This could have become the German century. At the beginning, Germany was the country in dynamic ascent. In the history of modern Europe, there is always one nation, which not only dominates the age but shapes it. Thus, you could expect at the beginning of the century that Germany would achieve that status of preeminence.

The idea of the twentieth century as a German century is a tantalizing proposition. It came up in a conversation between French sociologist Raymond Aron and the American historian Fritz Stern. The occasion was the opening of a Berlin exhibition about Albert Einstein, Otto Hahn, Max von Laue and Lise Meitner, which highlighted the scientific discoveries leading to the atomic bomb and sketched out the path of physics from relativity theory to nuclear fission. The exhibition suggested to the discerning eye that some of the most consequential scientific innovations of the age were initiated in Germany. German science, German industrial ingenuity, German scholarship were poised to rule the world of the mind much as the Royal Navy ruled the waves. Needless to say, Stern and Aron were so casual about the matter because they opened an exhibition about German achievements whose future lay elsewhere. Hitler did not get the bomb. The century was not to become German. It fell to the United States, which defeated Germany not just once, but twice and the second time decisively.

Fritz Stern has, in the meantime, elaborated the theme of high hopes and expectations and of the extraordinary creativity and productivity of the German Empire at the turn to the twentieth century. Some German historians have made similar arguments, albeit with less lightness and with more obstacles to overcome. They struggle with the Sonderweg paradigm, which they use in order to explain German descent into catastrophe. Because the German Empire was squarely set

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3 Most prominently Thomas Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1866–1918: Arbeitswelt und
against the emergent modern world and because of its resistance against modernity, so the argument goes, it was destined to run its course from Wilhelmine disaster to National Socialist catastrophe. In one way or another, this interpretation is keyed to German backwardness rather than forwardness.

On balance, Stern is certainly right in one respect. The striking thing about the turn to the twentieth century, not least in contrast to the turn to the twenty-first century, is the sheer future-orientation of the moment. Some of these expectations were rather fantastic, others were soberly enlightened and progressive, and yet others were tyrannical and extremely violent. Forwardness was not identical with progressiveness. But there was a futurist edge to all of them. Whereas an older historiography associated the German Empire not only with backwardness, but with a backward-looking world view, German society’s orientation toward the future – both the embrace and the disquiet about the future – is the distinguishing feature of the German turn to the twentieth century. For better and for worse, these were accelerated times, and much of the accelerating was done by Germans. Aron and Stern captured this element succinctly. However, if this is so, how can we make sense of German descent into aggressive war and genocide?

More recently, the German historian Eberhard Jäckel has rendered the argument about a German century in a different and distinctly post-catastrophic mode that reflects German sentiment or, in any case, the German historians’ preoccupation in the last quarter of the twentieth century. He suggested that, even in defeat, German action dominated the century, because “in the course of the twentieth century no other country marked Europe and the world quite as much as Germany did, beginning with World War I, when it stood at the centre of passions, and reaching its nadir under Hitler and in the Second World War with the crime of the century, the murder of the European Jews”. Because genocide has a “preeminent place in the memory of all people”, the twentieth century has effectively become a German century. The holocaust in the context of genocidal war is the world-historical role Germany played. Whatever German futures may have been and whatever they may yet again have become, they disappear in the black hole of a murderous reality.

This argument had originally been suggested, albeit for different ends, by Hannah Arendt in her famous proposition about the holocaust as a crime against humanity. It has since become associated with the global effect of the holocaust as


6 Jäckel, Das deutsche Jahrhundert 7–8.

the master crime of the twentieth century. In the German debate, the singularity of the holocaust was at issue, not least because the notion of the holocaust as a genocide not only diminished the egregious nature of the crime, but was also used as an escape from responsibility. Lately, the tide has turned and the burden of a murderous history has become increasingly contested. Still, both sides tend to agree on the overwhelming effect of the past on the present. Much has been made of the culture of contrition, and the culture of resentment as its evil twin, that resulted from the recognition of mass murder. But the striking feature at the end of the twentieth century has been the single-minded preoccupation with the past as a result of it. In a way this makes sense, because there was and is so much healing to do and so much reluctance to bury the murdered and the dead (burial entails coming face to face murder). Yet, the preoccupation with the past is remarkable also in another way. There was more future to be had – in a pragmatic economic and social sense – in the second half of the century than at any other time, except perhaps for the turn to the twentieth century. But the post-war nations, their self-understanding and self-representation rather were consumed by the past. The record of the Berlin Republic to date suggests the same – perhaps with the difference that public sentiment now realizes that the twentieth century could have been a good century after all, if only disaster would have been avoided. What we get is a nostalgia for a twentieth-century past that never has been.

This situation leads me to wonder what it takes to write a German history of the twentieth century that moves beyond triumph and abjection in its preoccupation with the past. Such a history, it seems to me, cannot take one side or the other, but must account for both and, therefore, takes as its subject the very depth of popular, national dislocation and disorientation and the persistent effort of people to re-situate and to re-orient themselves in the world. It must account for the peculiar propulsion of the German age, its extraordinary promise, its descent into dishonour and defeat, and the uncertain process of rebuilding a common, civil project. It is a history in which "all that is solid, melts into the air". But where nineteenth-century theorists like Marx saw the modernizing force of industrial capitalism at work, we need to account for the exorbitant violence that scorched nations and territories and, killing and murdering entire peoples, wiped out futures – both the chance to have one and the ability to imagine one.

In contrast to a national historiography that prefers a continuous story unfolding, I suggest that the more appropriate solution is a history of repeated new starts into the future of the twentieth century – those which catastrophically failed and those which succeeded. No one future dominated, all of them had their moment.

