-Nationalismus am Beispiel Hans Jürgen Syberbergs", *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 Jan. 1994.

⁴ One of the latest statements by some of the leading neo-nationalists in the debate can now be found in Heimo Schwilk and Ulrich Schacht (eds.), *Die selbstbewusste Nation: "Anschwellender Bocksgesang" und weitere Beiträge zu einer deutschen Debatte* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1994).

British historians at least are often puzzled by the fact that their German colleagues feel a seemingly irresistible urge to make frequent pronouncements on public debates and issues and, what is more, command a good deal of attention for doing so. The authority with which historians in Germany make such statements derives from their traditional proximity to the German state as civil servants, as well as from their mandarin-like status in the universities and in German public life.⁵ In fact, from Heinrich von Treitschke to Michael Stürmer, the highly public role of German historians has often been informed by a scarcely hidden desire to serve as policy advisers to Germany's political class. Hence, much of German historiography since the nineteenth century has been dominated by professional historians whose main aim was to educate, to emancipate, to agitate or to indoctrinate. German historians' claim to objectivity only thinly veiled its tendency to legitimate the existing political conditions and therefore to write the history of the victors. By the middle of the nineteenth century the so-called Prussian school of historiography wrote history which could ably support the demand for a unified nation-state. Like Treitschke, Friedrich Christoph Dahlmann, Max Duncker, Johann Gustav Droysen and Heinrich von Sybel all wrote history not for history's sake but to allow the Germans to develop national identity. In the words of the Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt, for the period of a unified nation-state between 1870 and 1945 German history-writing was "imbued with German triumphalism".⁷

Even if the worst excesses of nationalist and racist historical writing were discontinued after 1945, few German historians felt that they had to account for the phenomenon of National Socialism by referring to peculiarly German traditions. In the

⁵ Cf. Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); Wolfgang Weber, *Priester der Klio: Historisch-sozialwissenschaftliche Studien zur Herkunft und Karriere deutscher Historiker und zur Geschichte der Geschichtswissenschaft, 1800-1970* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1987).

⁶ I deliberately use the term "historism" rather than "historicism" throughout this article. Whereas "historism" (in German, *Historismus*), as defined by Leopold von Ranke, can be seen as an evolutionary, reformist concept which understands all political order as historically developed and grown, "historicism" (*Historizismus*), as defined and rejected by Karl Popper, is based on the notion that history develops according to predetermined laws towards a particular end.

⁷ Jakob Burckhardt, letter to Friedrich von Preen, 31 Dec. 1872, in J. Burckhardt, *Briefe: Vollständige und kritische Ausgabe*, ed. M. Burckhardt, 10 vols. (Basel, 1949-74), v, p. 184.

most famous and immediate German post-war analysis of Nazism, Friedrich Meinecke, the doyen of post-war West German historiography, wrote: "Hitler's National Socialism . . . is a phenomenon which cannot be adequately explained by referring to German developments alone. However horribly peculiar it appears to us as a perversion of our own character, it had certain analogies and preliminary stages in the authoritarian systems of our neighbouring countries".⁸ Despite this obvious tendency to relativize the crimes of National Socialism, Meinecke was still criticized for suggesting that there was any link at all between a tradition of German illiberalism and Nazism.

Gerhard Ritter, for one, saw National Socialism as rooted in the development of modern mass politics and mass culture: "In essence National Socialism is by no means an original German phenomenon; it is only the German variant of a European phenomenon: the one-party- or Führer-state".⁹ Others wrote of National Socialism as a demonic force, an accident, a horrible anomaly in an otherwise proud German history. Despite some tentative efforts to write history within a larger western European context, and despite the fact that Germany as a nation-state had ceased to exist, after the Second World War the writing of history continued to a very large extent as the writing of national history. Ritter, whose importance for post-war historiography it is difficult to overemphasize, was quick to reclaim positive national values, which he saw embodied in the bourgeois German resistance to Hitler. On the basis of such values, he argued, a "healthy national self-confidence" should grow in the post-war era.¹⁰

This emphasis on a positive national tradition was linked to the fierce propagation of anti-communism, which some took so far as to denounce the communist resistance to National Socialism as treason.¹¹ Other historians joined Ritter in a concerted effort to inoculate West Germans against the "communist virus". National Socialism and Soviet communism were conveniently

⁸ Friedrich Meinecke, *Die deutsche Katastrophe: Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen*, 6th edn (Wiesbaden, 1965), p. 9.

⁹ Gerhard Ritter, *Das deutsche Problem* (Munich, 1962), p. 23. See also similar arguments in G. Ritter, "The Fault of Mass Democracy", in John L. Snell (ed.), *The Nazi Revolution: Germany's Guilt or Germany's Fate?* (New York, 1959), pp. 76-84; G. Ritter, *Europa und die deutsche Frage* (Munich, 1948).

¹⁰ Gerhard Ritter, *Carl Goerdeler und die deutsche Widerstandsbewegung* (Munich, 1964), p. 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-11.

bundled together in the theory of totalitarianism. German historians who used this concept may, intentionally or otherwise, have attempted to exculpate the Germans from their own National Socialist past by pointing to a comparable, possibly greater and certainly more present danger, namely that of the Soviet Union. The emergence of an anti-totalitarian consensus in German historiography owed much to the closed and secretive structures of the German academic milieu, which ensured a very high degree of homogeneity of views on the topics of Nazism and anti-communism in the 1950s and 1960s.

The break-up of that consensus came in the wake of the "Fischer controversy", which challenged the view that National Socialist policies broke with German traditions.¹² The longing for hegemony in Europe and the world was portrayed by Fritz Fischer as a constant of German foreign policy ever since the turn of the century. A line of continuity could be drawn from Wilhelmine Germany to Hitler's Germany. This controversy served as a catalyst to other critical evaluations of German national history in the 1950s and 1960s. Karl Dietrich Bracher, for example, had contributed to a deepened awareness of the structural weaknesses of the first German republic which led to its collapse in 1933.¹³ The problematic nature of the German nation-state was also influentially discussed by Karl Jaspers in his *Freiheit und Wiedervereinigung* (1960). Arguing within the framework of the totalitarianist theory, Jaspers left little doubt of his total non-acceptance of the G.D.R., but at the same time set out a clear list of priorities in which peace and freedom came before unity. The most promising way to free the Germans in the G.D.R. from communist "slavery", according to Jaspers, was for the Federal Republic to reject unity as its major aim. In his view, Germany as a nation-state was irreversibly a thing of the past, destroyed in 1945 as a result of German hubris. This in itself was not

¹² Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (Düsseldorf, 1961), trans. as *German War Aims in the First World War* (London, 1967); F. Fischer, *Krieg der Illusionen: Die deutsche Politik von 1911 bis 1914* (Düsseldorf, 1969), trans. Marian Jackson, *War of Illusions: German Politics from 1911 to 1914* (London, 1975). For the Fischer controversy, see Volker Berghahn, "Die Fischer-Kontroverse 15 Jahre danach", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vi (1980), pp. 403-19; John A. Moses, *The Politics of Illusion: The Fischer Controversy in German Historiography* (London, 1975); Wolfgang Jäger, *Historische Forschung und politische Kultur in Deutschland: Die Debatte 1914-1980 über den Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen, 1984).

¹³ Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik: Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie* (Villingen, 1955).

necessarily to be mourned, as Germans had a lot to be proud of. Jaspers quoted with approval Max Weber's dictum: "I thank fate that I was born a German".¹⁴ The existence or otherwise of a unified nation-state was irrelevant to such assertions. Germany had in the past existed as several states and would continue to do so, and the most pressing task for the present was "to find and realize the new state-consciousness of the Federal Republic".¹⁵

The students' movement in Germany, with its strong interest in National Socialism, took up the more critical interpretations of the German nation-state with a vengeance. In the 1970s many young left liberal historians, broadly in sympathy with the Social Democratic Party (S.P.D.) of Willy Brandt, came to formulate what they described as the "critical science of history" (*kritische Geschichtswissenschaft*). This rested heavily on the thesis that German national history constituted an aberration (*ein deutscher Sonderweg*) from the alleged western European norm. Such normality was in turn often defined in the light of an idealized picture of British history. The development of industrial capitalism and the emergence of a civil society in Britain served as a positive counter-example to the view that Germany was a "belated nation",¹⁶ in which the overwhelming influence of Prussia strengthened traditions of authoritarianism, illiberalism and unpredictable aggressiveness in its foreign relations. In this view, the lack of a successful bourgeois revolution and the strength of feudal, agrarian élites in imperial Germany prevented the breakthrough to a modern democratic society in nineteenth-century Germany. Yet a critical view of German national history between 1870 and 1945 did not necessarily include a straightforward condemnation of German history as a whole. Helga Grebing, for example, carefully pointed out that there was much that was positive to look back on in German history, and that it would be wrong to assume that a negative national history logically ended in National Socialism.¹⁷ If there was a problem of teleology in much of the discussion of the German *Sonderweg* in the 1970s, the debates of the 1980s have contributed significantly towards a

¹⁴ Karl Jaspers, "Freiheit und Wiedervereinigung", in his *Hoffnung und Sorge: Schriften zur deutschen Politik, 1945-1965* (Munich, 1965), p. 237.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁶ Helmuth Plessner, *Die verspätete Nation* (Stuttgart, 1959).

¹⁷ Helga Grebing, "Bismarck und Bebel — Zweierlei Kontinuität? Die 'schwarze' und die 'weisse' Linie in der deutschen Geschichte", in *Streitfall deutsche Geschichte: Geschichts- und Gegenwartsbewusstsein in den 80er Jahren* (Essen, 1988), pp. 71-86.

greater awareness that long-term historical developments should not be talked about as deterministic cul-de-sacs.¹⁸

The critical historians have been criticized for many things, but one cannot deny that they did German historiography a very great service in opening up the conservative *juste milieu* of professional historians. Although it is fashionable today to stress the dominance of critical historians amongst professional German historians, this is little more than a myth, albeit one occasionally upheld by its (erstwhile) proponents.¹⁹ Of its critics, Harold James has been particularly prolific in attacking "the self-declared critical historians" who formed "an intellectually and politically small-minded orthodoxy" which dominated West German historiography before 1989.²⁰ In fact, critical historians have always remained a minority amongst academic historians. Greater plurality of views and methods amongst German historians, not dominance of one particular view or method, was the result of the Fischer controversy and its aftermath in the 1960s and 1970s. The writing of political and diplomatic history continued, but new forms of history-writing, like social history from below or gender history, were increasingly practised.

Within these new historical disciplines, the experiences of individuals or small groups within local or regional frameworks rather than the nation-state formed the centre of attention. The first generation of critical historians, in contrast, remained strongly committed to writing the history of the nation-state. Together with methodological differences, this ensured that the relationship between the two factions remained distant and at times frankly hostile — most famously in the debates in the mid-1980s about the history of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*).²¹

¹⁸ One of the earliest and the most thoughtful critiques from a neo-historist standpoint was by Thomas Nipperdey: T. Nipperdey, "Welters Kaiserreich: Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, i (1975), pp. 538-60. Another powerful criticism of the notion of a German Sonderweg was formulated by British historians of Germany: David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford, 1984); Richard J. Evans (ed.), *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (London, 1978).

