

NEWS



of the History Department at Boston University

April 2008

The US past as window on contemporary Germany

BY DAVID MAYERS

United new Germany is emerging from the trauma of World War II and of having been organized by outside powers for forty-five years. It is a country of considerable affluence, diplomatic influence, and potential military prowess. It could become one of the world's major powers, especially as leader of an increasingly coherent Europe. Irrespective of whether Germany achieves a higher international status or settles for a more modest position, the country must overcome a number of problems, intimately connected to uneven economic development and twentieth-century history. Based on the experience of Civil War in 1861-1865 and of Reconstruction, Americans are well positioned to understand something of the political-emotional complexity of questions now facing Germans. Despite obvious differences, striking parallels do exist between the Civil War-era United States and contemporary Germany.

Both countries were visibly divided for several decades in their respective histories. The Mason-Dixon line in antebellum America and the police-

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in brief

EVENTS OF NOTE!

Professor **James Schmidt** writes: On March 7 I gave a lecture at the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati entitled "I Cannot Remember Ev'rything': Catastrophe, Lamentation, and the Musical Memorial" as part of the Conservatory's "Thinking About Music" series. The talk examined the relationship of a group of musical compositions that attempt to memorialize catastrophic events, including Arnold Schoenberg's "A Survivor from Warsaw"; John Foulds's World War I memorial composition "A World Requiem"; some of Edward Elgar's World War I compositions; Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem," which was written for the dedication of the Coventry Cathedral and draws from the poetry of Wilfred Owen; and John Adams's "On the Transmigration of Souls," commissioned by the New York Philharmonic as a memorial for the victims of the 9/11 attacks (this work was performed by the Cincinnati Symphony under Adams's direction a week before the talk). The talk sought to approach these works from the perspective opened by historical work on the question of cultural

memory and to see in what sense "musical memorials" differ from other memorial practices. As a side note, my talk was followed by the heaviest snowfall to hit the Cincinnati area in two decades, which afforded me the unexpected opportunity to spend an extra day in the Vernon Manor Hotel, a venerable Cincinnati hotel located in what optimistic real estate agents call a "transitional neighborhood." The heavy snowfall prevented me from visiting the various museums in the Cincinnati area, which include the Underground Railroad Museum, the Classical Music Hall of Fame, the Cincinnati Reds Museum, the Muhammad Ali Museum, and the Creation Museum, which is devoted to exhibits showing why Darwin was wrong (who knew that Cincinnati was so rich in museums?). Fortunately, the heavy snowfall did not prevent me from escaping to Sicily for spring break, where I marveled at various Greek temples and engaged in extensive research comparing preparations of the classic Sicilian pasta with fresh sardines.

Professor **Eugenio Menegon** presented a paper entitled "Believing or Performing? Textual Authority and Rit-

ual Performance in the Jesuit-Dominican Debate about the 'Chinese Rites' (1630-1740)" on February 29 at the Seventh European Social Science History Conference in Lisbon (Portugal). He also had a chance to attend a fado recital with his fellow panelists and to spend a day visiting the marvels of Evora, a splendid ancient city south of Lisbon. See the back page of this newsletter for a related photograph.

Professor **Bruce Schulman** organized a conference in honor of his graduate advisor, Professor David Kennedy of Stanford University. Titled "Reflections on the American Condition: A Celebration of the Career of David M. Kennedy," the event took place the weekend of March 7-8 at Stanford; Schulman delivered the keynote address. Together with Professor Julian Zelizer of Princeton, Professor Schulman published in the March 21 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* an article entitled "The Incomplete Revolution," coinciding with their recent book, *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (see last month's newsletter). That book has been named the History News Network's Book of the Month for April.

Graduate student **Scott Marr** has received a student research fellowship from the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The fellowship offers one month of in-residence support for scholars and researchers who work on things related to the life, work, and influence of Calvin. Scott adds, "I will be at Calvin College in July and hope to complete a chapter of my dissertation while in residence."