9 The entire debate has now its own historiography, as for example Peter Reichel, Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland: Die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Diktatur von 1945 bis heute (München 2001).
As a result, the German past veers off at impossible and odd angles and it ends up where it never has been. It remains counterintuitive and shocking to see the century's *promesse du bonheur* on the same page, in the same history, as the murder of millions\(^\text{12}\). A careful mapping of both may account for their potency, but only a non-continuous, jagged history will make sense of their simultaneity.

The problem is that, in order to get a grip on this condition, we have to face up to a subject that historians, myself included, usually tend to consider the frame of reference within which we operate. We take the time and the space of the nation as given — and yet it is the time and the space of the nation that has become so thoroughly unstuck. In my brief reflections I will concentrate on the space of the nation. Despite the recent re-appreciation of the role of space, the sense of space among historians is still quite uni-dimensional. Above all, it leaves untouched, what matters most — how to make sense of the space of the nation. I suggest that in “reading the space” of the nation we gain a tool in de-coding the jagged history of Germany and its spatial unsettlement\(^\text{13}\).

The Space of the Nation

Throughout the twentieth century, the territory of the nation was never the integrated, self-determining, and self-identifying space of the nation that historians presume. They have created a phantom space of the nation, when in fact the territoriality of the German nation has remained highly contested. Territory is certainly not destiny, as geopolitics would have it\(^\text{14}\). However, in the contestation over territoriality we find one of the keys to making sense of the fractured and disunited history of Germany — and not just of Germany.

Three dimensions of this contestation deserve particular attention\(^\text{15}\). First, the nation appears as a space of political participation and legal sanction. While the nation has emerged triumphantly as a unified political space at the end of the twentieth century, this outcome was the product of repeated contestation and deep division.

Second, at no moment did territorial integrity guarantee autonomy or, as it were, self-determination. Even the nature of sovereignty can be questioned. Spaces of dominion (*Herrschaftsraum*) always exceeded the territoriality of the


The gap between the nation as political space and the nation as subject and object within spaces of dominion is the heart of the “German Problem”. It is articulated most clearly in the extreme fluctuation of the actual boundaries of the German political space.

Third, the nation came about as a space of attachment or identification, although not necessarily as a space of nationalism. However, not only was this a more protracted and less unequivocal process than is commonly assumed, but attachments both subverted and exceeded the nation. German territoriality, in short, was contingent and unstable. Therein lies the key to unlocking the peculiar trajectory of the twentieth-century German nation.

First, mass participation in political affairs and the assertion of rights of personhood and citizenship were the driving forces of the consolidation of the nation as a contiguous, unified, and exclusive space of political action and legal sanction. For twentieth-century German historians this seems to be, for the most part, an unremarkable process inasmuch as the submersion of ethnic sub-nationalisms and the extension of political and civil rights are relegated into a long nineteenth century. It is something that in their mind has already happened. However, this is not so. For one thing, this view makes the territory of the Weimar Republic and of the first years of the Third Reich (until 1938) into the representative political and legal space for the entire century. For another, it takes the political and legal consolidation of nations as ineluctable, when in fact it is not. For seen from the end of the century, the European record of national consolidation is rather more mixed than is indicated in the notion of a Europe of integral nation states. Integral nations (as for example Italy) have retained powerful regionalisms and localisms, while others (such as Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia) have come and gone. Even pre-national state territories, which are said to be near-perennial constructions (like France), have shown a tendency to fissure (Spain) along regional lines. By the same token, highly integrated political spaces (Poland) are the product of extreme violence. There is nothing natural, nothing self-evident, and nothing “given” about the nation as a politically and legally constituted space in the twentieth century. “Germany” is perhaps the most telling example. Notwithstanding the ardent desire of National Liberals and Protestant Prussian nationalists, there was little to foretell the successful submersion of ethnic sub-nationalisms in Germany even at the turn to the twentieth century.

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16 I am indebted to my colleague Prasenjit Duara, Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China (Chicago 1995).
18 The case for nationalization and its limits is developed by Siegfried Weichlein, Nation und Region: Integrationsprozesse im Bismarckreich (Düsseldorf 2004); see also Alon Confino, The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory (Chapel Hill 1996).
The consolidation of the nation as a unitary space is much less self-evident than it may appear. And it is paid for with an insane level of violence. Therefore, we may want to begin a twentieth-century German history with an appreciation of the consolidation of the nation as a unified political and legal space. Rather than relegating the process of nation-making into the nineteenth century, it is, or remains, an on-going and open proposition for the twentieth century.

One way of approaching the constitution of the nation as an integral space is to look at changing border regimes. Border-making became a German and, for that matter Central- and Eastern European preoccupation of the century. Border regimes fluctuated from relative openness to recurrent near-impermeability and on to regimes of convenient, if uneasy transit as a result of the Schengen accords and the simultaneous tightening of external European borders. We begin to know quite a bit about the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political struggles in border regions and even to learn more about regional cooperation across borders. Moreover, historians have pointed to a mythically heightened sense of natural and cultural markers such as the Rhine. While these claims invite quick deconstruction, historians have also pointed to the deep nature of some of these dividing lines that prove quite intractable like the divide between Slavic and German populations. Of course, they have also shown that borders have not generally kept people very long from intermingling, although commingling can turn into alienation, xenophobia, and paroxysms of rage. But the point here is in the first place that, while borders are age-old, the fact of a nationally integrated political and legal space that cuts across trans-border allegiances, attachments, and local traffic is remarkably new. And while the establishment of border regimes has a long history, the consolidation of the nation as a mass-political sphere reshaped previous arrangements and previous awareness of cross-border difference. An earlier sense of territoriality or territorial belonging was reconstituted as the territory of the nation turned into a highly charged political space.