¹⁹ Wolfgang Mommsen, *Die Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Historismus*, 2nd edn (Düsseldorf, 1971).

²⁰ Harold James, "Die Nemesis der Einfallslosigkeit", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 Sept. 1990. See also H. James, *Vom Historikerstreit zum Historikerschweigen* (Berlin, 1993), and the review of this volume by Stefan Berger, *Bull. German Hist. Inst.*, xvi, no. 3 (1994), pp. 49-53.

²¹ See, for example, F. H. Tenbruck, *Die unbewältigten Sozialwissenschaften oder die Abschaffung des Menschen* (Graz, 1984); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Geschichte — von

(cont. on p. 193)

On the other hand, the "critical history" approach came under almost immediate attack in the 1970s and 1980s from methodologically and politically conservative historians. Andreas Hillgruber and Klaus Hildebrand defended diplomatic and political history against social history in the 1970s.²² In 1978 Hellmut Diwald, the extreme right-wing professor of history at Erlangen, published his widely read *Geschichte der Deutschen*, which was informed by an effort to revive German pride in the nation-state of the past.²³ Guido Knopp, historian, journalist and television presenter, found a disappointing lack of national identity amongst Germans in 1981, and pleaded for a historiography in which the national perspective of a unified German nation-state would be central.²⁴ Michael Stürmer warned of "a worried, deeply insecure nation running away from its own past",²⁵ and proposed as a cure for this malaise a new historiography that would inspire a renewed sense of national purpose amongst Germans: in other words, a return to nineteenth-century Prussian history-writing with a clear political mission. Hence questions of national identity and the national problem formed the focus of major publications in the first half of the 1980s.²⁶ A number of largely conservative historians, in broad sympathy with the ruling Christian Democrat government, made continued efforts to redefine the parameters of a positive national identity which would help to immunize the Federal Republic against an alleged communist threat.

The *Historikerstreit* has itself by now been the subject of much

(n. 21 cont.)

unters gesehen", *Die Zeit*, 3 May 1985, p. 64; Volker Ullrich, "Spuren im Alltag: 'Barfusshistoriker' — woher sie kommen und was sie wollen", *ibid.*, 2 Nov. 1984, p. 73.

²² Andreas Hillgruber, "Politische Geschichte in moderner Sicht", *Historische Zeitschrift*, ccxvi (1973), pp. 529-52; Klaus Hildebrand, "Geschichte oder 'Gesellschaftsgeschichte'? Die Notwendigkeit einer politischen Geschichtsschreibung von den internationalen Beziehungen", *ibid.*, ccxxiii (1976), pp. 328-57.

²³ Hellmut Diwald, *Geschichte der Deutschen* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1978).

²⁴ Guido Knopp, "Brauchen wir die deutsche Einheit?", in G. Knopp (ed.), *Die deutsche Einheit — Hoffnung, Alptraum, Illusion?* (Aschaffenburg, 1981), pp. 7-14.

²⁵ Michael Stürmer, "Der Historiker als Gentleman", *Merkur*, xxxv (1981), p. 859.

²⁶ Werner Weidenfeld (ed.), *Die Identität der Deutschen* (Munich, 1983); Josef Becker and Andreas Hillgruber (eds.), *Die deutsche Frage im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1983); Otto Büsch and James J. Sheehan (eds.), *Die Rolle der Nation in der deutschen Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1985); Klaus Hildebrand (ed.), *Wem gehört die deutsche Geschichte? Deutschlands Weg vom alten Europa in die europäische Moderne* (Cologne, 1987).

research, and there is thus no need for further detailed analysis.²⁷ It is sufficient to point out that the efforts of Ernst Nolte, Hillgruber, Stürmer, Hildebrand and others to normalize (i.e., sanitize) German history are merely the latest fruits of a long tradition in German historiography. However, in the mid-1980s, at a time when *Ostpolitik* and the peaceful coexistence of the two superpowers were accepted by the overwhelming majority of West Germans, when millions demonstrated against new American missiles, when West Germany saw a lively debate on whether to grant the G.D.R. official recognition, the "critical historians" could feel safe in the knowledge that their parameters for interpreting Germany's national history as essentially problematic and exceptional stood firm. The defence of the pluralism of views first introduced into West German historiography after the Fischer controversy against the claims of a historiography which aimed at creating a uniform national consciousness amongst Germans seemed to hold its ground. As Bernd Faulenbach, historian at the Recklinghausen Institute of Labour History and the chairman of the historical commission of the S.P.D., argued in 1988: "There have to be serious doubts whether or not complex societies can develop consistent identities at all . . . There is much to be said in favour of accepting the existence of different identities and developing a historical consciousness that allows for the tension which exists between those different identities, and which encourages critical self-reflection above all".²⁸

As late as 1989, the West Berlin professor of history Hagen Schulze, himself hardly a critical historian,²⁹ could write that the nation-state had been a historic failure in Germany.³⁰ Amongst

²⁷ For the documentation of the *Historikerstreit*, see "*Historikerstreit*": *Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung* (Munich, 1987); Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988); Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (New York, 1989); Peter Baldwin (ed.), *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians' Debate* (Boston, 1990); Geoff Eley, "Nazism, Politics and the Image of the Past: Thoughts on the West German *Historikerstreit*, 1986-1987", *Past and Present*, no. 121 (Nov. 1988), pp. 171-208.

²⁸ Bernd Faulenbach, "Identität durch Geschichte? Zur aktuellen Diskussion über die Bedeutung der deutschen Vergangenheit", in *Streitfall deutsche Geschichte*, p. 248.

²⁹ In the *Historikerstreit*, Schulze had published a defence of the revisionist historians against Jürgen Habermas and the critical historians: Hagen Schulze, "Fragen, die wir stellen müssen", in "*Historikerstreit*", pp. 143-50.

³⁰ Hagen Schulze, *Gibt es überhaupt eine deutsche Geschichte?* (Berlin, 1989), pp. 63-70.

left liberal historians the same broad consensus survived the *Historikerstreit* largely intact. Even where the concept of a unified German nation was not completely given up it changed its meaning significantly. Heinrich August Winkler, for example, maintained in 1981 that the aim of German unity should not be easily abandoned, as the West Germans' responsibility for the Easterners could best be fulfilled if the ideal of national solidarity was maintained.³¹ However, in this view national identity had become a functional tool for the democratization of the G.D.R. The question of an undivided German nation-state was not on the agenda for Winkler until after 1989. Even Hellmut Diwald had argued in the early 1980s that reunification was "beyond his imagination",³² and there was a widespread recognition that the question of the united nation-state had become less important. Rudolf Vierhaus spoke for the mainstream of German professors when he argued in the mid-1980s: ". . . the question of national identity can no longer be equated unproblematically with the question of national unity. Unity . . . is only one of the historical components of the national identity of the Germans. No such unity characterized Germany's history . . . political unity has been the exception . . ." ³³ Some historians abandoned the idea of the nation-state altogether.³⁴ A concern with regional, local and post-national (i.e., European) identities replaced national identities in Germany. As Hans Mommsen of Bochum University argued in 1988, all over Europe "the historical consciousness reconstitutes itself on the level of regions and neighbourhoods. Social history and the history of everyday life are mirroring this

³¹ Heinrich August Winkler, "Der deutsche Sonderweg: Eine Nachlese", *Merkur*, xxxv (1981), p. 804.

³² Hellmut Diwald, "' . . . eine Sache der Deutschen'. Deutschlands Einheit als historisches Problem", in Knopp (ed.), *Deutsche Einheit*, pp. 33-4.

³³ Rudolf Vierhaus, "Historische Entwicklungslinien deutscher Identität", in Will Cremer and Gernot Dallinger (eds.), *Die Frage nach der deutschen Identität* (Bonn, 1985), p. 21.

³⁴ Heinrich August Winkler's contribution to the *Historikerstreit* rests heavily on the assumption that any national history of Germany came to a definite end in 1945: H. A. Winkler, "Auf ewig in Hitlers Schatten?", in "*Historikerstreit*", pp. 256-63. See also Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Wir brauchen keinen neuen deutschen Sonderweg: Antwort eines Historikers auf den Neutralismus der Friedensbewegung", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 Feb. 1982; Karl Dietrich Bracher, "Das Modewort Identität und die deutsche Frage: Exkurs über jüngere und jüngste Kontroversen", *ibid.*, 9 Aug. 1986.

process".³⁵ There were, indeed, many signs of a post-national identity developing in 1980s western Europe, and nowhere more so than in West Germany.³⁶

Then, in 1989, to everyone's surprise, the Berlin Wall came down, and less than a year later Germany was united once more. At first, some critical historians maintained that the nation-state was a dead end. Like some of the leading dissidents in the G.D.R., they began to favour the continued existence of two German states. Reforms within the G.D.R., not complete abolition of the G.D.R., became the rallying cry of critical historians before the people of the G.D.R. decided otherwise.³⁷ Uneasy about the course events were taking, they were soon faced with a revived onslaught from the revisionist historians, who felt vindicated by the events of 1989 in their emphasis on the importance of a positive national identity. Schulze, who had declared national history a dead end in 1989, five years later published a lengthy essay about states and nations in Europe, in which he admits the historical continuity of the nation-state and argues that nation-states will continue to play a major role in Europe.³⁸ This re-nationalization of German identity pursues four major lines of attack: first, an assault on the *Sonderweg* paradigm; secondly, a revisionist interpretation of National Socialism; thirdly, the negative rewriting of the history of the Federal Republic; and fourthly, demands for a new historical methodology.

The first two of these concerns are not really separable, for a rejection of the *Sonderweg* inevitably involves a reassessment of National Socialism. German history, it is argued, is not reducible to the twelve years of Nazism. Once again it is Stürmer who has pointed out the need for a redirected historiography to encourage a positive identification with the nation-state and a legitimate

³⁵ Hans Mommsen, "Geschichte und politische Legitimation in der Bundesrepublik: Zum Dilemma gesteuerter historischer Konsensbildung", in *Streitfall deutsche Geschichte*, p. 230; H. Mommsen, "Die Nation ist tot. Es lebe die Region", in Guido Knopp (ed.), *Nation Deutschland?* (Paderborn, 1984), pp. 35-8.

³⁶ For ideas of binationalism and post-national identity, see especially Gebhard Ludwig Schweigler, *National Consciousness in Divided Germany* (London, 1975); Erich Kitzmüller, Heinz Kuby and Lutz Niethammer, "Der Wandel der nationalen Frage in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 18 Aug. 1973, pp. 3-31, 25 Aug. 1973, pp. 3-31; Hans Mommsen, "Aus Eins mach Zwei: Die Bi-Nationalisierung Rest-Deutschlands", *Die Zeit*, 6 Feb. 1981, p. 4; Heinrich August Winkler, "Nation — ja, Nationalstaat — nein", *ibid.*, 13 Feb. 1981, pp. 5-6.

