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Harry & Helen Gray  
Humanities Program Series  
Volume 6

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THE CULTURAL LEGITIMACY  
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC  
ASSESSING THE GERMAN  
*KULTURSTAAT*

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Edited by  
Frank Trommler  
University of Pennsylvania

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American Institute for Contemporary German Studies  
The Johns Hopkins University

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# FOREWORD

The remarkable ascent of the Federal Republic of Germany, whose fiftieth anniversary is being commemorated in 1999, is usually credited both to its successful democratization of the Germans and their strong economic recovery from the ruins of Hitler's dictatorship. Cultural factors have received less attention, although the works of Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll, Joseph Beuys, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder have been celebrated abroad as proof of the country's vibrant cultural life. In fact, the West German state, from its founding in 1949, has drawn much-needed credibility from its attachment to the traditions of German culture and the concept of the *Kulturstaat*. This concept, alien to American ideas about the role of government, obliges the state in terms of its public and moral representation, as well its active support for arts, education and culture.

This volume, based on a Harry and Helen Gray Humanities Program workshop in Washington on March 27, 1998, is a first attempt on this side of the Atlantic to assess structure and reality of the German *Kulturstaat* since 1949, taking a critical look at the historical, political, legal, and administrative features of the cultural legitimacy of the Federal Republic. The workshop highlighted achievements and problems in a frank discussion of German and American experts even before the new German government of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, as a result of the election of September 1998, installed a first State Minister of Cultural Affairs on the federal level. As the discussion about the role of public sponsorship in the sphere of culture intensifies with the waning ability of governments to honor the financial obligations of the welfare state, this volume widens the perspective beyond the immediate political debate. It conveys in its contributions the spirit of a critical exchange, preserving the spoken word as much as possible.

The papers are the revised versions of the recorded and transcribed workshop talks. In his authoritative survey, "The State of the *Kulturstaat*," Andreas Johannes Wiesand, director of the *Zentrum für Kulturforschung* in Bonn, includes the developments since the creation of the office of State Minister of Cultural Affairs, which was taken over by Michael Naumann in fall 1998. Barthold Witte, who held the position of under secretary of state for Cultural Affairs at the German Foreign Office from 1983 until his retirement in 1992, focuses on Germany's cultural representation abroad which also has attracted much attention in recent years. For many foreign observers, this representation has been instrumental in shaping views of the cultural legitimacy of the Federal

Republic which cannot be ascertained without reflection of the cultural legacies of previous German governments, those of the Empire, the Weimar Republic and Hitler's Third Reich. Jeffrey Herf, historian at Ohio University, illuminates how the first president of the Federal Republic, Theodor Heuss, made sure that these legacies were reflected and Hitler's worst legacy, the persecution of the Jews, was remembered and addressed. In his comment, Charles Maier, historian at Harvard University, ponders a historical evaluation of the *Kulturstaat* concept and concludes with thoughts about phasing it out in the era of Europeanization and globalization.

The workshop was part of a seminar series on German and American approaches to cultural politics and arts sponsoring which the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies began in 1995. After three conferences in Washington under the titles, "Cultural Politics and Policies in the United States and Germany: A Comparative Assessment and Agenda," "Foreign Affairs and Cultural Policies: American and German Strategies," and "New Approaches to Public and Private Funding of the Arts: The Local Agenda in the United States and Germany," the Institute organized, together with the *Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* and the *Kulturstiftung Sachsen*, the conference, "New Forms of Arts Sponsorship in the United States and Germany," which took place in Leipzig in May 1996. It featured a lively exchange between German and American experts concerning models of public-private partnerships as well as arguments for instituting better legal and tax provisions in Germany for individual and corporate sponsorship of the arts. Its proceedings were published in the *Blaubuch des Aktionskreises Kultur (Bürger, Staat und Wirtschaft als Partner, 1997)*. All these discussions leave little doubt about fundamental differences in the public and governmental conceptions of arts sponsoring in the United States and Germany, and yet they also reveal increasingly common ground in working toward creative public-private partnerships. It is an area of growing importance where the Institute has become a contributor to the transatlantic exchange.

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## INTRODUCTION

Frank Trommler

### SUCCESS OF A CONCEPT

When the victorious Allies, together with a small group of German politicians, launched the Federal Republic in 1949, they made sure that the new state was fully equipped to follow their lead in the realms of politics and the economy. Among the specifically German contributions to this process of renegotiating nationhood in a federal framework was the notion of the *Kulturstaat* which defines the state, in the century-old tradition of governmental and public sponsorship of the arts, as an active agent in the realm of culture. Although there was no constitutional explanation of the concept itself, aside from the declaration that the responsibility for culture and education rested with the federal *Länder* or states, the traditional public responsibilities in this area were not only resumed but also expanded. Thanks to the first federal president, Theodor Heuss, who used his office as a highly visible repository of moral conscience and cultural reflection, the new federal state was able to project contours of a cultural sovereignty that helped shape its political legitimacy as a fledgling democracy. Heuss gave substance to the argument that of all the continuities which helped reintroduce Germany to the community of nations, those of arts and culture, if mindful of the terrible burden of war and Nazi atrocities, were of particular weight. This was rarely recognized by the political and economic elites whose definition of sovereignty hardly touched upon the realms of culture and cultural politics. Yet it became an important factor in the 1960s when the Federal Republic grew beyond the confines of a western protectorate, a bulwark in the Cold War confrontation, and was able to draw on the status of Germany as a *Kulturnation*.

Since then, public culture has been recognized as a major factor in providing identity to a society that had become used to acting as an economic reconstruction community on its way to a consumer society, not as a sovereign political entity. If the state was to reap the benefits from this identity, it needed to establish legal foundations and invest in the infrastructure of cultural integration. Andreas Johannes Wiesand delineates in this volume how the legal basis of the current concept of *Kulturstaat* emerged in the 1970s. Mostly through the ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court, the state, defined as the protector of cultural freedom and pluralism, has been charged to provide administration and funding in the realm of public culture. What had been considered its obligation to make information and cultural participation accessible to the population was determined to be its responsibility, which, according to the

federal system, involves cities, *Länder* and the federal state. In Germany, cities are generally assumed to be the major contributors with 55 percent of cultural sponsoring, followed by the *Länder* with 40 percent, while the *Bund* provides approximately 5 percent. Only after German unification, the share of federal contributions rose to a higher percentage. The total amounts to about 1 percent of all public budgets. And yet it covers more than 90 percent of all subsidies in arts and culture, the rest coming from private sources.<sup>1</sup>

The 1960s also witnessed the rethinking of the *Kulturstaat* in the field of foreign policy. Barthold Witte's contribution to this volume reflects the decisions made in this decade when the federal government learned to make use of Germany's cultural capital in the process of gaining legitimacy as a partner in the newly opened world of international trade and communication. Culminating in the expansion of the network of Goethe Institutes all over the world, this cultural advance followed the model of France and England but created, also on the basis of the German tradition, in the intermediary organizations Goethe Institute, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Humboldt Foundation a politically flexible structure for international collaboration. While the presentation of Germany as *Kulturstaat* abroad provided the initial impetus for the costly investment on the part of the federal government, a new generation of intellectuals, cultural managers and enlightened bureaucrats developed different models of cultural exchange which put collaboration before diplomatic flag-waving. The success of their work, together with the reform spirit of the new social-liberal coalition under Willy Brandt of 1969, led to an official reconceptualizing of foreign cultural policy which still stood under the shadow of *Pflege des Deutschtums im Ausland* (cultivation of German-ness abroad). Ralf Dahrendorf's "Leitsätze für die auswärtige Kulturpolitik"<sup>2</sup> (guiding principles for foreign cultural policy) of 1970 established the basis on which Brandt's notion of foreign cultural policy as the "third pillar" of foreign policy was transformed into a delicate and continuously contested reality.<sup>3</sup>

Both on the domestic and foreign scene, the decade of the 1970s became the highpoint of promoting culture as politics or specifically, the use of culture in the pursuit of social as well as foreign policies. This constellation would have been unthinkable without the Cold War which helped, especially since the Sputnik Shock of 1957, extend the East-West competition to the fields of science, culture and the arts. Enhancing cultural budgets continued to provide movement where politics were stalled and the reform spirit had run aground. A particular incentive emerged with the international recognition of the German Democratic Republic as the second German state. With increased determination, Germany (West), projected the image of a reformed, democratic and economically successful society through its intermediary organizations. Germany

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(East) could hardly compete. Its Herder Institute, with a solid language program, concentrated mainly on East and Central European countries.