Therefore, it is more than just a bit strange that the explanations for this process remains so strongly linked to infrastructural modernization. Despite obligatory

caveats, there is general, if mostly implicit support for Eugen Weber's exploration of nationalization in France that highlights infrastructural (communications and transportation), cultural (education), institutional (military conscription) – to which one should add (mass)media-generated perceptual changes – in creating a sense of national unity\textsuperscript{24}. All these elements support a narrative in which an emergent civil society becomes a national society (and this national society defines its territory as if in passing). This is a supremely enlightened history, whether or not we have it end up in the \textit{Verfassungspatriotismus} of the Federal Republic\textsuperscript{25}. Whether or not infrastructural modernization can actually explain the subordination of ethnics and the national integration of territory is one question to ask. For Weber's argument presumes a centralized state, where there was none in Germany. Institutions like the military or the education system remained tied to regional states and sub-regional localities. Even the mass-media – the press and radio – had a strong local bias. The first, truly national mass-media were film and post-war television – and the latter were tied into transnational networks of production and consumption. Therefore, even if we were arguing a case of infrastructural nationalization, the latter would put us deep into the twentieth century\textsuperscript{26}.

But in my view, it is the constitution of the nation as an integral space of political participation and of legal sanction that makes the difference in the territorial constitution of the modern nation, at least as far as Germany is concerned. This process cuts into the nineteenth century and establishes the contours of a long twentieth century that is marked, from beginning to end, by struggles over mass participation (and mass mobilization in war). The truly remarkable process to consider is not simply the introduction of universal (male [1867] and female [1918]) suffrage as well as the modernization and nationalization of civil law in the \textit{Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch}, but the acceptance and rapid appropriation of both by the populace. Mass participation within a single legal space of civic action comes into its own in the late nineteenth century\textsuperscript{27}. Its most important, long-term effect was the levelling of ethnic differences (and, more slowly, of gender divisions). Once mass-participation was reinforced by war-time mobilization, it consolidated national political space to a point of no return. Although Bavaria remained single-minded in its particularism, it was inexorably drawn into a German political space. It is a good case for the inexorable impact of mass political participation on the sense of territorality. In sharp contrast, Austria drifted ever further apart notwithstanding hopes and expectations to the contrary (as in 1918/19 and, again, in 1939). Austria is a good reminder of the persistence of the ethnic-religious lay

\textsuperscript{27} Margaret Lavinia Anderson, Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany (Princeton, N. J. 2000).
of the German lands and their potential of profoundly different political trajectories as well as their continuing import into twentieth century (in 1919 and again in 1939). There is a long nineteenth-century that runs into the twentieth century, much as there is a long twentieth century that reaches into the nineteenth.

However, the nation as a space of mass participation did not occupy a unified space. Quite the contrary was the case. The politics of mass participation re-divided German territoriality in novel ways. Twentieth century Germany, rather than struggling with ethnic divides, fell apart into discrete mass participating regimes. Instead of one continuous political space, we encounter competing national spaces, each with their own distinct territoriality, simultaneously and in succession. Each of the main mass-political futures of the turn to the twentieth century also formed its own distinct political space by gaining territorial hegemony either over the whole or parts of German territory. The Nationalists had their Third Reich, the Socialists their German Democratic Republic, and the Catholics their Federal Republic. Where a unified national historiography sees immense problems with integrating the GDR into German history, a recognition of the problems and contradictions of the formation of a national political space may provide a solution. Obviously, in order to get there, the fiction of unity and homogeneity has to be abandoned in favour of a conflictual and precarious understanding of national territoriality.

Minorities in general and diasporic minorities in particular were the main casualties of the nationalization of territory through mass participation. Mass participation regimes split the nation not simply between competitors (Nationalists, Socialists, Christians), but between insiders and outsiders, inlanders and auslanders. German Jews, gypsies and other minorities, including religious sects, became aliens who bore the brunt of a politics of exclusion. Strategies and tactics of inclusion and exclusion differed among the competing nationalizers, because all of them, including the Nationalists, contained forces that pleaded for openness and inclusivity – frequently demanding “assimilation” as entry ticket – and all of them also had forces that argued for either the exclusion or suppression of some minority, the effort to exclude so-called sects and psycho-groups being only the most recent example of this on-going trend. Overall, the politics of integrating the respective national political space is a very mixed business.

In this context, then, the extreme violence of nationalist persecution is memorable for the sheer persistence and the extraordinary intensity of the antagonism between Germans and aliens and, particularly, the Jew as the quintessential alien. It took war-time mobilization (the formation of the nation as an involuntary community) to push exclusionary politics to the extreme. In war, the enemy to be con-

verted or subdued became an enemy to be killed. To be sure, there are other factors to be considered in the National Socialist turn from exclusionary to an annihilationist regime and in explaining the persistence of a violent German xenophobia. But overall the German nationalization of ethnics had its closest corollary in a politics of alienation and exclusion, much as the politics of involuntary mobilization had as its consequence extirpation and annihilation. Herein lies the main fissure in the formation of a national space of participation and of rights. Exclusion—and, in its extreme nationalist variant, extirpation, expulsion, and murder—are in this sense truly "the dark side of democracy".

Second, if the principle of territoriality underwrote popular sovereignty and vice versa, neither guaranteed self-determination. This pithy observation opens up a second consideration concerning the territory of German history in the twentieth century. Whereas national historiography thinks of the nation as the supreme space of dominion (a Herrschaftsraum), such spaces rather exceed the nation. It is not even a given that the German nation(s) constituted a sovereign space, because their power over life and death reached far beyond the national territory in the first half of the century and, in the second half, security was beyond German control. Therefore, Germany constituted a legal and political space, but it was not the site of self-contained dominion. More generally we may say that throughout the twentieth century, the German nation was “enmeshed” in international regimes (of states, commerce, ideas) that marked out paths for the nation and it was engaged in a persistent struggle, if not to bust out of these regimes altogether, to improve its relative position within them. What Germany meant or became depended as much on external arrangements and exogenous developments as on endogenous ones, whether we think of 1913, 1918, 1919, 1945, 1949, or 1991.