³⁷ For one example among many, see Heinrich August Winkler, "Die Mauer wegdenken", *Die Zeit*, 11 Aug. 1989, p. 7.

³⁸ Hagen Schulze, *Staat und Nation in der europäischen Geschichte* (Munich, 1994).

sense of pride in one's national history, especially among young people. The aim of his vision of a revamped historiography would be to establish feelings of pride in one's national history. Such history-writing has already led to a revisionist attack on the interpretation of post-Fischerite *Sonderweg* history. First of all, historians such as Stürmer and Gregor Schöllgen have revived the idea of geopolitics, of Germany's *Mittellage*, in trying to account for German foreign policy.³⁹ In the light of this, it is Germany's geographic position in the middle of Europe which accounts for much of the rather unhappy history of Germany and Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. Schöllgen and Stürmer argue that whereas Bismarck could still control a complex situation by skilfully building up a system of alliances with various other European "great" powers, German foreign policy in the age of imperialism became more aggressive in its quest for colonies. The problem was not German colonialism itself, but the fact that Germany, by meddling in world politics, became increasingly isolated in Europe, eventually believing it was encircled by enemies (France, Russia, Great Britain). In this view, the First World War was not a conscious attempt by the German ruling class to gain hegemony in Europe. It was a tragic war for which Germany cannot be held solely responsible. National Socialist foreign policy, based on racist ideological principles (*Volk ohne Raum* ideology) and on consciously expansionist aims, can then be presented as a total break with the foreign policy traditions of both Imperial and Weimar Germany.

As far as the domestic policy of National Socialism is concerned, several historians have recently stressed the modernizing elements within Nazism. Rainer Zitelmann, until recently editor of *Geistige Welt* and commissioning editor of the powerful Ullstein publishing house, has portrayed Hitler as a conscious modernizer and revolutionary.⁴⁰ Modern elements of National Socialist rule have been identified, for example, in the creation of an efficient welfare state, in the setting up of the first people's party in Germany, in the continued Americanization of German industry in the 1930s, and in the partial reform of the educational system and the public

³⁹ Michael Stürmer, *Die Grenzen der Macht: Begegnung der Deutschen mit der Geschichte* (Berlin, 1992); Gregor Schöllgen, *Die Macht in der Mitte Europas: Stationen deutscher Aussenpolitik von Friedrich dem Grossen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1992).

⁴⁰ Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler: Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (Hamburg, 1987).

housing market.⁴¹ Thus a more positive re-evaluation of the Nazi regime in Germany emerges, which finds its best expression in the writings of Ernst Nolte. Nolte argued that it is to the credit of the National Socialists that they recognized from an early stage the inhumanity of the Stalinist system in the U.S.S.R., to which Nazi genocide is seen as a reaction: "The National Socialists were the only German party capable of countering communism with similar decisiveness and unity. Hence they were not unjustified in their extreme fight to the bitter end forced upon them by the communists . . . The question has to be asked, if there was not a rational centre in National Socialism".⁴² In Nolte's work, Nazism attains historical greatness, and even the dimensions of tragedy, and its murderous side becomes a mere "preventive over-reaction".⁴³ Nolte's theses are also reflected in a recent book on the end of the Weimar Republic, in which Christian Striefler argues that the anti-communism of the Nazis was a rational and legitimate response to the communists' plans to overthrow the Weimar Republic and install a Bolshevik regime in Germany. Because Striefler sees the democratic forces in Weimar Germany as being too weak to prevent the communists from achieving their ultimate aim, the Nazis emerge as the only convincing alternative to the communist threat in 1933. Here, historical interpretation comes very close to justifying the Nazi seizure of power in 1933.⁴⁴ In this view, moreover, the reasons for their success had nothing to do with any German *Sonderweg*. Instead the old idea that the Versailles Treaty was responsible for the Germans' willingness to support ultra-nationalist policies is once again becoming fashionable,⁴⁵ and the *Sonderweg* becomes a dangerous illusion which has prevented the Germans from developing a more healthy national

⁴¹ For the revisionist history of National Socialism, stressing its modernizing elements, see in particular Uwe Backes, Eckhard Jesse and Rainer Zitelmann (eds.), *Die Schatten der Vergangenheit: Impulse zur Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1990); Michael Prinz and R. Zitelmann (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung* (Darmstadt, 1991).

⁴² Ernst Nolte, "Identität und Wiedervereinigung", *Die politische Meinung*, xxxvii (1992), pp. 41-2.

⁴³ For the latest restatement of Nolte's position, see E. Nolte, *Streitpunkte: Heutige und künftige Kontroversen um den Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1993); E. Nolte, "Ein historisches Recht Hitlers?", *Der Spiegel*, 3 Oct. 1994, pp. 83-103.

⁴⁴ Christian Striefler, *Kampf um die Macht: Kommunisten und Nationalsozialisten am Ende der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin, 1993).

⁴⁵ Karlheinz Weissmann, *Rückruf in die Geschichte. Die deutsche Herausforderung: Alte Gefahren — Neue Chancen* (Berlin, 1992), p. 83.

identity.⁴⁶ The holocaust and, indeed, the essential moral depravity of the National Socialist regime, are moved from the centre of interest to the sidelines, with dire moral implications.⁴⁷ Some publications now suggest that Auschwitz was used by the allies to blackmail the Germans into submitting to the division of Germany after 1945.⁴⁸ Hans-Peter Schwarz, professor of contemporary history at Bonn University, has recently expressed the hope that the critical examination of East German communism will draw attention away from the continued German preoccupation with National Socialism, which he sees as resulting from a neurotic guilt-complex.⁴⁹ Eckhard Jesse and Rainer Zitelmann have spelt out this agenda most clearly: a historization of National Socialism would enable the reunified country finally to step out of Hitler's shadow.⁵⁰

However, the situation has become far more complex as a result of quite different efforts by Martin Broszat, the late director of the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, to historize National Socialism. He argued that an end to the moral demonology of National Socialist crimes can only lead to a fuller understanding of ordinary people's behaviour under National Socialism by showing the overwhelming normality of life in Nazi Germany. The preoccupation with the amorality of the Third Reich and its leading representatives will only serve the purpose of preventing the development of a wider historical consciousness amongst Germans.⁵¹ Importantly, in Broszat's work, as also in Detlev Peukert's,⁵² there is a complete absence of nationalist political

⁴⁶ For an explicit attack on the German *Sonderweg*, see Karlheinz Weissmann, "Auf dem Sonderweg verirrt", *Rheinischer Merkur*, 28 Feb. 1992.

⁴⁷ This development has been carefully analysed by Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 3rd edn (London, 1993), pp. 197-217.

⁴⁸ Arnulf Baring, *Deutschland, was nun? Ein Gespräch mit Dirk Rumberg und Wolf Jobst Siedler* (Berlin, 1991).

⁴⁹ For Schwarz's views, see Herbert Obenaus, "Stasi kommt — Nazi geht?", *Die Zeit*, 31 July 1992, p. 40.

⁵⁰ Eckhard Jesse, "'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' und politische Kultur", *Politische Bildung*, xxiii (1990), pp. 53-66; Rainer Zitelmann, "Vom Umgang mit der NS-Vergangenheit", in Rolf Ittlinger (ed.), *Bewusstseins-Notstand: Thesen von 60 Zeitzeugen* (Düsseldorf, 1990), pp. 69-79.

⁵¹ Martin Broszat, *Nach Hitler: Der schwierige Umgang mit unserer Geschichte* (Munich, 1987).

⁵² For the crisis of modernity in the Weimar Republic, see in particular Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* (London, 1991); David Crew, "The Pathologies of Modernity: Detlev Peukert on Germany's Twentieth Century", *Social Hist.*, xvii (1992), pp. 319-28.

overtones, and indeed of any apologetic tendencies. However, the untimely death of both historians poses the serious danger that their voices will be submerged in the torrent of Prussian calls for a revival of "national history".

The revisionist rewriting of the history of the German nation-state between 1871 and 1945 is accompanied by a corresponding rewriting of the history of the Federal Republic. On the one hand there is an increasing awareness of the continuities which connect pre-1945 German society with its post-1945 West German successor. The break with the past was not as sharp as many critical historians had argued.⁵³ However, some critics of such a positive view of the history of the Federal Republic go one step further. From success story the history of the Federal Republic becomes a provincial divertimento of national history. Following Karl Heinz Bohrer, some historians see the determining characteristic of the Federal Republic as its provincialism, and Bohrer himself traces this in its political system and its society.⁵⁴ In its orientation towards the present, they have argued, the Federal Republic is revealed as an artificial creation of the Allies, bereft of any identity of its own. They see a new German nation-state as a genuine opportunity to transcend the old Federal Republic's alleged lack of historical roots, and write German histories from Karl the Great to Kohl the Great.

For the neo-Prussian historians, the ahistorical orientation of much of West Germany's historiography is most evident in the development of concepts like constitutional patriotism, which they dismiss as unable to create identity. Instead such concepts are replaced by the cornerstone of the old *völkisch* nationalism, the idea of ethnicity. The *Volk*, characterized by specific collective historical and cultural memories, becomes the sole focus from which national identity can be derived. Any kind of patriotism grounded in abstract universal values embodied in a constitution can never be as strong as the identity derived from ethnic collective memories. 1989 marks the failure of all efforts to ground the

⁵³ Martin Broszat, Klaus-Dieter Henke and Hans Woller (eds.), *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform* (Munich, 1988). See also Harold James, "The Pre-History of the Federal Republic", *Jl Mod. Hist.*, lxiii (1991), pp. 98-115.