And yet, it should not go unnoticed that also the other German state furnished itself as a kind of *Kulturstaat*, although officially it did not include the concept in its self-definition as a socialist state. The pursuit of the socialist community (*sozialistische Menschengemeinschaft*) under Walter Ulbricht included official devotion to humanist values and cultural achievements; in this period traces of the old social democratic program of making culture accessible to the whole population can easily be detected both in the domestic agendas of Germany (East) and Germany (West). The GDR used cultural contacts extensively in preparing the worldwide diplomatic recognition around 1970. Cultural conventions often represented the most tangible political reward for the new activities.<sup>4</sup> Internally, the East German regime built its own cultural service structure (*kulturelle Versorgungsstruktur*) which concentrated on the human capital—writers, artists, musicians, filmmakers, scholars, and cultural functionaries—while neglecting the physical infrastructure of buildings, landmarks, museums, cityscapes, and the environment. With unification the Federal Republic inherited an enormous body of delapidated buildings, architectural and artistic treasures, whose maintenance had been delayed for decades. Financing their restoration, seen as an indispensable obligation of the *Kulturstaat*, fell on the federal government whose share of the national budget for culture rose above 5 percent for several years.

It might still be too early to assess the whole impact of the unification of the two German states on both the understanding and the practice of the *Kulturstaat* concept. To be sure, Article 35 of the Unity Treaty of 1990 promised the financial support of culture and decreed that the cultural practitioners of the East would enjoy the same rights, privileges and assistance as those in the West; collections that had been divided between the two German states would be restored. However, as the new federal structure for the area of the former GDR put an enormous burden on the states and financial shortfalls proliferated in all public budgets in the 1990s, the maintenance of this concept has increasingly become a matter of debate, even doubt. Given the new scenario in which other factors, especially the need for private support structures for culture as well as the regulatory impact of the European Union, have changed basic conditions for the state as an active agent in the realm of culture, a critical reflection of the Federal Republic of Germany as a *Kulturstaat* seems opportune.

The fact that the coalition of Social Democrats and Greens under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, elected in September 1998, created the office of the State Minister of Cultural Affairs, indicated the willingness to engage in new ap-

proaches on the federal level. Michael Naumann, the first occupant of this office, took the bull by the horns and assured the German public that culture is indeed political and needs this kind of centralized support if its standing vis-à-vis the interests of state and federal bureaucracies is to be improved. Notwithstanding the constitutional limits to a major role of the federal government. He also pointed out that the German position towards the European Union needed to be represented by one voice instead of the sixteen voices of the *Länder*. Likewise, the overhaul of the tax system in the area of corporate and private sponsorship needed a more centralized input in order to become effective.

As these and similar issues receive new attention, it becomes obvious that the review of the fifty-year history of the Federal Republic and its cultural legitimacy cannot be conducted without a critical look at the origins and reality of its cultural commitment as a successor to other German states and an equally critical look at the changing reality of culture in the second half of the twentieth century.

## HISTORICAL ROOTS

In an impressive brochure under the title, *So fördert der Bund Kunst und Kultur* (This Is How the Federal Government Advances Art and Culture), the German government presented its case as a *Kulturstaat* in 1996. The *Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung* listed a broad array of activities, which include the preservation of the cultural heritage, the sponsorship of important cultural institutions and landmarks, the support of film production, music, and international cultural exchange. A whole section is dedicated to the work in the new federal states of the East, another to foreign cultural policy. The first chapter presents the various steps that led to the legal framework under the title, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland als Kulturstaat*. The historical lineage is stated this way:

The constitutional state which developed on German soil since the beginnings of the 19th century always considered itself to be a *Kulturstaat*. The democratic powers in Germany whose tradition the Federal Republic of Germany continues, always took as a basis for the intended free state the idea of the *Kulturstaat*. Therefore they attributed evergrowing importance to the protection of the freedom of belief, conscience, speech, and opinion as well as the care of education and learning, science, and the arts.<sup>5</sup>

The adjacent illustration, showing the opening of the National Assembly in the Frankfurt Paulskirche of 1848, indicates the direction of this reference. The history of the concept is presented as an attribute of the democratic tradition in Germany. Such a reference is honorable, though extremely vague. Considering the erratic relationship of state and culture in the 150 years since the Frankfurt Parliament, it is not more than a fleeting reverence.

The brochure is not untypical in its rather ahistorical presentation of the profound commitment of the German state to the welfare of arts and culture. This commitment is there, so it seems, because it always was there. Although the competition between cities and regions and states in the area of arts and culture may have subsided, it still reflects older patterns of rivalry between cities and kings, archbishops and dukes. Contemporaries scarcely draw on the institutional memory of cultural associations, libraries and city departments that might tell a different story. What happened before the 1960s is not part of the debates on *Kulturpolitik*.<sup>6</sup>

A brief look at the history of the cultural service structure (*kulturelle Versorgungsstruktur*) which is built on public subsidies and prominently displayed in the brochure, reveals that its roots lie in a period that is hardly considered an inspiration for the 1990s: the 1930s. The decade of Roosevelt's New Deal, of Stalin's push for a fully integrated socialist state, of enormous public works programs that gave a livelihood to artists, writers, photographers, and a whole segment of marginalized cultural practitioners, was also in Germany the era of new structures of a tax-supported public culture. Viewed from the 1990s when the financial support for public libraries is waning and literature and reading lose their privileged status in the public sphere, the development of an infrastructure of libraries in the 1930s might represent a good example. While the Weimar Republic built the system of public libraries (*Volksbüchereiwesen*) still much as a private or non-governmental structure, the innovation of the 1930s was the decision to provide public funding for several layers of local libraries and reading-related activities involving schools and organizations.

The transformation of the library culture of the Weimar Republic under National Socialism meant, of course, the installation of rigorous censorship and replacement of personnel with obvious democratic credentials. Yet it also meant a tax-supported building program of enormous proportions bringing a public library to every village of five hundred or more, supplying funds for filling their shelves and encouraging reading and library use among broad segments of the population. While we look back, on the one hand, at the barbarous book burning of 1933 which set the stage for a politics of terror, intimidation and exclusion in the cultural sphere, we also notice, on the other hand, the state-sponsored program to provide access to literature to all segments of soci-

ety, in particular to working-class and young people. As so often, such a program was not invented by the Nazis but was put into practice by them, in this case inspired by the egalitarian goals of the Social Democratic cultural movement (*Kulturbewegung*) with its motto of breaking the educational privileges of the propertied classes (“*Brechung des Bildungsprivilegs der Besitzenden*,” Heidelberg Program). Doubtless there had been many activities and new support structures in the Weimar Republic which resulted both from the responsibilities of the Reich in the area of cultural politics, laid down by the Prussian minister of culture, Carl H. Becker, in a memorandum (“*Kulturpolitische Aufgaben des Reiches*,” 1919), and from the intensive commitment to culture and education in which political parties, associations and city governments invested impressive efforts. Yet the tax-based structures of a cultural service state with a vast network of local and regional agents and an immense confusion of competencies was established under National Socialism.<sup>7</sup>

For the long-term assessment of this history, the crucial component is the decision to shield arts and culture from the mechanism of the market. After the Depression of 1930-32, when the market for literary and cultural products came close to a collapse not only in Germany, the Nazis were not alone in embracing a policy of public subsidy, thereby lifting this area at least intentionally beyond the regulatory forces of the market. While the commercial dynamics of arts and culture were not abandoned, the public support structure instilled in the population a sense of cultural entitlement, which remained valid also after World War II. In those years, at a time of economic hardship and political impotence, cultural participation represented continuity, something with which a modicum of national identity was made publicly accessible. Under these circumstances, the language of culture and the language of business were at crosspurposes; if they mingled, it could only mean trivial culture for the masses, a much maligned, profit-seeking, lower-taste entertainment which had its place in the world but was not *Kultur*.