The presumption of a phantom space of the nation marginalizes both the dramatic expansion of the German space of dominion and its equally dramatic contraction to the point that it lost key aspects of sovereignty. It neither captures conquest and expansion nor the consequences of defeat—and therefore undermines in a most immediate sense the effort to make sense of the twentieth-century German condition. For what would German history be without either of them?

For conquest we may want to consider the maps of 1911, 1917/1918 and 1942/43 in order to visualize the sheer extension of German dominion. Germany’s co-

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31 The phenomenon is not yet conclusively explained, but it is covered, if with a different emphasis by Dieter Gosewinkel, Einbürgerern und Ausschließen: Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Göttingen 2001).


Colonial empire was small compared to both the vast landmasses controlled by maritime and telluric empires as well as settlement nations such as the United States, Mexico, Brazil, or Australia. Still, German control affected its territories deeply, not least because of the German penchant for unrestrained violence (which went hand in hand with a peculiar and much less well understood nativism that turned natives into what Germans thought they were). The abrupt dissolution of this dominion with defeat in 1918 did not settle the matter. It rather reinforced a redirection of the expansionary German drive toward both Western Europe and deep into Eastern Europe and Russia—a thrust, which was renewed with the radical expansionism of the Third Reich. In each case, German dominion was short, but it was clearly not an ephemeral event. The extreme violence of German expansion cut right through the territories and people it occupied and left behind wastelands. Expansion and occupation came to an end, not because of endogenous developments, but because the Royal Air Force (with pilots from around the world) and the Red Army (with its multi-national and multi-racial soldiers) did not buckle and a global coalition shattered German forces. In fact, had it been up to endogenous developments, German dominion would have covered Europe and revolutionized its make-up.

With the German quest for dominion defeated, the resulting settlements reconstituted German territoriality. The effect of defeat was first of all occupation, foreign military presence on German territory, and restricted sovereignty. This too is treated as an ephemeral aspect of German national history. But even if we think only in terms of chronology the years add up. Foreign presence between 1918 and 1929—or until 1935, if we take the Saar, and until 1936, if we take the demilitarized zone into consideration—and between 1944/45 and 1991 under various legal arrangements, suggest that we think twice about what constitutes normality in twentieth-century German history. The fact that these presences were altogether benevolent—at least compared to German dominion—should not distract from the condition of a fundamentally circumscribed national sovereignty. The effects of it become instantly evident, if we treat "Westernization" and "Sovietization" less as a disembodied phenomenon than as a tangible presence that defined German security. The physical presence of huge foreign armies and unprecedented destructive capabilities, the outright dependence on patron-states for security, traditionally the hallmark of sovereignty, are striking indications that

there were and are higher orders of space, beyond the territoriality of the nation state.

The implications of this still very basic (because state-centred) retooling of the notion of territoriality require some further reflection. The obvious implication is that dominion in all its forms must become an integral part of national history, if we want to make any sense of twentieth century. There was no more ludicrous debate in German historiography than the one over the primacy of domestic vs. foreign policy during the seventies, whatever the academic stakes may have been. But does a return to a more judicious understanding of the exogenous and endogenous stakes in the making of German territoriality mean that Belarus or Namibia – or alternatively the Allied powers – should become a part of German history and that Germany should become part of a history of the United States? I think they should. For what we discover is that German territoriality not only expanded and contracted in rapid succession, but that German space overlaid other spaces, radically altering what these territories had been and would become – cutting, as it were, into their futures – and German territory, in turn, was overlaid by others for much of the twentieth century with altogether less barbaric, but nonetheless tangible and lasting effects.

How tangible these effects were becomes evident, if we ask what chances would a Catholic or Socialist future for Germany have had if the Allies had not defeated a German national and nationalists majority twice? The contest likely would have been between more or less radical national(ist) trajectories – and who knows, if we trust the historical judgement of Niall Ferguson, they might even have evolved in a “western” direction. In any case, “westernization” has a more protracted history than the mere presence of the United States in Europe might suggest. Still, the chances for a Christian or, for that matter, a Socialist republic would have been slim without external intervention and without the moral bankruptcy and utter defeat of radical nationalism. This is also to say that the idea that national and nationalist trajectories were the exception or, more so, the aberration of twentieth century history and, therefore, must be explained by way of a deeply rooted backwardness, only naturalizes the outcome of an open-ended process that was defined by German aggression and defeat. The weariness about national German sovereignty is understandable in the face of its German abuses, but it remains a key site of contestation. There is more historical reality to the exogenous consti-

