

Letter from the Editor

With a new volume, and a new editor, comes a new cover: *Das Machtzentrum* (*The Hub of Power*), by Berlin-based artist Edward B. Gordon. For almost a decade, Gordon, who was born in Hanover in 1966 but grew up and studied in the United Kingdom, has been producing and selling a “painting a day”—nearly 3,000 in all since 2006. The vast majority, which can be seen at <http://edwardb.gordon.blogspot.com>, are vibrant cityscapes of Berlin, inspired by the artist’s daily strolls through the German capital. In the foreword to Gordon’s first book of paintings, *Bilder einer Stadt* (2012), Frank Schirrmacher, the late publisher and former editor of the *Feuilleton* section of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, characterized Gordon’s oeuvre by paraphrasing Walter Benjamin: “He portrays experiences that one needs to have seen in order to remember them.” Perhaps, but his distinctive style and masterful use of light and muted color will no doubt speak to even those who have not experienced firsthand the pulsating rhythm, excitement, and energy of the old new capital city—just like those of another autodidact, Adolf Menzel, who similarly chronicled on canvas everyday street life during the political and industrial awakening of nineteenth-century Berlin.

But why *this* painting for the cover of *Central European History* (*CEH*)? After all, the journal is dedicated to the history of *all* of German-speaking Central Europe and not just Germany—a point that all its editors have made in programmatic statements published at the beginning of their tenure, usually followed by a promise to make even greater efforts to expand coverage beyond *Kleindeutschland*. Does a painting of Berlin—of the *Reichstag* and the new *Bundeskanzleramt*, no less!—send the “wrong message” about the remit of the journal, especially at a time when it has been criticized for an increasing focus on the post-1945 period at the expense of earlier epochs—and at a time when “old-fashioned” political history has largely taken a backseat to newer and often more innovative approaches and methods?

These are legitimate concerns, which is why the choice of this painting, which Gordon completed in February 2014, merits some explanation. Apart from the pleasing aesthetic, I was drawn to *Das Machtzentrum* for two reasons: first, because of the appealing way in which it brings together the (semi-)old and the new: the 1894 parliament building and the post-*Wende* German Chancellery of 2001. In a sense, this reflects the type of temporal breadth and juxtaposition to which *CEH* also aspires in its choice of topics and treatments. Second, the positioning of the two buildings speaks to the discursive and historiographical thrust of the last decades. The picture might be construed as some sort of teleological statement about the successful trajectory of modern Germany: a study in the continuity of bombast, perhaps, but one involving a progressive move away from the dangerous swagger of the Wilhelmine Reich to the chastened but nonetheless self-confident economic powerhouse that is “re”-unified Germany. Yet—and this is the point—the way in which the Reichstag looms above the new Chancellery suggests at the same time the way in which the past, and fraught memories of it, loom large in the present. Gordon’s painting *is*, then, a programmatic statement of sorts—but not necessarily the one that some readers of *CEH* might think of at first blush.

Given the subject of the new cover, it is fitting that the first issue of Volume 48 opens with an article about architecture. In “**Shaping Public Opinion through Architecture and Urban Design: Perspectives on Ludwig I and His Building Program for a ‘New Munich,’**” Joshua Hagen examines the ambitious building projects undertaken by King Ludwig I in the Bavarian capital during the first half of the nineteenth century. The article looks in depth at the

building program itself, as well as at evolving public reactions to Ludwig's architectonic endeavors, both during and after the monarch's reign, to get at the relationship among art, politics, and public opinion, as well as at issues related to the representation and contestation of political authority. Making extensive use of travel journals, tourist guidebooks, memoirs, and parliamentary debates, Hagen focuses on the ways in which the costly program—intended to bolster the image, identity, legitimacy, and power of the Bavarian monarchy at a time of growing demands for greater popular political participation—instead alienated Ludwig's subjects and contributed to his abdication in 1848.

Kim Christian Priemel's "**Occupying Ukraine: Great Expectations, Failed Opportunities, and the Spoils of War, 1941–1943**" is an important case study about the economic and moral failure of Nazi occupation policy in the East. Despite general agreement about the importance of Ukrainian economic resources for sustaining the war effort, German officials disagreed about the best policies necessary to achieve that goal. Priemel looks at the economic mismanagement that came about as a result, focusing on the dire consequences of misguided planning and implementation for both the occupiers and the occupied. While emphasizing the fatal failure to exploit the region's industrial potential, the article nevertheless calls attention to the ways in which the occupation of Ukraine and the exploitation of its many valuable economic resources did contribute in significant ways to the German war effort. Priemel embeds his findings in a larger argument about the inadequacy of traditional interpretations that posit a dichotomy between the Nazi leadership's supposedly "rational" economic and "irrational" ideological motivations. Instead, he shows how they formulated policies combining ideological and material imperatives that were driven, in turn, by considerations containing *both* rational and irrational elements. There was no simple antagonism between the two, in other words, and it was that very combination that ultimately resulted in the destructive dynamics of the occupation.

The next two articles focus on the first decade of the postwar period. In "**Missing, Lost, and Displaced Children in Postwar Germany: The Great Struggle to Provide for the War's Youngest Victims,**" Michelle Mouton builds on recent work about the fate of children in war-torn and postwar Europe by focusing on young Germans in particular. The article looks at official attempts after 1945 to find stable homes for those who had been orphaned, displaced, or otherwise separated from their relatives during the war. Drawing on oral interviews and memoirs, as well as on a variety of German archives, including the Red Cross Archive in Munich and the newly opened International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen, Mouton describes the painstaking efforts in both German states to locate, identify, and place German children in stable surroundings. She emphasizes the many logistic challenges faced by officials working in the agencies charged with this formidable task, as well as the different responses and policies adopted in the East and the West. As Mouton shows, one of the greatest challenges was deciding what was in the "best interests" of these children: with an eye to the larger ideological context, she shows how all this played out against the background of escalating Cold War tensions, which not only influenced the socio-political slant of official policies but also created hurdles for officials on both sides of the iron curtain.

Scott Krause's "**Neue Westpolitik: The Clandestine Campaign to Westernize the SPD in Cold War Berlin, 1948–1958**" sheds new light on concerted efforts by U.S. occupation officials in West Berlin to influence German domestic politics during the early Cold War. Focusing on the close personal contacts forged during World War II between these officials and anti-Nazi exiles who would later return to Germany—so-called *rémigrés* such as Willy Brandt and Ernst Reuter—Krause shows how the Americans actively intervened in a bitter factional feud that

rent the West Berlin SPD in order to advance the political careers of Social Democrats sympathetic to American policy goals. This informal German–American political network was instrumental in adapting Social Democracy to the exigencies of the Cold War, which, in turn, helped promote West German integration into the anti-Soviet alliance. Pouring substantial resources into that common political project, influential Americans such as Shepard Stone and John McCloy helped develop and disseminate the Cold War narrative of West Berlin as an “outpost of freedom,” thereby ensuring the political future of Willy Brandt and his local supporters in West Berlin, whose pro-Western policies anticipated the Bad Godesberg Program of 1959, a major turning point in the history of the SPD and the political landscape of the Federal Republic. As Krause forcefully argues, all of this made West Berlin an “alternative laboratory of German democratization in which global and local politics were intensely intertwined.”

Finally, in a far-ranging essay on **“The German Right from Weimar to Hitler: Fragmentation and Coalescence,”** Geoff Eley reviews a series of major new publications charting the trajectory of German conservatism during the period leading up to the ascension of the National Socialists.

ANDREW I. PORT
EDITOR