Nowhere was the sense of cultural entitlement as comprehensive as in the German Democratic Republic. Carefully distanced from the forces of the market and the capitalist entertainment industry, culture maintained its higher calling by its attempts to serve as a culture for everybody. In this area the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 took away the last defense not only against western commercialism but also the western notion of culture with its trappings of commercial viability. For many contemporaries this collapse had become inevitable, however, they could not help mourning the dramatic closure of a much extended chapter of an isolated culture of social, political and moral significance.

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In contrast, the Federal Republic did not witness a closure but rather a democratic rewriting of this chapter thanks to the student and extra-parliamentary opposition in the late 1960s which united in the demands for a much more comprehensive sponsorship role of the state in the social and cultural realms. For almost a decade a Fordist vision of mutual stimulation between extended cultural production and consumption originated. In its democratizing mission, it appeared to overcome both the mentality of mere cultural entitlements provided by the state and the lack of moral commitment within the entrepreneurial concept of culture. However, in the 1980s the writing appeared on the wall that the state as the provider of a *Kultur für alle* (culture for everybody) was being overcharged. The notion of economic accountability returned with a vengeance. In the 1990s, the *Crisis of the Welfare State*<sup>8</sup> has been acknowledged as a crucial factor for the need to reconceptualize public culture in its economic formation. As the state itself is being perceived as a withering colossus which has to shed a whole array of obligations, services and competencies if it is to return to fiscal stability, cultural institutions face questions of financial responsibility that severely test their viability within the culture service structure so proudly displayed in the abovementioned brochure of the federal government.<sup>9</sup>

Subsidiarity, the core concept of the public-private partnership in social welfare, is back in the limelight also for the sponsoring of arts and culture. Subsidiarity has been claimed when individuals or associations are able to undertake tasks that concern themselves or the larger society, thus relieving larger units, especially the state, of performing them. Conversely, these units or the state are obliged to assist their efforts. It is the organizing principle for incorporating the nonprofit sector into the public sphere, or vice versa. How much it will contribute to new approaches to the cultural service structure remains to be seen. Although the share of *Bund, Länder* and cities in cultural sponsorship is incomparably larger than in the United States, American models of mixed public-private funding have recently received increased attention.<sup>10</sup> Crucial is the revamping of the tax structure for individuals and corporations.<sup>11</sup> The expansion of the term *Kultur* toward the inclusion of attitudes, social formations and interactions (*erweiterter Kulturbegriff*) in 1970 has transformed the conceptual reliance on high culture. One thing appears to be certain: that the policy of shielding arts and culture from the market has run its course.<sup>12</sup> The installation of the office of the State Minister of Cultural Affairs assures the German public that the federal government will centralize cultural politics and cultural administration. And yet, the period of cultural entitlements appears to be over.

## THE EMERGENCE OF A CULTURE OF MEMORY

An assessment of the German *Kulturstaat* in the second half of the twentieth century needs to reflect its mixed tradition, filled with democratic and anti-democratic elements, evoking pride as well as criticism, resulting in probing questions from abroad. Critics hear the echoes of the threat which accompanied the coupling of *Kultur* and power—or even with the military—in the period of World War I. In his comment in this volume, Charles Maier illuminates certain features with which the idea of the German *Kulturstaat* can still challenge the goodwill of observers who find the political legitimacy of German *Kultur* a rather porous principle. Pointing to certain origins of the cultural service structure in the 1930s, under National Socialism, and to its build-up under communism in the GDR does not exactly instill trust in the democratic traditions. And yet, it would also be incorrect to ignore the attempts to build a democratic *Kulturstaat* in the Weimar Republic, to which Theodor Heuss referred although he was not inclined to apply this term to the federal state he was chosen to represent.

Heuss's reluctance to employ the term *Kulturstaat* to the new state is no indication that he did not direct his energies towards making it into one. Indeed, he did, as Jeffrey Herf shows in the following article, though in ways that differed from the legal and social conceptualization outlined above. Beginning with his speeches right after the collapse of National Socialism, Heuss articulated the difficult truth that German culture had been terribly compromised by the Nazi regime and could not be used as an alibi for the moral and political failure of the country.<sup>13</sup> In the assessment of fifty years of the Federal Republic as a *Kulturstaat*, this truth also has to be included. Heuss became exemplary in his officially expressed conviction that German culture, in order to be able to serve as a force and a reference in the political arena, had to prove its credentials at each occasion. As he returned repeatedly to the topic of Jewish persecution, he initiated what Herf calls a cultural politics of memory which remained less than popular in the 1950s but later, especially with Willy Brandt, became part of the official self-definition of the Federal Republic.

Half a century later, the debate about the current cultural obligations of the state seems to be at least as much concerned with the appropriate ways of memorializing the terrible murder of Jews and other minorities as with the problems of private-public partnerships and Europeanization of the administration of culture. Indeed, the cultural politics of memory has moved center stage, determining to a large extent the moral beginnings of the Berlin Republic. Charles Maier expresses doubts whether this coupling with memorialization of the Holocaust will further the cause of culture. Nonetheless, it cannot go

unnoticed that the use of the concept of culture in the attempts to address the Holocaust enhances its weight in the public eye. A decade after the end of the Cold War when culture has lost much of its political potential, and at the conclusion of a century whose upheavals cry out for a narrative and visual closure, memorialization seems to provide a new function, even definition of culture. However, one also cannot leave unmentioned that, instead of building a bridge to the political and social agenda for the new century, this function threatens to isolate culture again as a mere compensation for the lack of historical consciousness in the other spheres. This might separate memory itself from the pragmatics of everyday politics and turn it either into an artifact or a commodity or both.

At the turn of the century, concluding a millenium, memory commands high attention and high prices. The state might be transformed enough to consider it a good investment for maintaining national identity in a united Europe. The results will depend on many factors. They will continue to determine the cultural legitimacy of the Federal Republic of Germany.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI, ed. *Kulturförderung in gemeinsamer Verantwortung III-Bürger, Staat und Wirtschaft als Partner: Blaubuch des Aktionskreises Kultur* (Bonn:ARCult Media, 1997), 6. - A systematic overview in Karla Fohrbeck and Andreas Johannes Wiesand, *Von der Industriegesellschaft zur Kulturgesellschaft? Kulturpolitische Entwicklungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (München: C.H.Beck, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> *40 Jahre Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Bonn Aktuell, 1989), 230-33.

<sup>3</sup> Hansgert Peisert, *Die auswärtige Kulturpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1978); Hansgert Peisert and Johannes Kuppe, "Auswärtige Kulturpolitik" in Wolfgang Langenbacher, Ralf Rytlewski, Bernd Weyergraf, eds. *Kulturpolitisches Wörterbuch Bundesrepublik Deutschland/ DDR im Vergleich* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1983), 372-79; Barthold C. Witte, *Dialog über Grenzen: Beiträge zur auswärtigen Kulturpolitik* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1988); Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich, "Foreign Cultural Policy," in Markovits/Reich, *The German Predicament: Memory and Power in the New Europe* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 183-207.

<sup>4</sup> Hansgert Peisert and Johannes Kuppe, "Auswärtige Kulturpolitik," (note 3), 374.

<sup>5</sup> "Der auf deutschem Boden mit Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts entstehende Verfassungsstaat hat sich immer als Kulturstaat verstanden. Die demokratischen Kräfte in Deutschland, in deren Tradition die Bundesrepublik Deutschland steht, haben dem von ihnen gewollten freiheitlichen Staat stets die Kulturstaatsidee zugrunde gelegt und

deshalb dem Schutz der Glaubens-, Gewissens-, Bekenntnis- und Meinungsfreiheit des einzelnen Bürgers, ebenso wie der Pflege von Erziehung und Bildung, Wissenschaft und Künsten eine immer größere Bedeutung beigemessen." Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, *So fördert der Bund Kunst und Kultur: Innerstaatliche Kulturförderung und Auswärtige Kulturpolitik* (Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt, 1996), 21.