39 Eckart Conze, Ulrich Lappenküper, Guido Müller (eds.), Geschichte der internationalen Beziehungen: Erneuerung und Erweiterung einer historischen Disziplin (Köln 2004) is a new beginning.
41 Niall Ferguson, Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals (London 1998).
ution of the nation than even post-national Germans are willing to counten-
ance. If this line of inquiry suggests that a purely endogenous account of German de-
velopment in the twentieth century makes no sense, it also raises the broader
question of the enmeshment of German territory in transnational spaces, or the
role of what Peter Katzenstein has called “network power.” Important as the
overlays of dominion were and continue to be, they are but one element in a re-
gime of transnational enmeshments that permeate(d) nations. We could debate the
nature of these regimes and their respective domains (such as economy, culture, ideology) that shaped Germany. But the case of the economy may suffice because of
its instant plausibility in the course of the long twentieth century. (“Culture”
and, more specifically, the culture of consumption are more frequently studied.)
At an earlier point the gold standard and a multilateral trading system and at a
later one transnational corporations (controlling, for example, the extraction and
the flow of oil) in thoroughly oligopolized markets and, at a yet a more recent
one, rampant global competition have exerted their dominion over Germany in
the most direct sense that they set parameters for what German actors could and
could not do – or the price they had to pay – like high unemployment – if they set
themselves up against the rules of the game.
Thus, a convincing argument could be made that of all nations Germany, to-
gether with Japan, profited handsomely from Ricardo’s Law that underwrote in
theory a very tangible international division of labor. Throughout the twentieth
century Germany was an integral part of transnational regimes – “transnational”
here in the narrow, but precise political-science rendition as “regular interaction
across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent.” These
quite fluid, but exceedingly effective, transnational spaces of action delimited
what was feasible and likely within Germany – with the effect, for example, that
no degree of political participation (as, for example, in the most populous post-
war German Land, North-Rhine Westfalia) could alter the fact that coal mining
would be replaced by oil, which Germany did not have, or that the long line of
leading politicians from Württemberg were unable to prevent the ruin of that re-
gion’s textile industry due to transnational competition. Overall, international
commerce proved beneficial for Germany and increased its prosperity, but it
shaped what Germany was and could be – and as we now discover even shaped
those Germanies, like the Third Reich and the GDR, that desperately tried to opt
out of this transnational force field.

43 One of the few to pick up the theme is Charles S. Maier, German War, German Peace, in:
44 Katzenstein, Network Power.
45 Victoria de Grazia, Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through 20th-Century Eu-
46 Thomas Risse-Kappen, Bringing Transnational Relations Back in: Non-State Actors, Do-
As long as historians hesitate to countenance this one side of the coin (profitable enmeshment), they cannot even begin contemplating the other side. It is intriguing that Germany and Japan, as the two modern nations that were, each in its own region and in its own way, so deeply and so profitably enmeshed in transnational economic regimes also were relentlessly nationalistic to the point of paranoia. However we may want to put it, their most prominent desire, certainly in the first half of the twentieth century, but not limited to it, consisted in busting out of a regime that had made them prosper. The goal of these ambitions was to become not simply autonomous, but impermeable. The gendered and, indeed, sexualised nature of this language is revealing. But quite apart from the gendered connotations, the permeability of German territory was no less real for being commercial, or ideological, or cultural. Panics about ascertaining the boundaries of the self and the nation may be—and commonly are—"embodied" in a sexualised language, but the domestic crisis of masculinity, real as it may have been both in times of prosperity and in times of crisis, does not provide a sufficient explanation for the paranoia about the loss of control that circulated widely from the late nineteenth century or for the fact that this sentiment was most powerful in the two most prominent exporting nations of the twentieth century. Germany and Japan nationalized by vaulting themselves into transnational networks—and, in turn, their very dependence produced not just wealth, but a persistent (and a discursively and ideologically feminised) sense of dependence. The sense of "losing control", of not being in charge and, hence, of not being free but entangled in "golden fetters" was (and is) at the source of much national(ist) rhetoric. These panics were and are a persistent feature of twentieth-century German development.

Enmeshment was (and is) tolerated as long as it delivers, but explodes into resentment when it fails. Sovereignty panics are driven by a fear of dissolution and disappearance, in response to which one had to take drastic action—so it was argued—in order to preserve the integrity of the self, of body and territory. The mass quality of these panics, their very bodily instantiation, and their heightened desire for self-determining autonomy and self-enclosed territoriality (to be recreated in racial and territorial new orders) makes them quintessentially twentieth-century phenomena—and makes German (and Japanese) societies the quintessential panic societies of the twentieth century.

The third iteration of our exploration of the spaces of twentieth-century German history leads us to the most parochial rendition of German space, to Heimat or home, and the seemingly most backward-looking articulations of the nation as a community, Gemeinschaft. Rooted localism and emotional attachment have at-

47 Roger Chickering, We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886–1914 (Boston 1984).
tracted a great deal of historiographical attention. It is now commonly understood not as atavism or hold-over from the past, but as a modern invention that links the local and the national. The same could be said for Gemeinschaft, a notion that is slowly but surely lifted out of its presumed traditionalism, with Linden tree and church steeple, and recovered both as a potent literary and cultural construction and as a politics of intimacy. Political attachments (to the nation or to a milieu) are important, but occur in the context of other such attachments as, for example, to family, friends, neighbourhoods, confessions, humanitarian causes, or the natural habitat.

There are, in short, dense and overlapping spaces of attachments that quite literally "settle" individuals in their environment. An older understanding of this phenomenon, closely linked to the intellectual notion of Gemeinschaft, has emphasized the "given" or traditional nature of such spaces of attachment – and either mourned their disappearance or agitated to clean them out like old furniture. A newer one – certainly more appropriate for decoding these spaces in the twentieth century – highlights the creativity in establishing such bonds and the elective nature of many of these attachments. Particularly in German history the glaring limits of such elective attachments become obvious, if we think of German Jews, whose desire to be German and Jewish ran up against an ever more rabid anti-Semitism – as well as competing attachments such as Zionism. In any case, before we start to sub-divide such spaces of attachments into primary and secondary, voluntary and involuntary attachments or into milieus and lifestyles (as an extension of the same problem), we better begin with acknowledging their significance and with recognizing what they do. Attachments "settle" people in their environment. That the nation is also such a space of attachment need be mentioned only, because national histories frequently take it as the only attachment there is rather than wondering how it is possible (quite apart from the problem

53 See for example Ina-Maria Greverus, Der territoriale Mensch: Ein literatur-anthropologischer Versuch zum Heimatphänomen (Frankfurt 1972).
54 We might want to trace back the idea to notion of Vergesellschaftung; see Georg Simmel, Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung (Leipzig 1908). But also note Karl Bücher, Friedrich Ratzel, Georg von Mayr, Heinrich Waentig, Georg Simmel, Theodor Petermann, Dietrich Schäfer, Die Großstadt. Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Städteausstellung (Dresden 1903).
whether or not it is true) that the nation should be able to colonize and incorporate all other bonds of belonging.