⁵⁴ Karl Heinz Bohrer, "Provinzialismus", *Merkur*, xlv (1990), pp. 1096-1102, xlv (1991), pp. 255-66, 348-56, 537-46, 719-27, xlvi (1992), pp. 88-90; Joachim Fest, "Nicht wie alle Welt. Immer wieder das deutsche Sonderbewusstsein: Aktuelle Anmerkungen zu einer Debatte von gestern", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 June 1992; Weissmann, *Rückruf in die Geschichte*, p. 43.

nation-state in rational universal values. Instead Germans will have to learn once again that nations rest on "the collective memory of a long and common history", which includes "an ethnic factor".⁵⁵ Brigitte Seebacher-Brandt, the widow of Willy Brandt and herself a distinguished labour historian, has criticized the inability of the left to understand the "imponderabilities of the soul of the *Volk*",⁵⁶ and welcomes the return of the nation: "The nation remains the natural and normal, the obvious frame of reference for the people, into which they are born".⁵⁷

The assumed lack of historically grounded identification of Germans with their nation is also linked to the allegedly disturbed relationship of Germans to power politics. Germans, in this view, will have to overcome the trauma of National Socialism and find a new, more positive national identity, so as to be able to play a more important world-political role. To rid the Germans of their guilt complex is also the aim of Martin Kittel's book on Germany's efforts to come to terms with the Nazi crimes after 1945. Kittel, a lecturer at the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, argues that the idea of a "second guilt" due to the country's "inability to mourn" is nothing but a myth invented by political forces interested in prolonging this very complex.⁵⁸ Such exculpation of Germany is particularly important for neo-Prussian historians, as the end of the east-west conflict means that war has once again become an instrument of politics (as in the Gulf War). Hence the Germans have to learn once more to wage just wars. This concern with a stronger political role for the reunified Germany is justified by an alleged return to normality. Hans-Peter Schwarz and Christian Hacke have been at the forefront of those arguing for a remilitarization of German foreign policy and for the re-establishment of Germany as a major world

⁵⁵ Karlheinz Weissmann, "Wiederkehr eines Totgesagten: Der Nationalstaat am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 2 Apr. 1993, p. 9; K. Weissmann, "Die Nation denken", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 Apr. 1994. See also Weissmann, *Rückruf in die Geschichte*.

⁵⁶ Brigitte Seebacher-Brandt, "Die Linke und die Einheit", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 Nov. 1989. See also B. Seebacher-Brandt, *Die Linke und die deutsche Einheit* (Berlin, 1991).

⁵⁷ Brigitte Seebacher-Brandt, "Nation im vereinigten Deutschland", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 21 Oct. 1994, p. 8.

⁵⁸ Manfred Kittel, *Die Legende von der "Zweiten Schuld": Vergangenheitsbewältigung in der Ära Adenauer* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1993).

power.⁵⁹ According to Schwarz and Hacke, the historical identity of Germans has been unfairly reduced to the twelve years of National Socialism. They argue that the Federal Republic has been built on a dangerous anomaly, from which only an unre-served rehabilitation of the nation-state and of power politics will free it. At long last, according to Gregor Schöllgen, Germany will have to overcome its paralysing indecisiveness and accept its *de facto* status as the major European power.⁶⁰ Historians like Schwarz, Hacke, Schöllgen and Karlheinz Weissmann seem to view history mainly as the history of struggles between nation-states or groups of nation-states. In their view, renewed national unity necessitates a renewed will to power which will reinforce Germany's role as the leading power in Europe.

Demands for a return to the "normality of the nation-state" and the attack on the peculiarity of the Federal Republic have been combined with an assault on its western orientation and western liberalism. Nolte and Joachim Fest have both written on the failure of western liberalism to build national identity amongst Germans.⁶¹ They are joined by a group of young historians around Rainer Zitelmann, who feel that there is an almost mystical glorification of the west and its political and cultural values. Germany's identity and interests can only come into its own after she has rid herself of this peculiar post-war link with the western democracies.⁶² Hans-Helmuth Knütter, professor at Bonn University, is prominent among those encouraging not only a new self-confidence amongst Germans but also a more anti-western position. For him the Germans after 1945 suffer from over-identification with the west, leading to a debasement of German achievements in the past and an irrational idealization of the west. The debates in western European countries about

⁵⁹ Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Die gezähmten Deutschen: Von der Machtbesessenheit zur Machtvergessenheit* (Stuttgart, 1985); Christian Hacke, *Weltmacht wider Willen* (Stuttgart, 1989). Since reunification these authors' arguments have clearly gained in self-confidence, and indeed sometimes border on the megalomaniac: see H.-P. Schwarz, *Die Zentralmacht Europas: Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne* (Berlin, 1994); C. Hacke, *Weltmacht wider Willen*, rev. and extended edn (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1993).

⁶⁰ Gregor Schöllgen, *Angst vor der Macht* (Munich, 1993).

⁶¹ See Joachim Fest, "Offene Gesellschaft mit offener Flanke", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 Oct. 1992; Ernst Nolte, "Die Fragilität des Triumphs", *ibid.*, 3 July 1993.

⁶² The attack on western orientation, combined with a neo-nationalist rhetoric, can be found most clearly in Rainer Zitelmann (ed.), *Westbindung — Chancen und Risiken für Deutschland* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1993).

German reunification in 1989-90, he argues, clearly revealed a degree of anti-Germanism which was also behind the efforts of the British, in particular, to inject a permanent feeling of guilt and deficiency into the German nation after 1945.⁶³

Hence, it is hardly surprising that Arnulf Baring of Berlin University has argued that the reunified Germany can no longer be defined in the unusual way that the Federal Republic was. Reunification and the renaissance of the nation-state are for him a belated victory for Bismarck and his creation of 1870-71.⁶⁴ The continuity of the reunified Germany with Bismarck's makes for a reopening of many questions long thought of as closed: "Suddenly very old questions reappear, questions about the position of Germany in the middle of Europe, about the relationship between east and west".⁶⁵ The new Germany and Poland are, after all, bound together by "common territories".⁶⁶ And if Germans were to think more about Poland, then "inevitably the lost, run-down eastern territories of Germany would be constantly on our mind".⁶⁷ But a solution may be to hand, "[for] if the Poles could do as they like, they would probably decide by a huge majority to join the Federal Republic".⁶⁸

This rediscovery of the nation-state, and this questioning of the Federal Republic's western orientation, has also led to a much more sceptical evaluation of the European Union, even amongst liberal-minded Europeans (not to mention dyed-in-the-wool Euro-sceptics). For Ralf Dahrendorf any hope for a Europe which would transcend national allegiance seems still very much wishful thinking. For him the nation-state remains for the present the only effective guarantor of basic civil liberties and rights. Constitutional patriotism only makes sense within nation-states. According to Dahrendorf, the renaissance of the nation-state as a constitutional entity guaranteeing civil liberties is not necessarily

⁶³ Hans-Helmuth Knütter, *Deutschfeindlichkeit gestern, heute und morgen. . . ?* (Asendorf, 1991). For a more specific discussion of the western nations' anti-Germanism, see H.-H. Knütter, "Deutschfeindlichkeit im westlichen Ausland", in Zitelmann (ed.), *Westbindung*, pp. 421-37. See also Kittel, *Legende von der "Zweiten Schuld"*, p. 36.

⁶⁴ Arnulf Baring, "In Bismarcks Grenzen", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 Nov. 1990.

⁶⁵ Arnulf Baring, "Schluss mit der Behaglichkeit", *Rheinischer Merkur*, 27 Sept. 1991.

⁶⁶ Baring, *Deutschland, was nun?*, p. 40.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 166-7.

to be deplored, at least so long as the Union has not developed reliable institutions to guarantee civil liberties and basic rights across Europe.⁶⁹ While no one could denounce Dahrendorf as an anti-European nationalist, his arguments have been gleefully picked up by those who would fit the description more neatly. For them, the current shortcomings of the Union are evidence of the unchanging superiority of the nation-state over supra-national organizations.⁷⁰

Such criticism of the Federal Republic and of the European Union fits well with a much more substantial delegitimization of the G.D.R., and in particular of G.D.R. historiography. The "Soviet protectorate"⁷¹ already appears "as a completely peripheral historical phenomenon".⁷² The whole of G.D.R. history is at times reduced to the problem of the East German secret police, the Stasi — in other words, to coercion and terror.⁷³ G.D.R. historiography is frequently referred to as "legitimation science" for everyday politics.⁷⁴ It is particularly sad to see that critical historians like Hans-Ulrich Wehler, who before 1989 seemed ever-willing to criticize fellow historians for not taking into account the research produced in the G.D.R., after 1989 vehemently argued that there was little, if anything, useful produced by G.D.R. historians.⁷⁵ Such distancing may be understandable in the light of recent efforts to tar with the brush of political opportunism, collaboration and immorality all those politicians, historians and political scientists who dared to have

⁶⁹ Ralf Dahrendorf, "Die Sache mit der Nation", *Merkur*, xlv (1990), p. 831. For a similar criticism from a liberal perspective, see Peter Graf Kielmannsegg, "Ein Mass für die Grösse des Staates: Europa fehlt die Zustimmung der Bürger", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 Dec. 1992.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Tilman Mayer, "Die nationalstaatliche Herausforderung in Europa", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 2 Apr. 1993, pp. 11–20.

⁷¹ Ernst Nolte, "Die fortwirkende Verblendung: Über Gleichsetzungen und Vergleiche von Drittem Reich, DDR und Bundesrepublik", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 Feb. 1992.

⁷² Weissmann, *Rückruf in die Geschichte*, p. 49.

⁷³ Refreshingly different in this respect is Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989* (Oxford, 1995).

⁷⁴ For some of the worst examples of Western historians acting as judge and jury over their Eastern colleagues, see Harm Kluefing, "Parteilichkeit war wichtiger als Objektivität: Die marxistisch-leninistische Geschichtsschreibung der DDR", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 May 1990; Gustav Seibt, "Kader: Überlebt die SED-Historie?", *ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1990; Christian Meier, "Im Zweifel lieber abwickeln", *ibid.*, 21 Apr. 1990.

⁷⁵ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Hart widersprechen und mit dem Unfug stets konfrontieren", *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 24 Sept. 1992.

contacts with or spoke up in any way for dialogue with G.D.R. representatives.⁷⁶ In such a climate one does well to remember today that in some areas like labour history G.D.R. historiography had been an early challenge to its counterpart in the Federal Republic. In its later years it developed its own distinct, and internationally recognized, historiographical traditions.⁷⁷

All this changed very rapidly after 1989. It was in vain that the G.D.R. historians' association appealed to West German colleagues to aid its transition to the reunified state. Blanket denunciations by members of a newly established Independent Historians' Association in the G.D.R. were quickly utilized by West German historians to demand the all but wholesale dismissal of their Eastern colleagues.⁷⁸ Initially there had been justifiable hopes for a self-renewal in East German historiography. Two internationally recognized G.D.R. historians, Hartmut Zwahr and Helga Schultz, hoped in 1989 and 1990 for a strengthening of G.D.R. social history and an end to the streamlining of history by what Zwahr has called the "administrative system".⁷⁹ Others argued that a renewed socialism would need a revitalized socialist historiography.⁸⁰ There are many examples of a self-critical stance amongst those who had held academic jobs in the G.D.R.⁸¹

⁷⁶ See especially the excruciatingly self-righteous work of Jens Hacker, *Deutsche Irrtümer: Schönfärber und Helfershelfer der SED-Diktatur im Westen* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1992); Konrad Löw, ... bis zum Verrat der Freiheit: Die Gesellschaft der Bundesrepublik und die "DDR" (Munich, 1993).

⁷⁷ Alexander Fischer and Günther Heydemann (eds.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in der DDR*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1989–90), i, pp. 3–30; Georg G. Iggers, "Introduction", in G. G. Iggers (ed.), *Marxist Historiography in Transformation: East German Social History in the 1980s* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 1–37.