At the 29th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire in April, graduate student **Jolanta Komornicka** will present a paper titled "An Arbitrary Feud: Honour/Shame Culture in Gregory of Tours' History of the Franks."

Professor **Brooke Blower** recently gave two talks based on her forthcoming book on Americans in interwar Paris. The first was a paper entitled "Americans and Police Prefect Jean Chiappe's Purging of Paris, 1927-1933: Urban Moral Reform in an Interna-

tional Context." This was presented at the Immigration and Urban History Seminar at the Massachusetts Historical Society in February. The second, delivered during spring break at the Institute for the Study of the Americas at the University of London, focused on the Sacco-Vanzetti riots in Paris in 1927.

On March 6 at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Professor **Charles Capper** gave a lecture and participated in a book-signing for his recently published second volume on Margaret Fuller.

Professor **Cathal Nolan** has been awarded a Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation Fellowship. He will use the award this summer to visit and research varied war museums, battle sites, and libraries in Normandy and the Ardennes pertinent to two books on World War II he is currently researching and writing. "I will also," he adds, "photograph, narrate, and film battlefield history for possible uploading to a new International History Institute database and for use in my various courses in military history."

In the February 24 *Boston Sunday Globe* (and subsequently reprinted in the *International Herald Tribune* of March 7) Professor **Andrew Bacevich** had an article published entitled "The Plan for What Comes After Iraq." He also lectured at the University of California, Santa Barbara and at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Professor **Thomas Glick** attended the annual meeting of the Texas State Historical Association ("having first purchased appropriately Texan millinery at the Dallas airport"). In a session on water law and irrigation in Texas he spoke on how current Texas water law doctrine emerged through a misinterpretation of the original Spanish rights. The paper was titled "The Plaintiff's Brief in State of Texas vs. Valmont Plantations: The Emergence of a Historical Doctrine of 'Spanish Rights.'" Valmont Plantations was the first southwestern "Spanish Rights" case in which the decision was based on archival based historical research.

Professor **Louis Ferleger** is the editor of a new series, *Historians in Conver-*

sation, to be published by the University of South Carolina Press. The first two books, both edited by Donald A. Yerxa, are to be published in March/April: *Recent Themes in Military History* and *Recent Themes in Historical Thinking*.

On February 26, in the opulent BU administration building atop the School of Management, CAS Dean Virginia Sapiro hosted a reception in appreciation of all College staff members. "Inundated by department business," department administrator **James Dutton** reports, "but very curious to see the building, I arrived just as the dean was praising the CAS staff and singling out those with 40+ years of service (no, I was not in that group). Then she began speaking of the 'Staff Outstanding Service Award.' I was truly surprised to hear my name announced and embarrassed to have to stand in front of my colleagues while Dean Sapiro read a statement lauding my accomplishments. I recognized a Dellheimian tone to the dean's prose, but the biggest hit with the audience was the mention of the pâté I make annually for the department's holiday party. We may have to restrict admission next December lest interlopers appear. Ordinarily I hate surprises—unless I know about them in advance—but the event was a nice one." ♦

NEWS

of the History Department at Boston University

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Items of interest for publication and changes of address should be sent to the editor.

military division of Germany—symbolized by the Berlin Wall—reflected and fostered the development of separate societies. These coexisted within a framework of linguistic unity and historical memory. Distinctive economies developed on either side of these national divides.

In the American case, the industrial north faced the agrarian south. In the German case, capitalism confronted socialism. An elaborate system of values and ideas in the two sections of each divided country helped sustain rival versions of social-political life. The idea in the American north of free and organized labor was compatible with abolitionist sentiment. The myth in the south of racial inequality helped to justify slavery. In post-1945 Germany, philosophical ideas based on the primacy of the individual person were affirmed in the west. Collectivist ideals were invoked in the east to legitimize the established order.

In both the US and German cases, the condition of division was temporary and ended with clearly identifiable winners and losers. In each instance, the vanquished region had to rejoin the larger and more powerful side on terms of the victor's choosing.