By the same token, not all of these spaces of attachment are parochial or local. What if your Heimat is Dortmund and the international proletariat, or Bräunlingen and Peoria, Illinois? What if Germans who have emigrated to Russia centuries ago are enticed to return to their homeland (where they often get lost and are distinctly unwanted)? What about the exiles who by virtue of their education, language, and Bildung are eternally reminded of where they come from, whether they like the association with their homeland or hate it? Obviously Heimat as a space of belonging can stretch and need not be church steeples either. Therefore, Heimat is better understood as the articulation—and a very powerful one at that—of spaces of attachments, which people form often across vast distances and which constitute bonds of belonging that are both smaller and larger than the nation. The most intimate of these connections are the family ties of emigrants and immigrants. The most ominous by far are the claims for racial sameness. Then again, the notion of Western Civilization or Abendland on one hand and of the fraternity of socialist nations suggests that such spaces have a distinctly global reach.

In fact, if we come to think about the matter, the discrepancy between spaces of attachment and the territory of the nation is another constitutive feature of twentieth-century history. There is a persistent tendency both to localize and/or privatise attachments and to see these local attachments as transnational (as is the case for the expellees on one hand or the Turks in Kreuzberg on the other). If it is true that spaces of attachment such as Heimat "settle" people, it is also the case that they stretch settlement far beyond the nation.

Once this is said in due brevity, we can trace the potency of constituting spaces of attachment for national history. Where conventional histories focus on a nineteenth-century German nation being torn apart by the shock of modernity, ca. 1890, it would appear more useful to think of the social and cultural labour, undertaken for good and bad, in order to create new spaces of attachment that suited an urban and industrial society. The investment of energy expended in this process at the turn to the twentieth century was, in any case, extraordinary.

(That this process was and is thoroughly media-mediated, if not media-driven goes without saying.) To be sure, this labor was accompanied by a great deal of fear and loathing, an expectation that all social bonds might disappear in thin air and that only drastic measures could save them. But the extremity and the sheer

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56 Harold James, A German Identity: 1770–1990 (New York 1989) is a case in point.
57 Etienne François, Hannes Siegrist, Jakob Vogel (eds.), Nation und Emotion: Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich, 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Göttingen 1995) is a model in terms of approach, but too limited in its focus on the nation.
violence of some of these projects cannot distract from the pervasiveness of the labour (which made Germany a laboratory of social forms) or from the sheer pleasure and moral commitments of people coming together\textsuperscript{60}. The late nineteenth-century drive to form new public spaces of attachments capped and transformed older nineteenth-century moral-reform and associational movements that established modern civility in all its (\textit{bürgerlich}, confessional, and socialist) variety and with its competing claims for inclusivity and exclusivity\textsuperscript{61}. The glamour of new public spaces – the excitement about railway stations, hotels, movie theatres, and department stores, but also museums, and the quest for the ideal mass work place – is just coming in sight\textsuperscript{62}. The sheer dynamic force in establishing private spaces of attachment – with their camaraderie, friendship circles, explorations of sexuality, alternative family models – has been explored for the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, but is still commonly underestimated as a powerful drive in the twentieth century\textsuperscript{63}. Undoubtedly, it would be easier to think of the expansion of private space for historians, if for once consumption were seen as aiding and abetting this process rather than stunting what is largely a fictional cult of personality\textsuperscript{64}.

The acceleration of daily life with rapid industrialization and urbanization, the new mobility of people and things was undoubtedly a shock – and remained a shock that never quite abated. However, we should not underestimate the sheer drive of all those who, individually and collectively, wanted to cut loose in order to make their own home and live in their own self-made world of attachments – whether it is evangelicals who found a new home with god, the “new woman” who found her way through the urban jungle, or country-people who moved into and made a home in new urban and industrial spaces, or the Catholics who explored new liturgical forms in order to express their sense of a thoroughly modern transcendental community, or, not least, the immigrants, such as the eastern European Jews, who sought security in an uncertain world. The remarkable thing about the early twentieth-century is how very wrong the cultural pessimism about society collapsing in anomie was. If anything, the very thickening of social


\textsuperscript{62} As a suggestion for general reading, see Sigrid Weigel, Zum „topographical turn“: Kartographie, Topographie und Raumkonzepte in den Kulturwissenschaften, in: Kulturpoetik 2 (2002) 151–165.

\textsuperscript{63} I am not aware of an equivalent to Rebecka Habermas, \textit{Frauen und Männer des Bürgerums: eine Familiengeschichte (1750–1850)} (Göttingen 2000); Thomas Kühne, \textit{Männergeschichte, Geschlechtergeschichte: Männlichkeit im Wandel der Moderne} (Frankfurt; New York 1996) is an indication of what is possible.

\textsuperscript{64} Michael Wildt, \textit{Vom kleinen Wohlstand: Eine Konsumgeschichte der fünfziger Jahre} (Frankfurt a.M. 1996) is a beginning.
ties, the elaborate furnishings of the spaces of attachment, and, above all, the endless talk about and unceasing effort to create new attachments and elective affinities – and to reject others – characterize this peculiar moment.