⁷⁸ Andreas Graf speaks of East German historiography as having been "intellectually rotten": A. Graf, "Wende und Wände: Zur Selbstfindung der (DDR-) Geschichtswissenschaft", in Konrad Jarausch (ed.), *Zwischen Parteilichkeit und Professionalität: Bilanz der Geschichtswissenschaft der DDR* (Berlin, 1991), p. 37. See also Stefan Wolle, "Das Versagen der Historiker", in Rainer Eckert, Wolfgang Küttler and Gustav Seiber (eds.) *Krise — Umbruch — Neubeginn: Eine kritische und selbstkritische Dokumentation der DDR-Geschichtswissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1992).

⁷⁹ Hartmut Zwahr, "Zu einer beginnenden Diskussion", in Eckert, Küttler and Seiber (eds.), *Krise — Umbruch — Neubeginn*, p. 31. Interestingly, Helga Schultz argued that one of the advantages of G.D.R. social history was that it "transgress[ed] national boundaries": H. Schultz, "Was bleibt von der Geschichtswissenschaft der DDR?", *ibid.*, p. 459.

⁸⁰ Jürgen John, Wolfgang Küttler and Walter Schmidt, "Für eine Erneuerung des Geschichtsverständnisses in der DDR", *ibid.*, p. 159.

⁸¹ See, for example, many of the contributions in Eckert, Küttler and Seiber (eds.), *Krise — Umbruch — Neubeginn*, and the debates on the renewal of G.D.R. historiography in the former flagship of G.D.R. research journals, the *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, after 1990.

Konrad Jarausch spoke in 1991 of the "crisis of survival" for G.D.R. historiography,⁸² and three years on it looks as though the Marxist-Leninist tradition has indeed almost vanished.⁸³ In this respect Schultz's comparison of G.D.R. historiography to a "dead dog" has apparently been justified.⁸⁴ Olaf Groehler, of the former East Berlin Academy of Sciences, has estimated that about 70 per cent of all East German academics had either left or been removed from their positions by 1992, and indeed Lutz Niethammer wondered whether the real problem for East German historiography was not the small number of indigeneous East German historians still in employment.⁸⁵ And yet efforts to revitalize Marxist historiography are being undertaken, and it is to be hoped that this will have a role to play in any future German historiography.⁸⁶

Understandably, if G.D.R. historians have discussed questions of identity at all, it has more often been the question of their G.D.R. identity than of any national identity: "For those who have worked in the G.D.R., identity will not be created by blanket condemnation of the work and the achievements of more than forty years. The G.D.R. belongs to my identity. I cannot be understood without the hopes and disappointments, the achievements and failures, the expectations and the disillusionment of this country".⁸⁷ And some, like the late Manfred Kossock, saw clearly that the discrediting of the G.D.R. and its historians was to serve the wider purpose of renationalizing German identity. Somewhat bitterly he wrote: "If East Germany had already paid the bill for the Second World War for the whole of Germany . . ., why should the whitewashing of German history

⁸² Konrad Jarausch, "Vom Zusammenbruch zur Erneuerung: Überlegungen zur Krise der ostdeutschen Geschichtswissenschaft", in Jarausch (ed.), *Zwischen Parteilichkeit und Professionalität*, p. 14.

⁸³ Martin Sabrow, "DDR-Bild im Perspektivenwandel", in Jürgen Kocka and M. Sabrow (eds.), *Die DDR als Geschichte: Fragen, Hypothesen, Perspektiven* (Berlin, 1994), p. 248.

⁸⁴ Schultz, "Was bleibt von der Geschichtswissenschaft der DDR?", p. 452.

⁸⁵ Wolfgang Gast, "Ohne Wahrheit keine Versöhnung", *Die Tageszeitung*, 1 June 1992.

⁸⁶ Wolfgang Küttler, "Hat 'marxistische' Geschichtsschreibung noch eine Zukunft?", in Jarausch (ed.), *Zwischen Parteilichkeit und Professionalität*, pp. 165-84.

⁸⁷ Walter Schmidt, "DDR-Geschichtswissenschaft im Umbruch: Leistungen — Grenzen — Probleme", in Eckert, Küttler and Seeber (eds.), *Krise — Umbruch — Neubeginn*, p. 175. Schmidt had been director of the history section of the East German Academy of Science and a senior figure in G.D.R. historiography.

not also be brought about on its back?"⁸⁸ Most of those G.D.R. historians who have contributed to the debate about the necessity for a renewed national consciousness amongst Germans have been critical of the artificial resurrection of national feeling.⁸⁹ The different preoccupations and agendas of former G.D.R. historians and their West German colleagues underline the gulf that separates Easterners from Westerners in the reunified Germany.

In the West there is a strong tendency to return to national history as a means of overcoming the reunification crisis. Christian Meier, a rarity as a classical historian with contemporary interests, has argued that attempting to flee from the history of the nation-state may be harmful in itself, and ultimately impossible. He wants to see the development of "foundations for a certain self-confidence" which will help overcome the "*dementia transitoria*" from which the reunified country suffers. He dismisses without adequate consideration suggestions that such an artificial construction of the positive national identification of the Germans with parts of their past will merely provide fodder to nationalist groups. He denies the existence of a significant potential for any new nationalism in what he analyses as the provincial, inward-looking and domestic-economy-oriented West Germany: ". . . German nationalism to any considerable degree only exists as a ghost haunting the thoughts of those who want to see in Germany's present the shadows of the past".⁹⁰

Similar arguments are put forward by Werner Weidenfeld, head of the European Institute at Mainz University: ". . . the perception of the nation-state necessarily has to change because

⁸⁸ Manfred Kossock, "Im Gehäuse selbstverschuldeter Unmündigkeit, oder Umgang mit Geschichte", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, xxxv (1993), pp. 24-36.

⁸⁹ For an example, see Irene Runge, "Die Vielfalt der Kulturen ist der wirkliche Reichtum der Welt", *Berliner Zeitung*, 17 Feb. 1990. See also the latest volume of memoirs published by the doyen of G.D.R. economic and labour historians: Jürgen Kuczynski, *Ein hoffnungsloser Fall von Optimismus? Memoiren, 1989-1994* (Berlin, 1994).

⁹⁰ Christian Meier, "Wir sind ja keine normale Nation. Deutsche Perspektiven: Kein Sonderweg mehr, aber mehr Verantwortung — kein Allianzwechsel, aber einiges zu balancieren", *Die Zeit*, 21 Sept. 1990, p. 7. See also C. Maier, *Deutsche Einheit als Herausforderung: Welche Fundamente für welche Republik?* (Munich, 1990); C. Maier, *Die Nation, die keine sein will* (Munich, 1990); C. Maier, "Nichts trennt die Menschen mehr als Vereinigung. Die deutsche Krise: Warum man auf beiden Seiten so misstrauisch ist", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 31 Dec. 1992 / 1 Jan. 1993; and most recently, C. Maier, "Deutschland zwischen der Bonner und der Berliner Demokratie", *Zeitschrift für Politik*, xli (1994), pp. 261-79.

of unity". He is critical of an alleged German tendency to downplay the country's achievements, and like Meier he asserts that "... nothing indicates that the new Germany is about to repeat the mistakes of the past".⁹¹ He is quick to identify the division of Germany and the National Socialist legacy as the two most important factors preventing Germany from developing a "normal" national identity. Reunification, according to him, will therefore allow Germany to return to normality.⁹² Equally, Lothar Gall, the current chairman of the German Historians' Association, has reduced the threat of nationalism to a left-wing fantasy. He locates the real difficulty for the reunified Germany in its peculiar attitude of "hiding behind her history". In trying to come to terms with National Socialism, he argues, the moralistic "68-generation" of Germans have created super-taboos, such as the nation-state. Consequently, an "orientation crisis" has gripped Germany after reunification as the hollowness of a post-national identity has been revealed and, according to Gall, only the development of a more positive attitude to the nation-state will overcome this crisis.⁹³

Hans-Peter Schwarz has called most clearly and directly for a political instrumentalization of nationalism to cope with the tasks of reunification. For him, the preoccupation with the Nazi past is a mere pastime for intellectuals and has no bearing on the reality of life: "People fit for life [*Lebenstüchtige Leute*] often cope with their past precisely by not talking about it all the time, but by pushing it aside for the present and attending to the tasks of the future".⁹⁴ For Schwarz, historians have not yet faced up to these responsibilities: "The whole profession plays the melody of reunification with only muted trumpets". In his view, it is to be regretted that "the enthusiasm which inspired the generation of Sybel and Treitschke during the foundation period of the German Reich is completely absent now".⁹⁵

⁹¹ Werner Weidenfeld, "Die Perspektiven der weiteren Entwicklung Deutschlands", in Eckhard Jesse and Armin Mitter (eds.), *Die Gestaltung der deutschen Einheit* (Bonn, 1992), pp. 389, 396.

⁹² Werner Weidenfeld and Karl-Rudolf Korte, "Die pragmatischen Deutschen: Zum Staats- und Nationalbewusstsein in Deutschland", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 2 Aug. 1991, p. 12.

⁹³ See Lothar Gall, "Den geraden Gang müssen wir erst noch lernen", *Die Welt*, 14 Sept. 1992.

⁹⁴ Hans-Peter Schwarz, "Wider das Intellektuellengerede", *ibid.*, 2 Oct. 1991.

⁹⁵ Hans-Peter Schwarz, "Mit gestopften Trompeten: Die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands aus der Sicht westdeutscher Historiker", *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, xlii (1993), pp. 703-4.

The late Thomas Nipperdey also argued that the problem was not a rebirth of nationalism, but on the contrary a *lack* of nationalism. The peculiar German non-acceptance of the nation-state would, he argued, contribute significantly to the difficulties of overcoming the problems of the unification process.⁹⁶ Nipperdey had been among those who lamented the alleged lack of national identity back in the 1980s.⁹⁷ For him, the unexpected reunification of the country marked a welcome return to a historiography centred firmly on the nation-state. Historiography in the future had to help Germans to find answers to "the question of why we are as we are: namely, German. That is, we want to have a better picture of the fate of those people whom we call Germans . . .".⁹⁸ Similarly, Gustav Seibt, literary editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, has argued that more nationalism would have helped the reunification process: "A blood-sweat-and-tears speech, made right at the very beginning, which would have argued in terms of historical laws of causality and national solidarity, would have effectively prevented the continuation of the divided mentality and jealousy still prevalent in Germany today". He blames the historians for failing to provide Germans with such a "sense of sacrifice based on a national historiography". Once again the nineteenth-century Prussian historians are held up as shining examples: "The little-German solution to the German question achieved by Bismarck would have been impossible without the preparatory work of the Prussian historians, such as Droysen, Sybel and Treitschke".⁹⁹ Favourable reference to Prussian historiography is combined with an attack on the methodology of critical historiography: in so far as critical historians were unable to predict the events of 1989 and 1990, their methodology is held to have been responsible for this failure. Seibt has already called for the abandonment of social and structural history, resorting to personal diatribe rather than argument when he calls Jürgen Kocka a "mediocre and consequently representat-

⁹⁶ Thomas Nipperdey, "Die Deutschen wollen und dürfen eine Nation sein", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 July 1990.