In each situation, the defeated and triumphant parties were connected to a larger global contest, the outcome of which transcended specific national debates. The Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 was another, albeit belated, strike for the antislavery cause in the nineteenth century. So, also, the crumbling and then disappearance of East Germany is part of an equally dramatic phenomenon: the Marxist-Leninist version of socialism is everywhere in retreat.

Reconstruction in the post-Civil

War United States was not an easy matter. Carpetbaggers and occasional misconduct in the occupied former-Confederacy encouraged additional resentment of Union victory and helped pave the way for the murderous Ku Klux Klan and retrograde policy, exemplified by Jim Crow laws. Former East Germany is still experiencing severe problems, comparable in their ominousness to those that plagued the American south. Unemployment remains too high. Envy of west German wealth is still palpable, aggravated by the arrival in eastern Germany of entrepreneurs who can buy land and buildings whose cost is still beyond the reach of most easterners. The earlier appearance, too, of former owners from the west who hoped to reclaim their homes and other holdings sometimes meant the threatened eviction of eastern families from their domiciles. The proliferation of skinheads and far-right political elements in east German cities is a manifestation of unfocused anger, ultimately fueled by a more widely felt sense of grievance.

Before the establishment of an independent West Germany in 1949, the US zone of occupation was administered by General Lucius Clay. He was a southerner whose sense of what had gone wrong during Reconstruction strengthened his determination to promote moderate and nonpunitive policies in Germany. In this task, Clay was mostly successful. His administration accounted in part for West Germany's later record of orderly liberty and prosperity.

The government of Angelika Merkel must now preside over another round in Germany's ongoing reconstruction and to assure a humane reunification of the country. For this purpose, Germans will have to muster all the prudence and political imagination they can. Americans will have to exercise patience and not judge harshly as Germany continues its enormous project of national reintegration and regional renewal—not unlike that tackled by the United States 140 years ago. ♦

David Mayers, Professor of History and Political Science, is on leave in Berlin, where he is a fellow at the American Academy working on his book-in-progress, "FDR's Ambassadors and the Diplomacy of Crisis."

Coming events sponsored by the African American Studies Program at Boston University

Symposium: 200th Anniversary of the Ending of the US-Atlantic Slave Trade

Hillel House, 213 Bay State Road, 4th floor, Friday, April 11, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Participants in the event:

David Eltis, Emory University
The Contribution of the Expanded Open-access Database to our Understanding of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Linda Heywood and John Thornton, Boston University
Dynamics of Ethnicity in the African Slave Trade

Steven Deyle, University of Houston
An Abominable New Trade: The Closing of the African Slave Trade and the Changing Patterns of Political Power in the United States, 1808-1860

Walter Johnson, Harvard University
The "Negro Fever," "The South," and the Ignominious Movement to Reopen the Atlantic Slave Trade



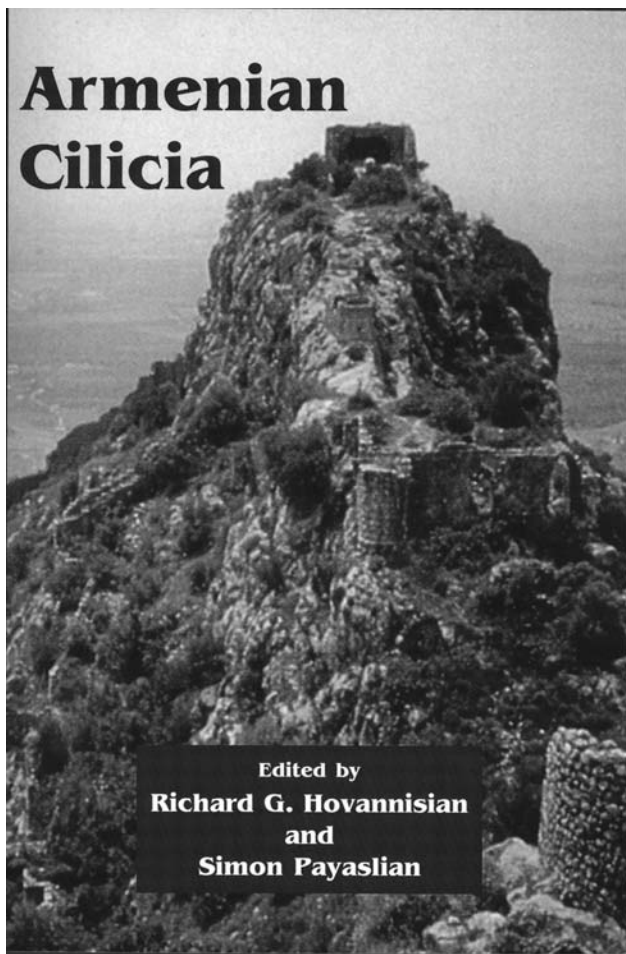
The African American Studies Center also announces two special lectures, both to be held at the BU Hillel House:

Thursday, April 17, 5 p.m.

Ira Berlin, University of Maryland, College Park
The Closing of the Slave Trade and the Transformation of Slavery in the US

Thursday, May 1, 5 p.m.

Gary Nash, University of California, Los Angeles
Agrippa Hull: New Perspectives on a Berkshire Revolutionary Patriot



Simon Payaslian co-edits work on Armenian Cilicia

In March, Mazda Publishers published the latest volume in the UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, *Armenian Cilicia*, edited by Richard G. Hovannisian (of UCLA) and Simon Payaslian of Boston University. The volume consists of 22 chapters, including surveys of the geography and history of Cilicia from ancient times to the final disintegration of the Armenian communities during and after World War I. Payaslian's chapter (pp. 557-592), titled "The Institutionalization of the Great House of Cilicia in Antelias" (a suburb of Beirut, Lebanon), focuses on the development of the Armenian Church in the Middle East between 1916 and 1956. The following is an excerpt from the book's introduction:

The Armenian kingdom of Cilicia represented a rare development in the history of the region, whereby a sedentary people who had inhabited their homeland for thousands of years created a state beyond its boundaries. Situated at the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea, Cilicia, whose earliest records date as far back as the thirteenth century B.C., had been integrated into the Persian Achaemenid Empire in the sixth century B.C. and conquered by Alexander the Great in the fourth century and by his successors, the Seleucids of Syria. It was not until the annexation by Tigran II the Great (95-55 B.C.) into his expanding empire that Cilicia came for the first time, albeit briefly, under the rule of an Armenian state. . . . The migration of Armenian dynastic families (for example, the Artsrunis, Rubenians,

Hetumians) to Cilicia eventually culminated in the establishment of a principality or barony in the eleventh century under the noble Ruben and his son Constantine I (1095-1102) and the Armenian kingdom under Levon I (1197-1219).

The Armenian kingdom of Cilicia . . . represented an age of expansive commerce and culture in a bustling cosmopolitan atmosphere across the domain as described by Marco Polo in the thirteenth century. The monarchy cultivated extensive commercial and diplomatic ties with the major trading houses in Genoa and Venice and farther west and witnessed a period of brilliant cultural growth known as the Silver Age. This was an age of developments in science and medicine, theology and philosophy, astronomy and musicology, led by illustrious scientists, writers and poets, painters and miniaturists. Among the intellectual giants were the philosopher Vahram Rabuni (thirteenth century), the musicologists Toros Tapronts and Gevorg Skevratsi (thirteenth century), and the renowned writer Catholicos Nerses Shnorhali (the Gracious [twelfth century]). . . .

The inability of the Armenian kingdom to balance the perennial East-West geopolitical tensions eventually contributed to its collapse in 1375. In fact, that kingdom of the Middle Ages represented the last Armenian government until 1918 when the Republic of Armenia emerged as a modern independent state.

Modern Intellectual History

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Professor Charles Capper of Boston University is co-editor of the journal. For more information, visit journals.cambridge.org/mih



Commencement 2008



Sunday, May 18, is commencement day at Boston University, and this year the History Department ceremony will again be in the College of General Studies, 871 Commonwealth Avenue.