<sup>6</sup> A critical analysis of the "Kulturstaatsparadigma" in Albrecht Göschel, "Zwischen Sozial- und Rechtsstaat: Zur Zieldiskussion in der Kulturpolitik," in *Kulturpolitische Mitteilungen* No. 69 (1995/II), 26-30. - An overview of cultural policy in postwar Germany (West and East) in Frank Trommler, "Kulturpolitik der Nachkriegszeit," *Kulturpolitisches Wörterbuch* (note 3), 407-14; Trommler, Hermann Glaser, Hannes Schwenger, "Kulturpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *ibid.*, 379-90.

<sup>7</sup> Volker Dahm, "Nationale Einheit und partikulare Vielfalt: Zur Frage der kulturpolitischen Gleichschaltung im Dritten Reich," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 43 (1995), 221-65.

<sup>8</sup> Bernd Wagner and Annette Zimmer, eds. *Krise des Wohlfahrtsstaates - Zukunft der Kulturpolitik* (Bonn/ Essen: Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft/ Klartext Verlag; Edition Umbruch vol.11, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Dieter Kramer, "Kultur als Chefsache: Anstöße zu einer neuen Politik," in *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* No 4 (April 1999), 467-76; Bernd Meyer, "Bürgergesellschaft und Kultur," in Dieter Sauberzweig, Bernd Wagner, Thomas Rübke, eds. *Kultur als intellektuelle Praxis: Hermann Glaser zum 70. Geburtstag* (Bonn/ Essen: Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft/ Klartext Verlag, 1998), 206-16; "Kulturkämpfe," special issue of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, No 97, 28 (1997).

<sup>10</sup> See the documentation of the conference, "New Forms of Arts Sponsoring in the United States and Germany," in *Bürger, Staat und Wirtschaft als Partner* (note 1), 47-98; Rupert Graf Strachwitz and Stefan Toepler, eds. *Kulturförderung: Mehr als Sponsoring* (Wiesbaden: Gabler, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Carl-Heinz Heuer, "Öffentliche Aufgaben - private Möglichkeiten: 10 Thesen zur Kulturfinanzierung," *ibid.* 29-34.

<sup>12</sup> For a strong indictment of this development see Jost Hermand, "Ist die Bundesrepublik ein 'Kulturstaat'? Rückblick und Ausblick," in Hermand, *Angewandte Literatur: Politische Strategien in den Massenmedien* (Berlin: Ed. Sigma, 1996), 249-66.

<sup>13</sup> A collection of speeches in Michael Kienzle and Dirk Mende, eds. *Theodor Heuss: Politik durch Kultur 1949-1959* (Bonn: Ausstellung des Arbeitskreises selbständiger Kultur-Institute, 1984). - See also Max Frisch, "Kultur als Alibi," in *Der Monat* I:7 (April 1949), 82-5.

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## CULTURAL POLITICS AND THE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST: HEUSS AND HIS SUCCESSORS

Jeffrey Herf

In June 1955, following their meeting at a memorial the previous month to honor Friedrich Schiller, Theodor Heuss and Thomas Mann exchanged letters, as they had before and would do afterwards. The *Bundespräsident* had praised the lifetime achievements of the famous author, who in those years was quite out of favor with a great deal of West German opinion both because of his passionate engagement for the Allies in World War II and because he refused to return to the Federal Republic as a citizen. Mann expressed his appreciation to Heuss that he had “stood by my side” in this controversy. Doing so he continued was “so very characteristic for the generosity, courage and wisdom of your being and spirit that I will attempt to greet you with the words that the Americans call out to their favorite political leaders: ‘More power to you!’”<sup>1</sup> Mann, with characteristic ironic wit, raised a central issue. For a plea for more power for Theodor Heuss underscored the fact that compared to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, the *Bundespräsident* dealt only with matters of *Geist* and *Kultur* and that the traditional German split between *Macht* and *Geist* had become institutionalized in the division of labor between *Bundeskanzler* and *Bundespräsident*.

In the following remarks about the tradition of official memory of the Holocaust inaugurated by Heuss, I want to address the suspicion that the effect, and sometimes the intent, of beautiful and moving speeches—that is *Kultur*—emanating from the *Bundespräsidialamt* was to mask the mundane politics of the Adenauer restoration. Some critics have dismissed the tradition of official memory in the Heussian mold as “philosemitism,” that is, as an excessive, sentimental praise for and memory of the Jews, a sort of cultural facade which coincided with and served to legitimate political decisions that delayed and denied justice for the perpetrators of the Holocaust.

While I sympathize completely with the anger of these critics regarding the failures of postwar justice, I do not agree that the Heussian tradition was a cynical ruse. Rather, in first postwar decades, when there was no popular majority in the Federal Republic for public memory of the Holocaust, it is not surprising that such memory, to the extent to which it came from the West German government at all, came overwhelmingly from its only non-elected national representative. Both the accomplishments but also the limits of the Heussian tradition of cultural politics become evident when we look at Heuss, and his most important successor, Richard von Weizsäcker, as contemporaries and counterparts to the respective conservative *Bundeskanzler*, Konrad Adenauer and Helmut Kohl.

As befits the practical politician he was, Adenauer made no significant contributions to the history of *Kulturpolitik* regarding the Holocaust unless one regards public reticence and reluctance to discuss the subject as a contribution. As I have argued in *Divided Memory*, Adenauer implicitly took the position that democracy could only be built with, not against, the majority or electoral majority will. Hence, filled with fear and mistrust of a large portion of the Germans who had followed Hitler, from the earliest days, he pursued a policy of democratization via integration of hopefully disillusioned and deradicalized members and followers of the Nazi party and regime. Adenauer combined support for *Wiedergutmachung* with refusal to support vigorous prosecution of Nazi war criminals, as well as reluctance, most famously manifested in his determination to keep Hans Globke in office, to purge the civil service and judiciary of people compromised by a Nazi past. Aside from his September 1951 statement in the *Bundestag* regarding *Wiedergutmachung*, Adenauer never delivered a major address about the persecution of the Jews, or the racist nature of the Nazi war on the eastern front. Neither did he publicly reflect on the difference between the Nazi attack on “Jewish Bolshevism” and the anti-communism of the Cold War.

In the midst of the Adenauer restoration, Heuss was the figure of national prominence to which anyone interested in German memory of the crimes of the Nazi era looked for an establishment alternative to Adenauer’s silence. His singular accomplishment as *Bundespräsident* was to make the memory of the crimes of the Nazi era a constitutive element of national political memory. Freed from electoral considerations, he made the office of *Bundespräsident* into a political center of national memory and liberal conscience. To his critics, he was the cultured veneer obscuring the failures of de-Nazification in the Adenauer era. Yet in speeches about German history, extensive private correspondence with Jewish survivors, resistance veterans, and West German, and foreign intellectuals, Heuss planted the seeds within the West German political and intellectual elite for subsequent broader public discussion and action. He evoked German liberal aspirations, and honored those who had stood for democracy and human rights in German history. He could have done much more. Others in his position would have done, and later did do, much less.

In December 1949, he delivered a speech entitled “Courage to Love” (“*Mut zur Liebe*”) to the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation (*Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit*). His focus on “love” as opposed to justice set the tone for the next decade and remained one of his most well known speeches. In the presence of religious leaders, politicians, and John McCloy, Heuss addressed the issue of German guilt for Nazi crimes. The speech was broadcast on radio, published in the German and foreign press and presented in

weekly film newsreels.<sup>2</sup> Heuss rejected the notion of collective guilt as a mirror of the way the Nazis looked at the Jews. Just as “the mere fact of being Jewish already decided the issue of guilt” for the Nazis, so the idea of collective guilt (*Kollektivschuld*) treated all Germans as a group. In its place he proposed the idea of “collective shame (*Kollektivscham*) . . . The worst thing Hitler did to us . . . was certainly this, namely that he forced us into the shame of having to bear along with him and his crew the same German name.”<sup>3</sup>

We must not; we may not simply forget the things that people would gladly like to forget because it is so unpleasant. We must not and may not forget the Nuremberg Laws, the burning of the synagogues, the transport of the Jews abroad, to misfortune, and to death. This is a set of facts, which we should not and cannot forget because it makes us uncomfortable. The awful thing in these events, about which we must speak openly is this: It was not a matter of the raging fanaticism of pogroms in Russia, Rumania or wherever, which we read about previously in the newspapers. Rather, it was the **cold brutality of rational pedantry**. This was the peculiar German contribution to these events. And the most terrible aspect of all this is that this process was not carried out with great emotion, which would have been bad enough. Rather it made use of legal paragraphs and was supposed to draw on a worldview for a long time. What then was this ‘world view?’ It was **biological materialism**; one that recognized no moral categories but which wanted to represent them. It had no idea that there are individual values established between individuals.<sup>4</sup>

One of the striking features of Heuss’ speechesCa feature they shared with those of other leading political figures in both postwar German statesCwas his reference to his own Jewish friends who had been killed or driven into exile. One of the roots of his *Kulturpolitik* was personal memory and with it his sense of what he called “Germany’s infinite loss due to this Nazi madness.”<sup>5</sup> These references appeared too often and were expressed too passionately to be dismissed as an *ersatz* expression. He felt himself bound to a Germany and a German-Jewish Germany, which the Nazis destroyed.