⁹⁷ Thomas Nipperdey, "Die deutsche Einheit in historischer Perspektive", in his *Nachdenken über die deutsche Geschichte: Essays* (Munich, 1986), pp. 206-17.

⁹⁸ Thomas Nipperdey, "Sinn für Vergangenheit", *Die Welt*, 23 Mar. 1992.

⁹⁹ Gustav Seibt, "Historien der Deutschen", *Merkur*, xlvii (1993), pp. 46-58. "Little-German" here refers to one of the two options for German unification in the nineteenth century — excluding Austria as opposed to including it: see H. W. Koch, *A Constitutional History of Germany in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1984), p. 66.

ive member of the social history orthodoxy". Instead he recommends a return to neo-historist narrative which will account for the contingency of specific historical circumstances.¹⁰⁰ Harold James is equally dismissive. In his view, social history dehumanized historiography and largely ignored diplomatic, political and military history. According to Michael Stürmer, "From the mid-1960s onwards society became the only subject of the new critical historiography, promising both salvation and a career . . . No longer did it want to know about the drama of history: it dissolved into social statistics and trends".¹⁰¹ For Stürmer, Seibt and others it is the drama of German national history, sometimes tragic but always great, which will have to be laid out before an identity-hungry people. Michael Wolffsohn, professor of history at the *Bundeswehr* University in Munich, who likes to call himself a "German-Jewish patriot", has pleaded openly for the revival of German nationalism, which for him has to be seen as something "completely natural".¹⁰²

Nolte, for one, would certainly be willing to contribute to any rebirth of German nationalism. He has already laid down five legitimate paradigms of national identity after reunification and explicitly called for a debate on the whole topic. He denounces the "negative Germanocentrism" under which variations of the idea of a German *Sonderweg* are subsumed. Instead he wants to interpret the history of the twentieth century using his concept of the "world civil war" between fascism and communism as a variant of the totalitarianist paradigm. The theory of totalitarianism is experiencing a revival elsewhere, notwithstanding its serious methodological shortcomings, especially its tendency to ignore the considerable social and theoretical differences of fascist and communist regimes.¹⁰³ Some authors, like Wolf Jobst Siedler, use the concept of totalitarianism to compare National Socialism

¹⁰⁰ Gustav Seibt, "Ein Drama ohne Helden: Historische Wissenschaft und gegenwärtige Erfahrung", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 June 1990. For the renewed popularity of narrative in German historiography, see also Wolfgang Müller, "Der Wind hat gedreht", *Die Zeit*, 3 Oct. 1991, p. 59.

¹⁰¹ Stürmer, *Grenzen der Macht*, p. 147.

¹⁰² Michael Wolffsohn, "Wachsam sein und Flagge zeigen", *Die Welt*, 14 Nov. 1992.

¹⁰³ For the revival of totalitarianism as a theoretical tool for historians, see Eckhard Jesse, "Der Totalitarismus-Ansatz nach dem Zusammenbruch des realexistierenden Sozialismus", *Die neue Gesellschaft / Frankfurter Hefte*, xxxviii (1991), pp. 983-92. See also Ernst Nolte, "Die fortwirkende Verblendung: Über Gleichsetzungen und Vergleiche von Drittem Reich, DDR und Bundesrepublik", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 Feb. 1992.

favourably with the communist regime of the G.D.R. According to Siedler, the Nazis merely created "an authoritarian regime, even if it included substantial criminal energy", whereas the communists managed to build up a "really totalitarian regime".¹⁰⁴ If German national history did not culminate in National Socialism, and if National Socialism can even be seen as a legitimate and rational reaction to the evil of Soviet communism, then the German nation-state in the late twentieth century can be reconstituted without recourse to National Socialism. With the end of communism, the National Socialist past has also been buried. The end of the "world civil war" closes one chapter in history and leaves the future wide open.¹⁰⁵

The anxieties of many *foreign* historians writing about Germany, however, draws attention to the fact that there is no perceived "normality" in a unitary German nation-state. As Hugh Trevor-Roper wrote in 1989 about efforts to reconstitute the Bismarckian Germany: "No thinking German today can look with pride on that stage of German history".¹⁰⁶ And David Calleo added in 1990: "Any re-creation of the Bismarckian Reich would have the same effect as the return of Frankenstein's monster".¹⁰⁷ Ian Kershaw has condemned the numerous efforts to use the historization of National Socialism for renationalizing German identity,¹⁰⁸ and Gordon A. Craig has expressed fears that in the reunified country the lessons of the past will be forgotten: "In this Germany a new thinking would emerge, a new pride, new ideas about what the Germans are and what their role in Europe should be".¹⁰⁹ None of these historians can be accused of anti-Germanism, but their reaction demonstrates that the renationalization of German identity meets with little understanding or sympathy among a majority of Anglo-American historians. For Timothy Garton Ash, "3 October is not so much the day of German unity. It is the day of German freedom . . . the question

¹⁰⁴ Baring, *Deutschland, was nun?*, pp. 55-6.

¹⁰⁵ Nolte, "Identität und Wiedervereinigung", pp. 35-42.

¹⁰⁶ Hugh Trevor-Roper, "On the Unification of Germany", *Independent Mag.*, 17 June 1989, p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ David Calleo, "Einheit ja, Frankenstein-Monster nein", *Die Zeit*, 5 Jan. 1990, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ian Kershaw, *Germany's Present, Germany's Past* (Bithell Memorial Lecture, London, 1992).

¹⁰⁹ Gordon A. Craig, "Zu gross für Europa?", *Der Spiegel*, 13 Nov. 1989, p. 185.

of national identity is not of first-rate importance".¹¹⁰ Efforts to revive German power politics will fuel the suspicions of commentators like Conor Cruise O'Brien, for example, who has warned of the danger to other Europeans of "German hegemony in its plenitude",¹¹¹ and it will continue to bewilder even Germanophiles like Craig: "If the Germans talk a lot about nations and nationalism again, one has to remind them that terms such as these make a bad impression when uttered by a German . . . Why do Germans have to be constantly bound up in themselves?"¹¹² Yet another astute observer of Germany, John Breuilly, recently expressed his lack of understanding for the amount of ink that West German historians were willing to spill over questions of national identity: "German intellectuals . . . constantly agonise over an alleged problem of 'national identity' in Germany. But what the historical evidence suggests . . . is that there is no problem". According to Breuilly, such recognizable hallmarks of identity as stable institutions and a single national culture are well in place.¹¹³ Equally, Charles Meier has warned of the return of German historiography to a neo-Prussian agenda: "The Germans always demand an identity from their historians . . . This is not the most fruitful framework for historical research . . . History cannot create harmony".¹¹⁴

Yet, as I have argued above, since reunification there has been a clear attack on the methodology of critical history-writing, which merges with a return to a more national historiography aimed at providing Germans with positive national identity. What then is the reaction of those historians who formerly criticized the history of the German nation-state as a dead end, and who increasingly sought to transgress national boundaries in their

¹¹⁰ Timothy Garton Ash, untitled speech, in *Reden über Deutschland* (Munich, 1990), pp. 106-7, 112.

¹¹¹ Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Pursuing a Chimera: Nationalism at Odds with the Idea of a Federal Europe", *Times Lit. Suppl.*, 13 Mar. 1992, p. 3.

¹¹² Quoted in Volker Ullrich, "Angst und Irratio der Deutschen", *Die Zeit*, 26 Nov. 1993, p. 42.

¹¹³ John Breuilly, "Conclusion: Nationalism and German Reunification", in J. Breuilly (ed.), *The State of Germany: The National Idea in the Making, Unmaking and Remaking of a Modern Nation-State* (London, 1992), pp. 235-6. Diametrically opposed to Breuilly is Harold James, who argues that Germany, like other nations, would need a national myth (that is, a greater sense of national identity) so as to be able to cope with the changes brought about by reunification: James, "Nemesis der Einfallsllosigkeit".

¹¹⁴ Charles Meier, "Sackgasse aus dem Sonderweg", in Kocka and Sabrow (eds.), *DDR als Geschichte*, p. 223.

history-writing — either by looking beyond the nation or by looking to regions and localities? First tentative conclusions suggest that in important respects they surrendered to the revisionists' onslaught (some more obviously so than others), and that their erstwhile interpretation of German nineteenth- and twentieth-century history was severely shaken by the charges brought against them by their critics. One can summarize the response of critical historians under four headings: first, the slow abandonment of the *Sonderweg* paradigm; secondly, the reaffirmation of western integration alongside the abandonment of ideas about binationalism and post-national identity; thirdly, the rejection of a new nationalist historiography alongside demands to recapture nationalism for the political left; and finally, a somewhat lacklustre defence of its methodology.

Critical historians continue to stress the problematic nature of the history of the German nation-state between 1870 and 1945. The renewed emphasis on geopolitics as an explanation for the outbreak of the First World War is still viewed with a great deal of scepticism, and few historians are willing to rehabilitate Imperial Germany as a nation-state worth emulating by the reunified Germany.¹¹⁵ Stig Förster of Bern University has recently unearthed new archival evidence that the military leadership of Imperial Germany risked war in 1914 in the full knowledge that it could not be a short local campaign, but would very likely become a world war.¹¹⁶ Only one month after reunification Eberhard Jäckel of Stuttgart University warned that the foundation of the German Empire in 1871 led directly to two world wars.¹¹⁷ According to Jäckel, the one overriding task of reunification must be "to create conditions in which following generations can make as little mischief as possible". Recipes for damage limitation include Germany's federal traditions and pan-Europeanism. Therefore local, regional, comparative and transnational history-writing is still the best protection against a revival of Prussianism. Jürgen Kocka has argued that Nolte's central thesis of a "world civil war" fails to acknowledge the role played by western liberalism. The interpretative framework for

¹¹⁵ See, for example, Fritz Fischer, *Hitler war kein Betriebsunfall* (Munich, 1992).

¹¹⁶ Stig Förster, "Mit Hurra und vollem Bewusstsein in die Katastrophe", *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 9 Aug. 1994.