The all-university commencement is held at Nickerson Field beginning at 11 a.m. Detailed information is available on the website www.bu.edu/commencement. Following the general ceremony each department within the College of Arts and Sciences holds its own convocation, at which diplomas and senior prizes are awarded. The History Department ceremony begins with a reception in the CGS lobby immediately following the Nickerson Field graduation. Food will be available by 1 p.m., and as soon as everyone has had a chance to have refreshments, the convocation will start in Jacob Sleeper Hall, located in the same building; the estimated starting time of the convocation is 2 p.m.

Department chairman Charles Dellheim will preside at the convocation, which is expected to last approximately an hour. Graduates sit in the front rows of the auditorium; each student's name will be on a seat. Two winners of senior prizes will give brief talks, after which diplomas will be handed out. There is no limit (within reason) to the number of guests graduates may invite to the convocation; no tickets are required. The department asks that all graduates call the office to let us know whether they will be attending the History convocation. The auditorium is easily accessible for wheelchairs; students may phone the department with questions about accessibility.

For more information, visit the department's website: www.bu.edu/history/commencement.html or call the office at 353-2551.

Department Seminars

Two department seminars have been scheduled for April:

Friday, April 4, 2 p.m., Room 504:

Sarah Phillips, Assistant Professor of History, Columbia University: "Errors of Abundance: American Food and Global Power in the Twentieth Century" (note title change from last month's announcement)

Wednesday, April 9, 12 noon, Room 504:

Catherine Epstein, Associate Professor of History, Amherst College: "Germans, Jews, and Poles: Nazi Population Policy in Occupied Poland"

Both events are open to faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate history majors.

Update on Fall Courses

Several new courses have been added to the schedule for fall 2008:

CAS HI 486 ("Islamic History"). Examination of major historical forces that determined the growth and character of Islamic civilization from beginnings to modern times. *Herbert Mason*. Thu. 2-5.

CAS HI 592 ("The Birth of a State: Israel 1945-1955"). Establishment of the State of Israel, 1945-1955. Immediate context following World War II and the Holocaust, out of which the State of Israel was created. Will consider the War of Independence and relations with Israel's Arab neighbors and internal political developments. *Paula Kabalo*. Tue. and Thu. 3:30-5.



History Honor Society

Professor Betty Anderson is the faculty advisor to the undergraduate history honor society, Phi Alpha Theta. Membership requires an overall GPA of 3.3 or above and a GPA of 3.5 or above for history courses taken at Boston University. Members must have completed four BU history courses, and they are expected to be active in the Undergraduate History Association.

Concentrators interested in joining Phi Alpha Theta must bring a transcript (printed from the Link) highlighting their history courses and showing the two relevant GPAs. The national organization charges a fee of \$40 for membership; the check should be made out to "Betty Anderson" with the notation "for Phi Alpha Theta." This material must be brought to the History office by April 11. The induction ceremony, followed by a reception, will be held in the History Department on Friday, May 2.

Department of History
Boston University
226 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215



2008



Stephen Pitti

Professor of History and American Studies,
Director of the Program in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration,
Yale University

“The World of César Chávez”

Monday, May 5, 5 P.M.
Stone B50 (675 Commonwealth Avenue)



Professor Eugenio Menegon (at left in photo) on a recent visit to Portugal with António Maria De Sousa e Vasconcelos Simão De Saldanha, professor at the School of Social and Political Sciences of the Technical University of Lisbon, former director of the Portuguese Institute of the Orient in Macau, and a historian of Portuguese international relations with Asia. The photo was taken in the courtyard of the University of Evora, located in the magnificent cloisters of the ancient Jesuit College (16th century), where some of the China Jesuits spent part of their novitiate before leaving for Asia. The figures of the Sun and the Moon surround the coat of arms of the Portuguese Cardinal and Regent Dom Henrique, founder of the College-University.