

# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

**Ursula Lehmkuhl, Clemens A. Wurm, Hubert Zimmermann, eds.** *Deutschland, Großbritannien, Amerika: Politik, Gesellschaft und Internationale Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert.* Wiesbaden and Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2003. 283 pp. EUR 48.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-515-08395-9.



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In reviewing essays dedicated to a person one must always take two sides into consideration: the person to be honored and the volume by the contributors. Gustav Schmidt, professor of international relations at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, celebrated his sixty-fifth birthday in 2003. He started his career with quite a different subject and methodology than those with which he ended it. His first work, *Deutscher Historismus und der Übergang zur parlamentarischen Demokratie*, in 1964, analyzed Friedrich Meinecke, Ernst Troeltsch, and Max Weber. A disciple of Gerhard A. Ritter, Schmidt became more interested in the history of parliamentarism and Great Britain in subsequent years. Many of his works provide not only a thorough methodological reflection but demonstrate a profound knowledge of the secondary literature as well as of archival sources. He treated Wilhelmine Germany and the Weimar Republic as political systems. But he soon became a specialist on the topic of appeasement. His *Habilitationsschrift* of 1971 was published a decade later under the title *England in der Krise. Grundzüge und Grundlagen der britischen Appeasement-Politik 1930-1937*. At the time, this book was innovative in its international context as well and thus was translated in 1985 into English. In this magisterial work Schmidt underlined his rare ability to connect the economic and political motives of appeasement to concrete political situations and decisions and contributed to a better under-

standing of this often disparaged political strategy.

Schmidt went on to publish a student handbook on pre-WWI imperialism; he also made significant contributions to cold war history. He authored a number of stimulating articles on bilateral or trilateral relations. He added East Asia and Canada to his interests. A comprehensive book-length essay on the Cold War up to 1956 was unfortunately published in 2003 only in a collective volume. Many publications arose from his work in organizing German scholars dealing with Great Britain, while others resulted from his work with the Commission of the History of International Relations (CHIR), with which he organized an international conference at Bochum. The conference gave rise to a three-volume documentation (1993). In 2001 a further three-volume documentation was published from a symposium, "NATO: The First Fifty Years," in 2001. A further book has been announced that will treat the history of the United States from the independence movement to the present. How a single person can achieve such a wide scope of research, with the necessary wide range of sources in the archives of so many countries, remains a puzzle that even the authors of the *Festschrift* cannot fully resolve. Suffice it to say that Gustav Schmidt is always an original interpreter of history who finds his own line, a convincing one and a course which is worth while debating in every case—although,

of course, his arguments have not found overall consent.

The essays in this volume in many cases happily start from ideas, notions, or theses which Schmidt had developed earlier: Marie-Luise Recker musters the origins of the notion of appeasement, and Bernd-Jürgen Wendt examines Lloyd George's Fontainebleau Memorandum of March 1919 as a possible starting point for appeasement. Anthony Nicholls ponders British policy towards the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961; he finds some good arguments for a common-sense policy which should not be labeled appeasement in a negative sense. Three authors deal with more theoretical questions: Charles Doran gives an overall view of the connection between transatlantic history and global theory and history. I find Hubert Zimmermann's description of China's "long march" through international institutions since 1971 especially convincing, because he can show how the People's Republic was able to promote a different mode of thinking about international theory in a continuing world historical process. As a political scientist, Nils C. Bandelow develops the innovative idea that institutional vetoes were instrumental for progress and collective learning in Great Britain and Germany during the last two decades of European integration.

Seven contributions appear under the heading of transnational relations since the Second World War. Ursula Lehmkuhl herself treats the triangle of the United

States, Canada, and Great Britain in the case of the Colombo Plan. Petra Dolata-Kreuzkampff deals with the law firm of Arnold, Fortas & Porter as "political brokers" in a mainly German "Kohlestreit" between 1958 and 1962. New research is presented by Heide-Irene Schmidt in her discussion of the outlines of the German position towards the International Monetary System in the 1960s, while Eckart Conze reflects methodologically about results of his earlier publications on German politics towards Europe and the Atlantic orientation in the early 1960s. Quite new material is used by Gottfried Niedhart in his summary of Western attitudes towards early German *Ostpolitik* in 1969-70. Two comparisons mark the end of a very interesting, but diverse volume: Frédéric Bozo reflects about France's role before and after September 11 in transatlantic relations, while Lawrence A. Kaplan, the doyen of NATO historians, compares the changing meanings of article 5 of the NATO treaty between 1949 and 2001.

Taking all these essays together, the book is a somewhat typical Festschrift, comprised of often excellent or at least very good chapters deriving from the contributors' specializations or attempting to find a common point with Schmidt's own research. The inner coherence of the volume is not very high. But for all readers interested in international history, it will be a good overview of recent developments in primarily German scholarship in this field.

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