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PROJECT

German History in the 20th Century

Geplant ist eine Deutsche Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert, im Kontext der Reihe Europäische Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, die im Beck-Verlag ab 2005 erscheinen wird. Der dabei verfolgte Ansatz geht von einer relativen Einheit der Jahrzehnte der Hochmoderne etwa zwischen 1900 und 1970 aus und versucht eine Interpretation der deutschen Geschichte, die sich einerseits dem europäischen Vergleich öffnet und die zum anderen die katastrophische Geschichte dieses Landes in der ersten Hälfte des Jahrhunderts und die Erfolgsgeschichte Westdeutschlands in der zweiten Hälfte konzeptionell aufeinander zu beziehen in der Lage ist.

Lektüreempfehlung

Herbert, Ulrich. Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland: Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge. München: Beck, 2001. (Engl. Ausgabe der ersten Fassung: A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1990.)

- . Best: Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903-1989. Bonn: Dietz, 1996.

- . Fremdarbeiter: Politik und Praxis des "Ausländer-Einsatzes" in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches. Berlin: Dietz, 1985, Neuausg. Bonn, 1999. (Engl. Ausgabe: Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany Under the Third Reich. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.)

Europe in the High Modern Era: An Historical Periodization Concept

In the mid-1980s in West Germany as well as internationally a shift occurred in the focus of research on the history of National Socialism. Questions as to the preconditions for the Nazi rise to power or concerning the political structures of the Third Reich gave way to those preoccupied with the mass crimes of National Socialism perpetrated against the Jews, the civilian populations of Poland and Russia and Soviet prisoners of wars-to name only the largest groups affected. At the same time, the conduct of the German populace in this connection was also the subject of close scrutiny. The findings showed that the political, ideological and mental roots of the Nazi regime were more deeply embedded in German society than hitherto realized.

In the 1990s began an intensification of research into the social and cultural history of the Federal Republic of Germany. Always emphasized was the extraordinary contrast between the defeated and decimated Germany of the postwar years and the establishment of a liberal democracy that by the early 1980s was regarded throughout the world as a stable one. But how was that compatible with the findings of recent research into the roots of Nazism? How had the Nazis of 1945 become the liberal German citizens of 1980? And in so short a time?

The answer to these questions is that in West Germany from the 1950s to the 1970s- particularly between 1959 and 1974-one can see a process of far-reaching change in private attitudes toward lifestyles, norms and value systems as well as in the legal sphere, in the acceptance of foreign cultures, in the political-cultural system, and in public discourse. These liberalization processes transformed the (West) German people from a post-dictatorial Volksgemeinschaft into the society of the liberal and western-oriented Federal Republic.

That is my thesis. But at the start of my research there were two main problems. First, these transformations did not affect-or only in a few areas-specific National Socialist holdovers, but rather virulent authoritarian, anti-pluralistic, anti-liberal traditions extending back into the nineteenth century. And second, such transformative processes as occurred in Germany during the 1960s were to be found in almost every other industrially developed western state-including those that had no dictatorial past. But then how could the National Socialist past be the driving factor of liberalization processes in Germany? And how did it emerge that in the 1960s similar mental and cultural changes achieved an equal intensity on a virtually worldwide scale? Did not other longer-term developments play a role independent of national political events and the periodizations that historians habitually derive from them?

In order to answer these questions, we developed a series of investigations into the diachronic, long-range orientations and reorientations in Germany with regard to family models, sexual deviance, child-rearing styles, the legal treatment of social minorities and other such matters. We were able to ascertain that there were intensive transformations in all of these areas at both the turn of the century and in the 1960s/70s. This suggested a new periodization model for the twentieth century as well as the questions: Was there a connection between the turn of the century and the 1960s/70s? Did this period of time form a historical phase of its own? And if so, then what constituted it?

After that there was only one further step to take: To what extent did our model apply to other advanced western societies? And if there were obvious and wide-ranging parallels, then what general conclusions could be drawn in terms of a history of (western) Europe in the twentieth century? And what exactly were the consequences for a history of Germany?

My lecture attempts to pursue these questions and develop a model that integrates the above observations. The question to be asked is how plausible and far-reaching such an approach is as well as what it might explain and where its blind spots might lie.

The lecture will be held in German. An English translation of the text is available.

Herbert, Ulrich (2007)

Deutsches Tagebuch 1943

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670708267>

Herbert, Ulrich (2007)

Jenseits der Katastrophen : Zum Stand der deutschen Zeitgeschichtsforschung

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=64626317X>

Herbert, Ulrich (Göttingen,2003)

Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland : Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung 1945 - 1980

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1605329452>

Moderne Zeit ; 1

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Herbert, Ulrich (2003)

Liberalisierung als Lernprozeß: die Bundesrepublik in der deutschen Geschichte - eine Skizze

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=67069570X>

Herbert, Ulrich (München,2001)

Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland : Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1614976287>

Herbert, Ulrich (2001)

Die deutsche Militärverwaltung in Paris und die Deportation der französischen Juden

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670695696>

Herbert, Ulrich (2001)

Vernichtungspolitik: neue Antworten und Fragen zur Geschichte des "Holocaust"

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670695688>

Herbert, Ulrich (Frankfurt am Main,2001)

Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939 - 1945 : neue Forschungen und Kontroversen

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=472508334>

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<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=472508334>

Herbert, Ulrich (New York [u.a.],2000)

National socialist extermination policies : contemporary German perspectives and controversies

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1610751132>

Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939 - 1945 <engl.>

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1610751132>

Herbert, Ulrich (2000)

Forced laborers in the Third Reich : and overview

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=772412545>