But so does the vengeance with which attachments were ripped up and destroyed. Therefore, the second question is when and where this experimentation turned destructive, and self-destructive at that. The ideological elements of this destructiveness were firmly in place at around the turn of the century, as the turn to a social-Darwinist eugenics, the rise of a radical anti-Semitism, or the debate about miscegenation in the colonies suggest among other things. But the debate is really much broader – if we think, for example, of the vast field of sexuality as another way of defining spaces of attachment – and suggests a new round of heated contestations over what these spaces were, who defined them, which ones appeared permissible and which ones did not. They gained urgency with the ravishment of the securities of everyday life in war and post-war. The mass killing at the front destroyed an entire generation and, with it, destroyed hopes and futures. It left a lacerated society. Post-war inflation shredded the value of money and, with money, made short shrift of status, authority, and inheritance. Scarcities and famine-like conditions sent most everyone off into a struggle for survival. The influenza epidemic, with its high death toll among young women added to the sense of catastrophe. However, the resulting mixture of utter fatigue and hyperactivism does not fully capture the deep sense of distrust and the violent anger that spread endemically across Germany. While a civil war was checked, a seething rage – so expressively visualized in both post-World-War-I painting and in nationalist propaganda – tore up society. Civility frazzled. The catastrophe-mongers captured the moment and gained mass support when the brief post-war


recovery collapsed in a global depression. Reality had caught up and surpassed their fantasies.

The older notion that society literally fell apart under the pressures of war and inflation has long been discarded. In fact, it was civility that fell apart in a mass scramble for protection. Instead of anomie and atomisation, we find a relentless competition of all against all that the Nazis eventually managed to sort out inasmuch as they set this scramble against internal enemies on one hand and projected a distant future of safe and secure Lebensraum – and promised tangible, immediate benefits. The notion of Lebensraum was noxiously vague, but it streamlined the desire for attachment and shaped it into a political imperative. It was to be a space large enough for all Germans, safe enough to shelter them, and pure enough to unify them. Lebensraum was an imaginary space of home-coming – of “settlement” in the literal and metaphorical meaning of the word. It became the imperative for Nazi aggression and the guiding idea for the sweeping plans of a new European order. The quest for a sheltered and unequivocal space of attachment came to a head in a catastrophic politics of extirpation, expulsion, and resettlement. It led to systematic and deliberate genocide. And it set Germany aflame in a war that turned into a nightmare and ended in unconditional surrender.

The dislocations of war were extreme. Mass death of soldiers and civilians, mass mutilation, capture as prisoners of war, mass-flight and expulsion, and the sheer post-war struggle for survival might suggest that a collapse of society was imminent. Conservative pundits feared and expected that outcome. But, although tensions ran high (it proved exceedingly difficult to incorporate expellees, for example), there is little indication that the experience of World War I and its aftermath, with its sense of dissolution on one hand and exuberance on the other, was repeated. Instead, many descriptions by outsiders referred to a certain sullenness, a sense of victimization, and a banding together against the outside world.

Historians have been rather keener to explore the openness of the fifties especially in West Germany and to deconstruct the politics of restoration (as, for example, of

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72 Take as a telling contemporary example of the dimensions of the issue Karl H. Dietzel, Oskar Schmieder, Heinrich Schmitthenner (eds.), Lebensraumfragen europäischer Völker (Leipzig 1941).
76 Famously Arendt’s quite vicious, but not inappropriate comment on the German situation: Hannah Arendt, Besuch in Deutschland, translated by E. Geisel (Berlin 1993).
family values) as an ideology. But on balance these were, if not restorative, restricted times, in which spaces of attachments shrunk to the home, the nation was displaced onto seemingly innocent subjects such as soccer, and the transnation appeared as the simultaneously hostile and sheltering reach of America and as the imposing presence of the Soviet Union – or as touristic escape. Indeed, the difficulty for historians (of a certain age) to imagine the reach, diversity, and sheer richness of spaces of attachments in an earlier German history is due not least to the contraction of these spaces after World War II to Volk and family in both East and West Germany. The hyperbolic effort to fortify milieus in the context of the consolidation of a Socialist and a Christian Republic respectively was driven by the opposition to National Socialism, but if anything further constrained them.

It is enticing to contemplate the possibility that rock n' roll changed all this and that mass consumption did the rest. This has led to the tantalizing argument that material objects and commodity culture regenerated the connecting tissue of German society. Others have highlighted the vanguard role of the student movement and the Cultural Revolution they set into motion. Yet others have pointed to security and prosperity as the conditions for anew beginning. Whichever way we turn, these instances suggest that in so many ways the horizons began to open up and new worlds of attachments became available. Experimentation was no longer anathema. German society in West and East recovered some of its zest for Lebensreform. It may well be argued that West Germany thrived, and East Germany faltered, because after an initial culture war there was nothing to stop this reform in the West, which, by the eighties, had gone into overdrive. In any case, the social and cultural re-societalization of (West) Germany was the by far most consequential development in the last quarter of the twentieth century – a recovery of an, albeit thoroughly commercialised spirit of intimacy.

In weighing these tendencies of renewal, it is remarkable that they came to fruition in tandem with German society facing up to the fact of genocide. Murder committed against an entire people was the breach that had ripped the fabric of

77 Axel Schildt, Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und „Zeitgeist“ in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre (Hamburg 1995).
83 Niklas Luhmann, Liebe als Passion: Zur Codierung von Intimität (Frankfurt a. M. 1982) is a key text in this regard – also in terms of the date of publication.
German society apart, or so it was now seen. A new civility of social bonds was regenerated only slowly and with great anguish. Inasmuch as new horizons opened up with growing prosperity, they gained salience only to the extent that Germans faced up to their past. If Dagmar Herzog highlights the contorted links between sexual revolution, anti-Fascism and the emerging memory culture, Konrad Jarausch conclusively shows that the sixties and seventies politics of memory was inseparable from rebuilding spaces of attachment. The seventies and eighties figure among the grand moments of societal activism in German history. Society itself was under construction. Countless experimentations with life styles, Beziehungskisten, Betroffenheitskultur, a new culture of interiority, and, who would be surprised, a return of Heimat, were all part and parcel of this peculiar moment of social and cultural renovation. Whatever else may be said about post-war society, this proved to be its main enterprise – and it turned out to be to be inseparable from the German politics of memory.