Another aspect of the emergent *Kulturpolitik* of memory was his redefinition of courage and national identity. In speeches to university students in particular he praised “that kind of courage which grasps reality and does not collapse in the face of . . . the harsh reality (strong applause).”<sup>6</sup> The most difficult task of building “a new national feeling” required “unconditional truthfulness towards our own history . . . Self-criticism is not self-destruction. Rather it

is the path to reformation.”(strong applause)<sup>7</sup> One of Heuss’ most important accomplishments was to associate the language of patriotism and terms such as courage, honor and friendship with memory of the Nazi era.

Public reticence did not mean lack of interest. Heuss carried on an extensive correspondence with leading figures of German and German-Jewish intellectual life, both those living in the Federal Republic, and refugees living abroad. They included Theodor Adorno, Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Max Horkheimer, Thomas Mann, and Karl Marx, the editor of the *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*.<sup>8</sup> However, there were limits to Heuss’ view of facing the Nazi past. He pleaded for leniency for industrialists, soldiers and for former officials who had been convicted by Allied courts in the occupation era. On January 16, 1951, Heuss wrote to American High Commissioner John J. McCloy, and in February 1951 to General Thomas T. Handy, commander-in-chief of European Command of American forces, to request leniency in several of the Landsberg cases. While many of the convicted deserved severe punishment, he wrote to McCloy, there were several cases in which the establishment of guilt “remained thoroughly questionable,” and new arguments should be heard. “My concern is great,” he wrote, that executions of the Landsberg prisoners “would disturb our sensitive discussions about the incorporation of the Federal Republic into a European and Atlantic community.”<sup>9</sup>

In a firm, at times sharp response the following week, McCloy dismissed warningsCor threatsCthat German integration into a western alliance would be threatened by punishment of convicted war criminals.<sup>10</sup> As he had with Adenauer, he reminded Heuss that the Landsberg decisions were the result of a long and careful study by himself and “very distinguished” American advisers. There had been “no subject on which I have spent so much time and thought since I have been in Germany.” He was “very glad” to have been able to find “a basis for very extensive grants of clemency.” But there were “some crimes the extent and enormity of which belie the concept of clemency” involving the “murder of helpless women and children by the tens of thousands under circumstances which we would not credit were it not for the contemporaneous reports of the perpetrators themselves and their own admissions.” The German people, McCloy continued, could not “possibly associate the interests of such criminals with their own.” McCloy wished that the German government and people “had a wider concept of the crimes which are represented by many of those at Landsberg.” The letters he had received from Germans pleading for clemency displayed “the most abysmal ignorance of both the offenses and the character of the proof of the guilt, which prevails in respect of them.”<sup>11</sup> Despite this very sharp response from McCloy, Heuss did not speak out forcefully in

the next eight years as *Bundespräsident* in favor of a more vigorous program of “German justice.”

Nothing displayed the limits of Heussian *Kulturpolitik* more clearly than the gap between his verbal advocacy of memory of past Nazi crimes and his refusal to support an early and vigorous program of judicial prosecution. Cultural politics did not extend to judicial activism.

He did, however, place the destruction of European Jewry at the center of the meaning of memory of the Nazi past. Heuss delivered his most important speech regarding the Nazi past at memorial ceremonies in Bergen-Belsen on November 29-30, 1952.

One of his most important decisions was to invite Nahum Goldmann to deliver a speech at the ceremonies. Goldmann’s speech offered the fullest account of the Holocaust presented at a political memorial ceremony in the first postwar decade in West Germany.

In its recollection of the eastern geography of the Holocaust, Goldmann’s speech offered a dissonant theme in official *Kulturpolitik*. In Bergen-Belsen, the memory of the Holocaust became part of West German *Kulturpolitik* during the months in which advocates of such memory in East Germany fled into exile or were purged and jailed in the “anti-cosmopolitan campaign.” Implicitly, this memory drew attention to the totality of the Nazi war on the eastern front in World War II, that is, to the millions of Nazism’s non-Jewish victims. Yet a major aspect of the history of divided memory between the two Germanys was also the fragmentation of memory within each. In the Federal Republic the memory of the Holocaust was on the whole separated from that of the Nazi war on the eastern Front and the deaths of millions of non-Jewish victims.

That said, it was by no means a foregone conclusion that the memory of Jewish persecution would become significant in West German official memory. Heuss’s speech in Bergen-Belsen, “No one will ever lift this shame from us” (“*Diese Scham nimmt uns niemand ab!*”) was the most extensive public reflection to come from a leading official of the West German government regarding the crimes of the Nazi era. He called on postwar Germans “to face the full horror of the crimes that Germans committed here” and rejected claims that the Germans did not know anything about the crimes taking place.<sup>12</sup> He rejected efforts at exculpation by pointing to the alleged misdeeds of others. Such balancing of accounts “endangers the clear, honorable feeling for the fatherland of everyone who consciously knows our history” and faces up to it. Violence and injustice were not things to “be used for mutual compensation.”<sup>13</sup>

To those who saw German history as a direct path “from Luther to Hitler,” Heuss responded with a moral and historical argument. Precisely because Germany possessed the moral resources and the multiple historical continuity to

have prevented genocide, yet failed to draw on them, “no one lift this shame from us [the Germans].” The shame would never be lifted above all because the Germans themselves, not only or primarily censorious foreigners, understood that Nazism represented a departure from the civilized morality that was also a part of German history. For Heuss, the moral imperative to recall the crimes of the Nazi era was not a burden imposed by the occupiers and victors but an imperative demanded by the better traditions of a still existing “other Germany.”

Heussian cultural politics of memory dispensed with efforts to find happy endings. As a cultural politician he adopted a pose of Hölderlin’s “holy sobriety” (“*heilige Nüchternheit*”). There had been German doctors and nurses who, driven by shame, morality and duty cared for the survivors of Bergen-Belsen in Spring and early Summer 1945, often at the risk of their own health. This manifestation of goodness and justice was “indeed a consolation.” Yet, that was hardly sufficient to end on an uplifting note. Contrary to Rousseau’s assumptions about the goodness of human nature, “we have learned that the world is more complicated than the theses of moralizing literati” suggest.<sup>14</sup>

Those who focus on the discrepancy between Heuss’ words and Adenauer’s deeds, and in so doing conclude that the former was a cynical use of cultural capital to legitimate political expedience, forget that in the Federal Republic of the 1950s even this verbal *Kulturpolitik* fell on many unsympathetic ears. The memory of the Holocaust, no matter how separated from the totality of the eastern front, did not fit the mentality of the early Cold War. In this sense, *Kulturpolitik* in the Heussian mold struck a dissonant and discomfiting note. Cultural politics at the official level is about the presentation of symbols, images and words. Adenauer had the good sense to leave these matters to Heuss.