¹¹⁷ Eberhard Jäckel, "Furcht vor der eigenen Stärke? Das vereinte Deutschland muss Versuchen vorbeugen", *Die Zeit*, 2 Nov. 1990, p. 10.

twentieth-century European history is instead seen to be the struggle of western liberalism against communism and fascism. A comparative study of dictatorships from the angle of western democracy is regarded as more fruitful than Nolte's "metaphysics of fascism from a German nationalist perspective".¹¹⁸ Klaus Tenfelde of Bielefeld University has argued that the first half of the twentieth century was dominated not so much by Nolte's "world civil war", but rather by a fierce modernization crisis.¹¹⁹ Whilst acknowledging the validity of comparing dictatorships, the limits of the theory of totalitarianism are emphasized by a number of critical historians, and any revival of such a theory as a historical tool is regarded with a great deal of scepticism.¹²⁰ Kurt Sontheimer, one of the doyens of German contemporary historians, has recently attacked what he called the "typical tendency in the current historiography on National Socialism, namely to relativize and sanitize" German twentieth-century history.¹²¹ Norbert Frei from the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich and Axel Schildt from Hamburg University have also criticized the assumptions of revisionist historians about the modern character of National Socialism.¹²²

However, these critical perspectives on German history are less and less connected to the view that the route to the German nation-state in the nineteenth century was a tortuous path which in its peculiarities led to National Socialism. Already before 1989, Kocka had modified the *Sonderweg* thesis so that it continued to

¹¹⁸ Jürgen Kocka, "Durch und durch brüchig. Wider die 'ewige Linke': Ernst Noltes neuerlicher Versuch, um Verständnis für den Nationalsozialismus zu werben", *ibid.*, 12 Nov. 1993, p. 15.

¹¹⁹ Klaus Tenfelde, "1914-1990: Einheit der Epoche", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 27 Sept. 1991, p. 11.

¹²⁰ See especially Eberhard Jäckel, *Die zweifache Vergangenheit: Zum Vergleich politischer Systeme* (Bonn, 1992), pp. 9-13. See also Bernd Faulenbach, "Probleme des Umgangs mit der Vergangenheit im vereinten Deutschland: Zur Gegenwartsbedeutung der jüngsten Geschichte", in Werner Weidenfeld (ed.), *Deutschland: Eine Nation — doppelte Geschichte. Materialien zum deutschen Selbstverständnis* (Cologne, 1993), p. 186; Jürgen Kocka, "Von der Verantwortung der Zeithistoriker: Das Interesse an der Geschichte der DDR ist — auch — Munition in der Tagespolitik", *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 3 May 1994.

¹²¹ Kurt Sontheimer, "Wider die Leisetreteri der Historiker", *Die Zeit*, 4 Nov. 1994, p. 15.

¹²² Norbert Frei, "Wie modern war der Nationalsozialismus?", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, xix (1993), pp. 367-87; Axel Schildt, "NS-Regime, Modernisierung und Moderne: Anmerkungen zur Hochkonjunktur einer andauernden Diskussion", *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für Geschichte*, xxiii (1994), pp. 3-22.

explain only the emergence of National Socialism in Germany.¹²³ More recently, he has explicitly argued that one of the consequences of reunification for German historiography will be the complete abandonment of the *Sonderweg* paradigm.¹²⁴ Tenfelde has written after reunification: "In the light of the most recent developments, the thesis about the German *Sonderweg* has to be modified. Not the emergence of the central European peculiarities, but their levelling-out was the really important development".¹²⁵ Wolfgang Mommsen, the former director of the German Historical Institute in London and now at Düsseldorf University, has recently argued that the re-emergence of a united nation-state in 1990 has also laid new stress on the positive sides of German national history, which had been in danger of being forgotten.¹²⁶ And at a recent conference at the Protestant Academy in Tutzing on the issue of national identity, the participants were unanimous that the idea of a German *Sonderweg* into modernity was not helpful and would best be dropped.¹²⁷ Lutz Niethammer, the doyen of "everyday history" in Germany, is almost a rarity in that he argued after 1989 that the German *Sonderweg* may have been hidden by the division of the country, but that after reunification it was becoming worryingly obvious again. Arguing that the concept had to be used in a modified version, his playful analysis still found much merit in the old concept.¹²⁸

There is still a consensus amongst critical historians that what is regarded as the central achievement of the Federal Republic after 1945, namely western orientation, should not be given up by the reunified Germany. They can rely on Jürgen Habermas's interpretation of the 1989 revolutions in eastern Europe, which

¹²³ Jürgen Kocka, "Deutsche Geschichte vor Hitler: Zur Diskussion über den 'deutschen Sonderweg'", in his *Geschichte und Aufklärung* (Göttingen, 1989), pp. 101-13.

¹²⁴ Jürgen Kocka, *Die Auswirkungen der deutschen Einigung auf die Geschichts- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Bonn, 1992), p. 18.

¹²⁵ Tenfelde, "1914-1990 — Einheit der Epoche", p. 3.

¹²⁶ Wolfgang Mommsen, "Die neue Lektüre der Vergangenheit: Die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft nach der 'demokratischen Revolution' in Ostmitteleuropa", *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 4 Dec. 1993.

¹²⁷ Carl Wilhelm Macke, "Eiertänze und Denkverbote: Eine Tagung zum 'Abschied vom deutschen Sonderweg'", *ibid.*, 15 Mar. 1994.

¹²⁸ Lutz Niethammer, "Geht der deutsche Sonderweg weiter?", in Antonia Grunenberg (ed.), *Welche Geschichte wählen wir?* (Hamburg, 1992), pp. 23-54.

he has called "catching-up revolutions".¹²⁹ The relevance of those revolutions is that they were bringing the eastern European nations in line with western Europe, so far as the re-establishment of civil societies is concerned. The western, and in particular the West German traditions, are only reaffirmed by the eastern European revolutions. The history of West Germany is seen as a new beginning, a path leading away from the ill-conceived idea of the illiberal Bismarckian German nation-state: "Only after 1945 did a constitutional consensus first become a possibility and then a permanent reality: the old élite finally lost their inherited positions, the separate milieux of the bourgeoisie and the labour movement increasingly disappeared, cultural diversity was accepted and the working class became fully integrated into German society for the first time".¹³⁰ Many historians continue to warn of the danger that lies in abandoning this tradition of the Federal Republic and instead reorienting the newly unified Germany towards older continuities which came to an end with the destruction of the German nation-state in 1945. Spiritual and political orientation towards the west should not be given up. It is connected with the values of a pluralistic, civil and open society, parliamentary democracy and tolerance. Ideally, reunification should mean the direct application of the West German ideal state on to the bankrupt East German state.¹³¹ Hans-Ulrich Wehler has given short shrift to any arguments that Germany's geographic position between east and west demands the abandonment of its allegedly one-sided western orientation: "It is about time that we stand up against these crackpots of the *Mittellage*, against their Germanocentric arrogance, their ignorance and their arguments which would lead Germany into a new cul-de-sac".¹³² According to Tenfelde, the geographic position of Germany in the middle of Europe will appear "a minor problem" in a few years' time.¹³³

However, some critical historians have significantly shifted

¹²⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *Kleine politische Schriften*, vii, *Die nachholende Revolution* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1990).

¹³⁰ Tenfelde, "1914-1990 — Einheit der Epoche", p. 10.

¹³¹ Jürgen Kocka, "Nur keinen neuen Sonderweg: Jedes Stück Entwestlichung wäre als Preis für die deutsche Einheit zu hoch", *Die Zeit*, 19 Oct. 1990, p. 11; Heinrich August Winkler, "Für den Westen — ohne Vorbehalt", *ibid.*, 19 Nov. 1993, p. 10.

¹³² Wehler, "Hart widersprechen und mit dem Unfug stets konfrontieren".

¹³³ Tenfelde, "1914-1990 — Einheit der Epoche", p. 11. The original term is *ein Sandkastenproblem*, a *Sandkasten* being a "sand-box" in which children play.

position. There is, for example, a clear withdrawal from the ideas of binationalism and post-national identity which had been voiced earlier. The necessity and legitimacy of the debate on the new identity of the new-found nation-state is not called into doubt; the fact that something has changed is acknowledged. Heinrich August Winkler, quite possibly the critical historian with the highest public profile, is a good example, as he openly adhered to Karl-Dietrich Bracher's 1986 dictum that West Germans had developed a post-national identity: "The German nation-state definitely belongs to the past . . . Hopes of a restoration of the German nation-state . . . would be vain".¹³⁴ As late as 1989 he belonged to those who argued against reunification and for the continuing existence of a reformed G.D.R.¹³⁵ Only after political realities had changed did he accept that "binationalism" and "post-national identity" had been largely invalid concepts.¹³⁶ Winkler agrees that since Germany has unexpectedly become a nation-state once more, there is a danger in neglecting terms such as "nation" and "patriotism".¹³⁷ He goes one step further by accepting the right's claim that the Federal Republic should be seen as "one of the smaller superpowers",¹³⁸ and finally arrives at Karlheinz Weissmann's concept of the Federal Republic's history as a *Sonderweg*, which he denounces with equal zeal as doing little to provide the allegedly necessary national identity in the new nation-state.¹³⁹ Ironically enough then, his path has finally led him to a remarkably similar position to that of the neo-nationalists.

With some notable exceptions, critical historians remain opposed to any utilization of history-writing for the purpose of constructing national identity. Some, like Peter Alter, argue that the categories of the nation-state will become increasingly irrelevant: "Who today is moved by the absence or the artificiality of a German national consciousness, the power of a German national state, the 'greatness' of the nation?" Efforts by revisionist histor-

¹³⁴ Winkler, "Deutsche Sonderweg", p. 803.

¹³⁵ Winkler, "Mauer wegdenken", p. 7.

¹³⁶ Heinrich August Winkler, "Mit Skepsis zur Einigung: Die Westdeutschen müssen nicht nur materielle Opfer bringen", *Die Zeit*, 28 Sept. 1990, p. 9.

¹³⁷ Winkler, "Für den Westen — ohne Vorbehalt".

¹³⁸ Heinrich August Winkler, "Nationalismus, Nationalstaat und nationale Frage in Deutschland seit 1945", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 27 Sept. 1991, p. 24.

¹³⁹ H. A. Winkler, "Abschied von einem deutschen Sonderweg: Wider die postnationale Nostalgie", *Die neue Gesellschaft / Frankfurter Hefte*, xl (1993), pp. 633-6.

ians to revive national identity in order to further political aims are seen as anachronistic.¹⁴⁰ Others warn of the emergence of a new German nationalism. The nation-state is seen as a chimera, a product of the nineteenth century unable to solve the problems of the late twentieth, and wholly inadequate for the political and economic realities of the 1990s. By declaring a return to the normality of the nation-state, the Federal Republic would create a second "sham existence" (*Lebenslüge*),¹⁴¹ and this is in any case impossible, as such normality never existed in Germany, unlike other countries such as France or Britain.¹⁴²

According to Hans-Ulrich Wehler nationalism served as an "integration ideology" in the newly reunified Germany.¹⁴³ As there was little public enthusiasm, at least on the western side of the former iron curtain, for creating a unitary state, the government of West Germany artificially created support for national unity by unleashing the hounds of nationalism — which they might find difficult to whistle back in the future. Such a factitious nationalism might not only fail to integrate East and West, but might also lead to a revival of right-wing extremism and racism, whose results have been all too evident in the dozens of racially motivated attacks and murders over the past five years. West Germans found their self-identity primarily in their economic success and in their anti-communism. Now that communism is gone and their economic success seems seriously threatened for the first time, the danger of extreme forms of nationalism becoming a new integration ideology for a united Germany is a very real one.¹⁴⁴ Habermas has argued that the overwhelming majority of East Germans wanted reunification, not because they were committed to the ideal of the German nation-state, but in order to get their hands on West German hard currency ("DM national-

¹⁴⁰ Peter Alter, "Die Nation ist den Deutschen wenig vertraut", *Handelsblatt*, 1/2 Oct. 1993. See also P. Alter, "Der eilige Abschied von der Nation: Zur Bewusstseinslage der Deutschen nach 1945", in Harm Klüeting (ed.), *Nation, Nationalismus, Postnation: Beiträge zur Identitätsfindung der Deutschen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 1992), pp. 185-202.