The turn to the twentieth century had seen a similar impulse. The difference between the beginning and the end of the century lies in the imbrications of a politics of memory with the new experimentation with social forms, which anchored German society in the past rather than in the future. The innocence and the exuberance, the utopian qualities, of the early twentieth century cultures of attachment were gone. What remained was the memory of a future of the good life that could have been but never was. Maybe Europe, as the new space of attachment, will harness some of the utopian energy. But that is, as the German language puts it with a certain bemused scepticism, Zukunftsmusik.

"Always historicize!"86

I have tried to show that spaces of participation and of dominion, as well as the spaces of attachment, shaped the territory of German history in the twentieth century. Rather than being a self-evident foundation, territory is not only multi-dimensional, but it stretches, breaks and changes. The hard facts are that the territory of German history is local and global (in the case of the Jewish expellees) and global and local (in the case of the Berliners in 1948 or 1961). Germany is implicated in the history of Belarus and of Belgium and, for that matter, of Namibia. It crashed right through other nations' histories, much as German history was shaped exogenously. Territory became a shelter for attachments only at the cost of

85 Avishai Margalit, The Ethics of Memory (Cambridge, Mass. 2002) suggests that this is the way societalization works.
86 Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Durham, N.C. 1991) makes historicization the imperative of postmodernism, which is commonly and understandably overlooked in the German debate.
extirpation, which undercut the moral certitude of a society, which had cherished
the civility of its public life and the intimacy of its elective ties. Much as it is im-
possible to write this history without acknowledging the void left by expulsion
and extermination and the experience added by the expellees, it seems unthinkable
to write this history without acknowledging the histories of the many strangers
that were to stay. Twentieth-century German history makes no sense without ac-
knowledging the sheer mobility of people and the shifting territories they lived in.
It is a history of unsettlement.

We may leave it to philosophers to decide whether or not uncertainty is a
human condition. The point here is that fractured space is a salient feature of
twentieth-century experience and, hence, a condition to be explored and un-
derstood. It is also and, perhaps more importantly, the source of action and agency,
with people putting together their lives time and again, creating new bonds of be-
longings, and bridging the deep chasms that murder, killing, and expulsion have
produced. The twentieth-century is as deadly and as murderous as a century can
be, but it also produced a history of people putting their lives together, moving on,
mending what can be mended and mourning what cannot, and, thus, recreating liveable communities. This is a state of affairs that nobody could or would have
expected as the outcome of the century that, once upon a time, was to be a Ger-
man century.

European intellectuals approached the new fin-de-siecle with some trepidation.
There was no popular and no intellectual groundswell of enthusiasm for things to
come. In this they differed quite profoundly from their predecessors a century
ago. Back then, at the tail end of another long period of stability and prosperity,
the future was largely welcome, and nowhere more so than in Germany. At the
end of the century, the future is so uncertain, because the past is so overwhelming.
The twentieth century proves to be a daunting age to be left behind. It is peculiarly
a century that everyone wants to keep and, yet, everyone also fears to repeat.

Hannah Arendt, although by no means the only one among intellectuals, was
by all accounts the fiercest to insist that with each new person the possibility for a
new world was born, an element of uncertainty and transformation was created,
and the chance for a new beginning entered the world87. With this emphasis on
what she provocatively calls “nativity”, she offers one of the clues for the working
of uncertainty in history. The chance of ever-new beginning is for Arendt “the
very essence of human freedom”88. (It is the exact opposite of what historians tend
to make of “contingency” when they take the term to denote the accumulation of
events or factors that makes outcomes inadvertent.) Beginning and “newness”,
Arendt insisted, is “the realm of historians”. While they may prefer to disappear in
the past as antiquarians or act like social scientists, who “pretend to be able to ex-

88 Hannah Arendt, Understanding and Politics (The Difficulties of Understanding), in:
318–320.
plain events by a chain of causes” but actually trace “events” back to their origins, they are bound to historicize, to start from the threshold of new beginnings. As Arendt writes:

Just as in our personal lives our worst fears and best hopes will never adequately prepare us for what actually happens – because the moment even a foreseen event takes place, everything changes, and we can never be prepared for the inexhaustible literalness of this “everything” – so each event in human history reveals an unexpected landscape of human deeds, sufferings, and new possibilities which together transcend the sum total of all willed intentions and the significance of all origins. It is the task of the historian to detect this unexpected new with all its implications in any given period and to bring out the full power of its significance.

In Arendt’s view, the task of the historian is of such importance because, inasmuch as events usher in new worlds, they threaten the common realm of togetherness or, more specifically, of politics as the source for bonds of belonging. At their extreme, events imperil these bonds and thus threaten civility. In illuminating the pathways of the new, history comes into being – and with history being told, “a new beginning for those who are alive” becomes possible. It may seem paradoxical, but without history the potential of a new beginning, occasioned by events that exceed the prior past, cannot be realized. Arendt proposes a history not of what people and situations were, but a history of what they might become in relation to what they have been and in relation to what they do with their futures. In this labour of recovering the past’s future, history opens up the present while preserving the past. And who knows, German history may yet have a future that does not repeat the past.

Ibid. S. 320.

Dan Diner, Kreisläufe: Nationalsozialismus und Gedächtnis (Berlin 1995).