One way of thinking about the cultural politics of the Bitburg disaster in 1985 is to view it as an attempt by Adenauer’s heir, Helmut Kohl, to behave like an American president and to try to become master of cultural ceremonies, as well as an effective locus of power. Another way it was seen was that Kohl sought to displace the Heussian tradition of commemorative symbolism with cultural politics that too bluntly and unabashedly expressed some classic themes drawn from Adenauer. However, Kohl went further. Where Adenauer had spoken of the honor of German soldiers in World War II, Kohl asked an American president to share the sentiment. Where Adenauer had found common cause with American anti-communism, Kohl sought reconciliation between victors and vanquished in the form of the western alliance. Unfortunately, in contrast to John J. McCloy in the early 1950s, Ronald Reagan did not remind Kohl that American-West German relations did not and ought not to rest on forgetting the crimes of the Nazi past or on offering sentimental fictions about

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the victim status of the *Wehrmacht* and the SS. As a result, Reagan placed himself in the absurd position of honoring soldiers who fought for Nazi Germany supposedly in order to help an ally in the Atlantic alliance, an alliance which had its origins in the war against Nazism. In the decade preceding the Bitburg incident, Kohl had been a persistent critic of the tendency to obscure the moral and political differences between the Soviet Union and the West. The Bitburg symbolism also was a projection of the doctrine of moral equivalence back into the past. If members of the *Waffen SS* were innocent, then what meaningful distinction could be made between perpetrators of crimes and victims in the Nazi era? Bitburg opened such deep wounds in part because it offered a wholly untenable choice: either recollection of the Holocaust and the race war waged by the *Wehrmacht*, the SS and the *Waffen SS*, or one celebrated the western alliance and displaced the realities of the Nazi era in a fog of manipulative sentimentalism. If going to Bitburg was an expression of friendship, was memory of the distinction between perpetrators and victims an expression of anti-German sentiment? Kohl's policy and the popular support he received in West Germany seemed to offer symbolic confirmation of an unbroken continuity between the *Wehrmacht*'s war against the Soviet Union, and the Cold War that followed. Was this not what communist propaganda about "Nazis in Bonn" had been saying for decades?

Reagan's Bitburg comments were noteworthy for their ignorance, sentimentalism and cynicism. He said nothing about what not only the *Waffen SS*, but also the SS and the German army, had actually done in Europe during World War II.<sup>15</sup> He said that "we who were enemies are now friends; we who were bitter adversaries are now the strongest of allies." This dangerous half-truth ignored the links between the United States and those Germans, such as Adenauer, Brandt, Reuter, Heuss, and Schumacher who had been "bitter adversaries" of the Nazis, not the Allies. Further, it presented as a great accomplishment one of the most regrettable aspects of the formation of the western alliance, namely the failure to purge the West German establishment more deeply in the postwar decade.<sup>16</sup> Reagan appeared to echo the communist claim that after 1945 the western allies actually did ally with ex-Nazis in order to form a new anti-Soviet alliance, and that therefore the western alliance rested on a shaky moral foundation of amnesia and denial of justice. In the history of the Cold War, no American president had understood the links between memory and politics as poorly as Reagan did in Bitburg.

In the Adenauer era, Theodor Heuss used the pulpit of the *Bundespräsident* to counter the pressures to place a distorted image of the past in the service of present politics. In the Kohl era President Richard von Weizsäcker used the

same pulpit to reinvigorate the Heussian traditions of West German national political retrospection.

The reassertion of the Heussian tradition in the office of the presidency began with Richard von Weizsäcker's soon world-famous speech in the *Bundestag* on May 8, 1985 in ceremonies marking the fortieth anniversary of the end of World War II. As this audience knows, it was the most important speech about the crimes of the Nazi era delivered in the national political arena since Heuss' address in Bergen-Belsen in November 1952. Delivered only three days after the Bitburg ceremony, it dispensed with sentimentalism and manipulative public relations.<sup>17</sup>

The central theme of Weizsäcker's speech was the need for Germans to "look truth straight in the eyeCwithout embellishment or distortion."<sup>18</sup> Whatever Germans believed before May 8, 1945, after that date it was clear that they "had served the inhuman goals of a criminal regime." Hence, May 8, 1945 represented defeat of the Nazi Germany, as well as "a day of liberation" from "the inhumanity and tyranny of the National Socialist regime." In response to Germans who regarded May 8, 1945 as the beginning of flight, expulsion and dictatorship in the East, von Weizsäcker insisted that the cause of Germans' postwar problems "goes back to the start of the tyranny that brought about war. We must not separate May 8, 1945, from January 30, 1933."<sup>19</sup>

Rather than remember the sufferings of one group at the expense of another, he urged Germans to mourn for "all the dead of the war and the tyranny."<sup>20</sup> He listed the victims in the following order: six million Jews; "countless citizens of the Soviet Union and Poland;" German soldiers, German citizens killed in air raids, captivity or during expulsion; the Sinti and Gypsies; the homosexuals and mentally ill; those killed due to their religious or political beliefs; hostages; members of resistance movements in countries "in all countries occupied by us" and also "the victims of the German resistanceCamong the public, the military, the churches, the workers and trade unions, and the Communists."<sup>21</sup> This was the most comprehensive listing yet made by a West German chancellor of the *Bundespräsident* of the victims of Nazism, and was one that crossed the Cold War fault lines which had a distorted memory in Bitburg.

The narrative structure of the speech dispensed with a happy ending, whether it is Ulbricht victorious socialism in Sachsenhausen in 1961, or the reconciliation of former enemies of Reagan and Kohl in Bitburg. Memory meant the ability to mourn and to grieve about "the endless army of the dead" and the suffering of those who survived.<sup>22</sup> Like Heuss, Weizsäcker presented a most un-Hegelian narrative of unredeemed suffering and tragedy. Where the experience of women had been either absent or incorporated into heroic archetypes in

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most postwar political reflection on the Nazi past, Weizsäcker spoke of “their suffering, renunciation and silent strength which are all too easily forgotten by history. In the years of darkness, they ensured that the light of humanity was not extinguished.”<sup>23</sup>

He then dealt with the Jewish catastrophe and with what the Germans had known and not known about it: “At the root of the tyranny was Hitler’s immeasurable hatred against our Jewish compatriots.”<sup>24</sup> While hardly any country was free of violence in its history, “the genocide of the Jews is, however, unparalleled in history.”<sup>25</sup> Though “the perpetuation of this crime was in the hands of a few people” and was concealed from the public, “every German was able to experience what his Jewish compatriots had to suffer, ranging from plain apathy and hidden intolerance to outright hatred. Who could remain unsuspecting” after the persecutions of the Jews in the 1930s. Anyone who “opened his eyes and ears and sought information could not fail to notice that the Jews were being deported.” Weizsäcker’s rejection of Germans’ claims of lack of knowledge and ignorance contrasted to the symbolism of Bitburg which presented Germans, even members of the SS, as victims of the Nazi regime. In place of the distancing reference to crimes committed “in the name of Germany,” Weizsäcker used the first person plural “we” and “us.” Despite this forthrightness, his narrative remained one without subjects, and of crimes without specified perpetrators.

His acknowledgment of collective responsibility did not mean acceptance of collective guilt. “There is,” he said, “no such thing as the guilt or innocence of an entire nation. Guilt is, like innocence, not collective, but personal.”<sup>26</sup> The young could not profess guilt “for crimes that they did not commit. No discerning person can expect them to wear a penitential robe simply because they are Germans.” But they did have a responsibility to “keep alive the memories . . . anyone who closes his eyes to the past is blind to the present. Whoever refuses to remember the inhumanity is prone to new risks of infection.”<sup>27</sup> Remembering the past was both a moral obligation, as well as a political necessity. Furthermore, no matter what the Germans remembered, “the Jewish nation remembers and will always remember. We seek reconciliation . . . there can be no reconciliation without remembrance.”<sup>28</sup> Reconciliation with “the Jewish nation” had to pass through memory of the Holocaust.