¹⁴¹ Jürgen Habermas, "Die zweite Lebenslüge der Bundesrepublik: Wir sind wieder 'normal' geworden", *Die Zeit*, 11 Dec. 1992, p. 48. A similar argument for the terminal decline of the nation-state is presented in a comparative perspective by E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990).

¹⁴² Winkler, "Mit Skepsis zur Einigung", p. 9.

¹⁴³ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Wider die falschen Apostel: Der Verfassungs- und Sozialstaat schafft Loyalität und Staatsbürgerstolz", *Die Zeit*, 9 Nov. 1990, p. 54.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Wilhelm von Sternburg, *Fall und Aufstieg der deutschen Nation: Nachdenken über einen Massenrausch* (Frankfurt-on-Main, 1993).

ism").¹⁴⁵ Similarly, West Germans after the outcome of the Note Campaign of 1952 could have few illusions about the prospects for rapid reunification, and instead increasingly came to identify with economic success and a strong currency. A kind of materialist nationalism could, according to Habermas, have a serious impact on the relationship of Germany with its European neighbours if the Deutschmark is allowed free rein, not only in the territory of the former G.D.R., but also over the territory of other European nation-states. Furthermore, the dangers to continued western integration are exacerbated by the potential for economic nationalism in Germany. The central question for Peter Bender, for example, is: "How can one prevent German hegemony from becoming once again a danger to stability in Europe?"¹⁴⁶ Eberhard Jäckel too has asked how the new German state should be so constituted as to prevent a rerun of the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁴⁷ The potential for economic nationalism in Germany can be countered only by creating a kind of constitutional patriotism which would serve as an alternative, positive basis for identification for the reunited Germans. The ethnic definition of Germanness has to be replaced by a definition via citizenship, participation in the political process and allegiance to universal constitutional values. To counter the nationalist threat of a reunified German nation-state, the critical historians continue to propagate the idea of a united Europe which would be able to tame the German tiger. Winkler, for example, has called for a "consciously European Germany" to prevent not only Germany, but the whole of Europe from falling back on the old forms of nationalism.¹⁴⁸ Only a mixture of regionalism and pan-Europeanism can prevent destructive nationalism from raising its ugly head again.¹⁴⁹

Critical historians have not without success undermined efforts by conservative historians to ally themselves with an official nationalism espoused by the conservative government. This became most obvious at the last meeting of the German

¹⁴⁵ Jürgen Habermas, "Der DM-Nationalismus: Weshalb es richtig ist, die deutsche Einheit nach Artikel 146 zu vollziehen, also einen Volksentscheid über eine neue Verfassung anzustreben", *Die Zeit*, 30 Mar. 1990, p. 62.

¹⁴⁶ Peter Bender, "Über der Nation steht Europa: Die Lösung der deutschen Frage", *Merkur*, xlv (1990), p. 366.

¹⁴⁷ Jäckel, "Furcht vor der eigenen Stärke", p. 10.

¹⁴⁸ Winkler, "Mit Skepsis zur Einigung", p. 9.

¹⁴⁹ Peter Glotz, *Die Linke nach dem Sieg des Westens* (Stuttgart, 1992).

Historians' Association at Leipzig in 1994, where their protest successfully prevented an official address by the "historian" Helmut Kohl to the association on the topic of the nation-state — just before the general election. Lothar Gall, as chairman of the Association, showed himself personally offended.¹⁵⁰ It was, however, rather revealing that at the conference itself, the topic of the renationalization of German historiography was hardly discussed at all.

The widespread rejection of a nationalist agenda in historiography goes hand in hand with the renewed emergence of a left-wing nationalism which wants to reclaim the idea of the nation for the political left. Critical historians like Peter Brandt, Heinrich August Winkler and Jörn Rüsen have all recognized the importance of "new, freer and more open forms of national identity".¹⁵¹ Brandt, the son of the late chancellor Willy Brandt and himself professor of history at the German equivalent of the Open University at Hagen, has argued for the emergence of a nationally self-confident Germany after reunification. He wants to build a firm basis for a left-wing nationalism, which historians will have to play a large part in formulating, and which would be able to hark back to the libertarian traditions and social democratic notions of patriotism in German history.¹⁵² Winkler has talked of a "need for national solidarity" which has to accompany any constitutional patriotism, and of the need to strengthen the feeling of national togetherness, especially in the younger generation.¹⁵³

In their defence of social history and its methodology, critical historians have begun slowly, and only partially, to abandon key concepts. Here, as with the other issues discussed above, they find themselves on the defensive. Probably the most forceful defence of social history has been put up by Jürgen Kocka. For him the events of 1989 point to the strength and importance of

¹⁵⁰ Lothar Gall, "Die Geschichte ist nicht das Waffenlager der Politik", *Die Welt*, 26 Sept. 1994.

¹⁵¹ Jörn Rüsen, "Continuity, Innovation and Self-Reflection in Late Historicism: Theodor Schieder (1908-1984)", in Hartmut Lehmann and James van Horn Melton (eds.), *Paths of Continuity: Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 353. For Brandt's and Winkler's views, see nn. 152 and 153 below.

¹⁵² Peter Brandt, "German Identity", *Debatte*, 1 (1993), pp. 30-41. For Brandt's effort to reconstruct a genuine social-democratic patriotism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see also P. Brandt and Dieter Groh, "Vaterlandslose Gesellen": *SPD und Nation* (Munich, 1992).

¹⁵³ Winkler, "Abschied von einem deutschen Sonderweg", pp. 633-6.

historical continuities in European history. Only a historiography which deals with structures and processes will be able to grapple with these long-term continuities.¹⁵⁴ Yet the same historian also conceded that social history changed significantly under the impact of the events of 1989. Ultimately, Kocka is now advocating a new merging of social with political history in order meaningfully to analyse national history.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, he now places strong emphasis on an adequate recognition of contingency and unpredictability in all historical development.¹⁵⁶

Among erstwhile proponents of social history, Wolfgang Mommsen goes furthest in rejecting many of his former beliefs. Whilst generally maintaining the importance of social history, he has specifically come to reject modernization theory, convergence theories and the primacy of domestic over foreign policy. Instead he recommends a rehabilitation of classic political and diplomatic history, and himself takes refuge in cultural history. In his argument there is a strong sense of a terminal crisis for social and structural history in post-reunification Germany. "The wind has changed", and he seems to be changing with it.¹⁵⁷

I conclude that in all four areas the responses of the critical historians to post-reunification historical revisionism are less convincing than they had been in the *Historikerstreit* of the mid-1980s. The neo-historism, the ideas on the primacy of foreign policy, the tendencies to relativize the National Socialist crimes and to exculpate German history from its darkest years, the attacks on the paradigm of the German *Sonderweg* — all this had been present in the West German historiography of the 1980s and even earlier. Reunification certainly encouraged those who had been arguing for a revival of the nation-state since the early 1980s. Questions of national identity move into the foreground of historical investigation once again, as more and more historians (largely male and politically conservative) come to perceive their task as shaping national identity according to political expediency. Such national reorientation of German historiography might well

¹⁵⁴ Kocka, *Auswirkungen der deutschen Einigung*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁵ Jürgen Kocka, "Sozialgeschichte der neunziger Jahre", *Die neue Gesellschaft / Frankfurter Hefte*, xl (1993), pp. 1125-9.

¹⁵⁶ Jürgen Kocka, "Überraschung und Erklärung: Was die Umbrüche von 1989/90 für die Gesellschaftsgeschichte bedeuten könnten", in Manfred Hettling et al. (eds.), *Was ist Gesellschaftsgeschichte? Positionen, Themen, Analysen* (Munich, 1991), pp. 11-12.

¹⁵⁷ Wolfgang Mommsen, "Die Geschichtswissenschaft nach der 'demokratischen Revolution' in Ostmitteleuropa", *Neue Rundschau*, cv (1994), pp. 75-88.

threaten the development towards regional, local and comparative social history which was so characteristic of the 1970s and 1980s. Whilst the critical history-writing which emerged in West Germany in the early 1960s is still defending some of its positions — notably the rejection of any apologia for Nazi Germany and of the Federal Republic's commitment to western orientation, together with the demand for the realization of a constitutional patriotism — other key notions of critical historiography are abandoned, for example the critical view of the problematic development of the German nation-state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the rejection of classic political and diplomatic history and the rejection of post-national identity. Having secured a belated and unexpected victory in the aftermath of reunification, the revisionists of the *Historikerstreit* have now turned to the revival of Prussianism in German historiography. If they were to be successful, it would almost certainly isolate German historiography from its counterparts elsewhere in western Europe.

*University of Wales
College of Cardiff*

Stefan Berger

CAMBRIDGE

A Short History of Ireland

Second Edition

John O'Beirne Ranelagh

A revised and extended edition of John O'Beirne Ranelagh's brief account of the history of Ireland, first published in 1983.

'A book which compresses the Irish story from pre-history to post-Sunningdale with notable dexterity and justice of scale, (the author) attains a remarkably dispassionate detachment of tone' *The Times*

Educational Supplement

£40.00 net HB 0 521 47548 1 315 pp.
£14.95 net PB 0 521 46944 9

The Chief Governors

The Rise and Fall of Reform Government in Tudor Ireland, 1536–1588

Ciaran Brady

This book offers a fundamental critique of conventional views of sixteenth-century Irish history.

£35.00 net HB 0 521 46176 6 280 pp.

Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History

Modern Wales

A Concise History
Second Edition

Gareth Elwyn Jones

A fully updated edition of this highly-regarded survey of the history of Wales.

'It is to Jones's credit that he has produced a clear, crisp and thoroughly sensible narrative which will prove a real boon to students and general readers.'

The Times Literary Supplement

£45.00 net HB 0 521 47546 5 395 pp.
£14.95 net PB 0 521 46945 7

Implicit Understandings

Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era

Edited by

Stuart B. Schwartz

This volume examines the nature of the encounter between Europeans and the other peoples of the world from 1450 to 1800.

£40.00 net HB 0 521 45240 6 655 pp.
£14.95 net PB 0 521 45880 3

Cambridge Studies in Comparative Early Modern History



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU