Andreas Wirsching, Time as a Resource between Bonn and Paris. The Strasbourg EC Summit on 8 / 9 December 1989, European Monetary Union and German Unification

The article covers the controversial question, how the decision for European Economic and Monetary Union and the perspective of German Reunification interacted with each other. Were both completely unconnected, as many have claimed? Or was there an implicit Do ut Des? This question primarily refers to German-French relations, which culminated precariously in the run-up to the Strasbourg EC summit on 8 / 9 December 1989. On the basis of archival sources, many of which have been evaluated here for the first time, the author provides a clear answer to these questions by putting the emphasis of the analysis on the diverging time horizons of the two respective sides. At the end both Paris and Bonn succeeded in achieving their divergent goals and thereby creating a win-win situation at the Strasbourg Summit.

Lukas Grawe, Compulsory Military Service, Rearmament and Youth Protection. The Origins of the German Protection of Young Persons Act of 1938 between Military and Socio-Political Considerations

Based on assertions by East German historians, the view that the National Socialist Protection of Young Persons Act was solely enacted for military reasons predominates historiography. There has, however, hardly been any research on this law founded on a broad source base. The article uses this problem as a starting point and subjects the genesis of the Youth Protection Law to a comprehensive analysis. Here the author makes clear, that the social policies of the Third Reich did not facilitate the redistribution of financial burdens, but rather economic preparations for war, the militarisation of the population, the creation of a Volksgemeinschaft through inclusion and exclusion, propaganda and finally political indoctrination.

Hubert Wolf, Sealed Off, Misidentified, Misplaced, Burnt. The Fate of the 1942 Christmas Address by Pope Pius XII

The 1942 Christmas Address is seen as the only text, in which Pope Pius XII publicly commented on the Holocaust. After the opening of the Vatican Archives in March 2020 it has become possible to retrace the genesis of the text from the first German draft by social ethicist Gustav Grundlach to the final printed Italian version. Here the central question is, whether the passage, which can be related to the Shoah, can be traced back to Pius XII himself and which circumstances made the Pope drop his long-lasting restraint. Finally, the conceptual and reception history is covered. How was it understood, and who was the Pope addressing? Here some critical attention is also directed at the handling of Vatican sources by the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences.

Contemporary History Podium: Islam and International Politics. New Perspectives on the Contemporary History of the Near and Middle East between the Cold War and Decolonialisation

The history of Islam – its role as a factor in international politics and transnational interdependence – so far only plays a marginal role in German and European con-
temporary historiography. The Contemporary History Podium attempts a “de-provincialisation” of Islam and lets it enter into a dialogue with universalisms and traditions from the history of ideas, which so far have mostly been connoted as Western-European by research. These include debates on Islam and nationhood in decolonisation processes (Matthieu Rey) as well as competing notions of the compatibility of Islam and secular socialism (Manfred Sing). Hatem Elliesie deals with Islamic understandings of human rights and their relationship with Western patterns of interpretation. The concluding contribution by Esther Möller covers concepts and practices of humanitarian help by organisations characterised as Islamic in the interplay between Arab nationalism, decolonialisation and the Cold War.

Amanda Eubanks Winkler, Thatcherism and Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Musicals
This article delineates the key tenets of Thatcherism and considers the ways they might be enacted in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s 1980s oeuvre. The author focusses on three shows that have often been linked with Thatcherite aesthetics: “Cats” (1981), “Starlight Express” (1984), and “The Phantom of the Opera” (1986). The article demonstrates how the musical language and dramaturgy of these musicals participated in larger cultural discourses shaped by Thatcherism, discourses that lauded “traditional values” and a “glorious” British past, that bridled against elitism, and that shifted the perception of the role of government and the relationship between the individual and the state.