As the dispute over the euromissiles had recently demonstrated, in West German political culture, with a few exceptions, the lessons of genocide at Auschwitz and appeasement in Munich had been neatly apportioned between left and right. Weizsäcker brought together the memories of appeasement in the 1930s with those of genocide and war in the 1940s. Though he stressed that Hitler had been “the driving force” on the road to disaster, he recalled the

failure of the western powers to stop Hitler, as well as the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union in 1939. Yet, while some West German politicians had pointed to these episodes to point the finger of blame at others, Weizsäcker emphasized that the failures of the other powers “does not mitigate Germany’s responsibility for the outbreak of the Second World War.” Moreover, he traced the postwar division of Germany to the policies of Nazi Germany. Though events following 1945 cemented the division of Europe and Germany, “without the war started by Hitler it [the division] would not have happened at all.”<sup>29</sup> Weizsäcker’s speech showed the impact of Brandt’s challenge to the political culture of the Adenauer era. By insisting that May 8, 1945 must not be separated from January 30, 1933, Weizsäcker placed postwar history into a longer chronological causal sequence. Given the extent to which he generally broke with the limits of divided memory of West German conservatism his speech included an odd lapse. He saw a parallel between the “the arbitrariness of destruction” during the war with the “arbitrary distribution of burdens” afterwards.<sup>30</sup> Yet neither the Nazi attack on European Jewry and the racially driven assault on the “subhumans” of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union nor the hatred and revenge directed at ethnic Germans in the last months of the war and the postwar months and years were arbitrary. Both, as Theodor Heuss foresaw in 1932 in *Hitlers Weg*, were the products of the anti-Semitic and racist policies of the Nazi regime. That said, the speech was a remarkable effort to “look at the truth straight in the eye.”<sup>31</sup>

Weizsäcker challenged those who would interpret the Nazi era primarily through the prism of the Cold War or the resentments of a new German nationalism. He named the Nazis’ victims, and included the Communists within the anti-Nazi resistance. He asserted that many Germans knew that genocide was taking place and that too many members of his own generation either remained silent or refused to learn more about what was occurring. He stressed that the postwar division of Europe and Germany had its roots in the Nazi seizure of power and World War II, and called May 8, 1945 a day of liberation. These assertions angered and provoked some West German conservatives.<sup>32</sup> However, especially because it came only days after Bitburg, the response to Weizsäcker’s speech both in West Germany and abroad was overwhelmingly favorable.

## CONCLUSION

Not every speech of Heuss or von Weizsäcker, not to mention some of their less distinguished successors and predecessors, urged postwar Germans to look the truth straight in the eye. Yet in Bergen-Belsen and on May 8, 1985 in the

*Bundestag* and not only then these two *Bundespräsidenten* illustrated how the traditions of West German *Kulturpolitik* came into conflict with the spirit and practice of practical politics. In the midst of the Adenauer restoration and of the post-*Nachrüstungsbeschluss* euphoria, memory of the Holocaust was an inconvenient theme for chancellors focused on building and sustaining domestic support for the western alliance. The fact that neither Heuss nor von Weizsäcker was seeking votes, and that Heuss had established as part of the office a tradition of memory, put these two *Bundespräsidenten* at odds with the two respective chancellors. In these two instances, *Kulturpolitik*, rather than legitimate current politics proved to be an irritating and dissonant note. I see them as examples of the weight of autonomous cultural traditions at odds with the demands of political expediency.

Since 1989, I am struck that despite unification, and neo-Nazi violence, the appeals of a new intellectual right to “at last” displace the memory of the Holocaust from its central place in German memory has failed. President Herzog, who entered office urging Germans to be more relaxed *unverkrampt* about the past, spoke the language of Heussian orthodoxy during the ceremonies marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. In recent years debates over the proposed memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin have been less over whether or not to have a memorial to the Jews but whether it should also include non-Jewish victims. The crimes of Nazi Germany were unique but so too is the tradition of official reflection on those crimes in post-war West Germany. Had the *Bundespräsidenten* been concerned above all with political expediency, they did not need to bother with reflections about the Holocaust. On balance, this aspect of *Kulturpolitik* was more an irritant and discordant note than a clever legitimating formula. That it was only that and not the possessor of the additional power of which Thomas Mann spoke reflected the limits on facing the past established by majority sentiment throughout the Federal Republic’s history.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Mann to Theodor Heuss, June 8, 1955 and Theodor Heuss to Thomas Mann, June 3, 1955. BA Koblenz, B122 195. “Sie haben sich in dieser Sache auf meine Seite gestellt, und das ist so sehr charakteristisch für die Großzügigkeit, Tapferkeit und Weitsicht Ihres Wesens und Geistes, daß ich versucht bin, Sie mit dem Wort zu grüßen, das die Amerikaner ihren Lieblingsstaatsmännern zurufen: ‘More Power to You!’”

<sup>2</sup> Theodor Heuss, “Mut zur Liebe,” BA Koblenz NL Theodor Heuss B122 2886.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>6</sup> Theodor Heuss, "Akademische Festrede des Bundespräsidenten Professor Dr. Heuss," BA Koblenz NL Theodor Heuss B122, 2886, 1-10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>8</sup> For the Heuss-Adorno correspondence see BA Koblenz NL Theodor Heuss B122 306; Heuss-Baeck B122 2083; Theodor Heuss-Martin Buber B122 2056; Theodor Heuss-Alfred Döblin B122 2057; Theodor Heuss-Max Horkheimer B122 2059 and B122 361; Theodor Heuss-Thomas Mann, B122 195; Theodor Heuss-Karl Marx B122 2086.

<sup>9</sup> Theodor Heuss to John J. McCloy (January 16, 1951), 1-2, BA Koblenz NL Theodor Heuss B122 644. For the exchanges between Theodor Heuss to Thomas T. Handy of February and March 1951 on the Landsberg matter also see BA Koblenz NL Theodor Heuss B122 644, especially Theodor Heuss to Thomas T. Handy (February 23, 1951).

<sup>10</sup> John J. McCloy to Theodor Heuss (January 24, 1951).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 1655.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1656. For a recent criticism of efforts to find a redemptive meaning in the Holocaust see Lawrence L. Langer, *Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Remarks of President Reagan at Bitburg Air Base, May 5, 1985," in Geoffrey H. Hartman, ed. *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 258-61.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 259. Also see "'Wir waren Feinde, wir sind jetzt Freunde,' Kohl und Reagan in Bergen-Belsen und Bitburg," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (May 6, 1985), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Richard von Weizsäcker, "Speech by Richard von Weizsäcker, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, in the Bundestag during the Ceremony Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the End of the War in Europe and of National Socialist Tyranny, May 8, 1945," Geoffrey Hartman, ed. *Bitburg*, op. cit., 262-73; and Richard von Weizsäcker, "Der 8. Mai 1945—40 Jahre danach," in Richard von Weizsäcker, *Von Deutschland aus: Reden des Bundespräsidenten* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), 9-36.

<sup>18</sup> Richard von Weizsäcker, "Speech by Richard von Weizsäcker...May 8, 1945," op. cit. 262.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 263-64. On politics and the memory of the German Resistance see David Clay Large, "'A Beacon in the German Darkness': The Anti-Nazi Resistance Legacy in West German Politics," in Michael Geyer and John W. Boyer, eds., *Resistance Against the Third Reich, 1933-1990* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Jeffrey Herf, "German Communism, the Discourse of 'Antifascist Resistance,' and the Jewish Catastrophe," op cit.

<sup>22</sup> Richard von Weizsäcker, "Speech . . .," in *Bitburg*, op. cit., 264.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 265-66.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 267.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 267.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>32</sup> Norbert Seitz, "Bemühter Umgang: 50 Jahre 8. Mai Keine deutsche Pathologie," *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (April 15, 1995).

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## THE STATE OF THE *KULTURSTAAT*: IDEAS, THESES AND FACTS FROM A GERMAN AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

Andreas Johannes Wiesand<sup>1</sup>

If the *Zentrum für Kulturforschung* (Center for Cultural Research), which I am directing in Bonn, were located in France, it would probably be acting as a documentation, research and planning department of the Ministry of Culture; indeed our partner institutes in France, Sweden, Italy, and other countries form part of the state administration. Yet, located in a federal state<sup>C</sup> founded almost thirty years ago by the news magazine *Der Spiegel*<sup>Cit</sup> is a private institution.

This difference in orientation as a private rather than public body, fortunately, did not prevent us from closely cooperating in a network called CIRCLE or from beginning to develop plans for a common European research institute concentrating on comparative cultural policy, and artistic as well as cultural development at large. Today, the support of the ERIC<sup>Arts</sup>-Institute is expanding and its Scientific Council is proud to claim some seventy members in twenty-four European countries.<sup>2</sup> Personally, I have also been working with many different German and European bodies on an honorary basis, such as Secretary General (over ten years) of the German Arts Council, which is an advocacy platform, assembling some 200 national arts and media organizations.

### ***KULTURSTAAT IS NOT STAATSKULTUR***

This cooperation between public institutions and private individuals or institutes in the cultural field easily demonstrates my thesis that associating the German cultural system, as is often done, with a strictly state-run and state-financed *Kulturstaat* is far from reality.

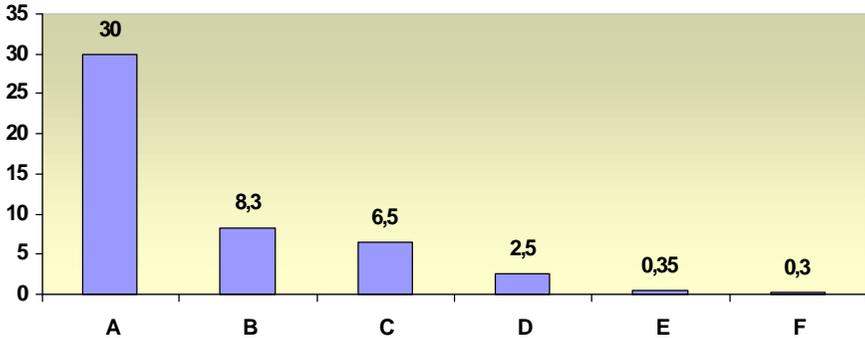
In fact, despite the involvement of state or local public institutions in the cultural field, there are a number of private firms, associations or foundations and dedicated individuals, especially writers, whose influence on cultural developments has been felt more strongly during the past forty years in Germany than probably that of an average minister for culture in one of our *Länder* states<sup>Cin</sup> in this respect, let me just mention Heinrich Böll or Günter Grass.

It would be just as inappropriate for us to only consider the work of subsidized public bodies as contributing to what is commonly labeled “culture.” On the contrary: if one really wants to use the “money argument” in such a case, the state share of all money spent in the broad field of cultural life might be merely 15 percent, depending on how one defines that field and the involvement of the population in it (cf. *figure 1*).

**Fig. 1: Consumers and the Public Purse:  
Financing Arts and Heritage in Germany  
Cultural Industries and the Media – State and Local Communities  
Citizens Initiatives and Sponsors**

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Legend:



A: Turnover of arts & culture industries (book publishing and trade, film, art galleries, designers, private music and theatre production, etc.): the figure includes an estimated 10 percent for branches not sufficiently covered by the official turnover statistics;

B: Public budgets for the arts, heritage and libraries, including scientific museums and libraries as well as 50 percent of public expenditure for adult education – ca. 1 billion EURO of entrance fees and other “earned income” of public arts institutions is also included in the figure;

C: Public broadcasting (ARD/ZDF) – ca. 90 percent from audience fees;

D: Turnover of independent artists/authors;

E: Private donations and sponsoring in the arts (estimates of ifo-Institute and other sources range between 800 and 500 million DM);

F: Updated ZfKf-estimate of the value of qualified voluntary work in the cultural field;

Source: Compiled/evaluated by ZfKf and ARKStat 1998 (in billion EURO – most data are from 1995-7, categories E and F are estimates based on earlier statistics or different empirical studies. Taking account of a slight, not exactly quantifiable overlap between some of the categories, they should normally not be added).

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Figures under A include design or architecture bureaus, musical instrument production and a few smaller sectors that might not be considered in a more restricted definition of “culture.” They do not include private media activities, e.g., newspapers, audiovisual consumer electronics, most craftsmen etc. We can see that the reign of the consumer has not spared the German *Kulturstaat*, despite the fact that even Americans sometimes see it as a kind of cultural paradise thanks to public funding. At the Leipzig forum organized by AICGS together with German funding bodies in May 1996, it was Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, director of the U.S. President’s Committee on the Arts and

the Humanities, who said that she was occasionally envious of the German system of public arts funding.<sup>3</sup>

As mentioned later, this envy may have been somewhat premature. We should keep in mind that in some cultural fields, private or commercial activities, as well as independent bodies now often called “third sector,” in terms that are almost too broad have been of great significance for cultural development within our society. Rowohlt Publishing House, to mention one example, which also happened to be the starting point of my own career, became almost legendary in the postwar days for its creative marketing of Faulkner, Steinbeck, Albert Camus, and other literary heroes from a world of spiritual leadership which had been suppressed during the Nazi period. To escape the paper shortage, Rowohlt printed their works in the form of newspapers, in many cases with more than 250,000 copies per title (*rowohlts rotations romane*).

It follows that private initiatives, though they normally cannot compensate for a shortage of public financial support, are not only interesting because of their ever-increasing turnovers but also because of their original contributions towards more diversity in the arts and media spheres. In contrast with variety as a far more common denominator, these days it is essential to examine diversity from both artistic and literary production, as well as from the impact of cultural participation of smaller and larger segments of the population. In fact, diversity in this sense is essential to cultural productivity which, in my view, can contribute more to the strength of cultural life in a certain country than high figures on public funding.

By this I do not want to minimize the 16 or 17 billion DM institutional support and seed money which are presently spent annually by the different sectors of public administration at the local, regional and national level and where the latter accounts only for some 5 percent while the local government contribution equals roughly 60 percent. Actually, the *Bund*, our federal authorities, played a larger role during the years immediately following unification in which they paid up to 10 percent of the nation’s public arts and heritage expenses with the consent of the *Länder*.

## 2. HISTORICAL ASSETS AND BURDENS

Let me now briefly address the term and meaning of *Kulturstaat* which forms the basis of our discussion at this conference. What does this word mean, how is it to be defined? The following statement by an insider will help us in the definition: Our former federal minister for cultural affairs, Werner Maihofer, once pointed out that the idea of the state has always been understood, from the times of Plato’s Republic to the Renaissance, as that of a cul-

tural state, a *Kulturstaat*.<sup>4</sup> No doubt, this statement, deliberately abridged, requires further explanation for several reasons:

- First: We really never had—and still do not have—a full-fledged federal minister for cultural affairs like in France or Sweden. Even the fall 1998 elections did not produce such radical changes, as shown later. Even the rather modest cultural competence exercised alongside their main responsibilities by some federal ministries was constantly questioned by legalists from the *Länder*, the German states. As in the case of Maihofer, the federal ministers in charge of the interior took responsibility for the majority of cultural duties as spelled out or tolerated in our constitution. However, at the same time, these ministers were also in charge of law enforcement, immigration and similar matters and hence received their nickname *Polizeiminister*. In 1998, the not always open debate about the need for a Federal Ministry of Culture in Germany was newly revived. This revival was mainly due to the failure of the federal government, particularly Chancellor Helmut Kohl himself, and the *Länder* to reach an agreement on the future director-general of the largest German public foundation in the cultural field, the *Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz*.<sup>5</sup> The debate over whether or not this gap should be closed was then re-opened. Even I had the “privilege” to discover in an art magazine,<sup>6</sup> that I had been named as a mock candidate for the proposed new ministerial post, together with thirty-nine other poor souls.
- Second: Maihofer, in his text, added a word that I had omitted before. He spoke about a definition or an understanding of the state as being *auch Kulturstaat*, which means: in addition to other functions or tasks. Some cultural aspects, namely the binding forces of tradition and, perhaps, new inventions in some of the less frivolous arts, as well as in architecture, played an important role in the former conceptions of a perfect state.
- Third: Maihofer referred not to a general consensus about the *Kulturstaat* in pre-modern times, but to a vaguely defined stream of philosophical and political thinking, for which he named just three examples. One of which was the Swiss Jacob Burckhardt, who once explained the idea and reality of the “*klassischer Kulturstaat*” as that of an original unity of State, religion and culture.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, it was this same Burckhardt who has, in another masterpiece, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860), actually demonstrated with the examples of the larger and smaller feudal dynasties—from the Visconti

and Sforza to the Gonzaga, Este or Malatesta that one could rightfully label them tyrannies in all possible meanings of that word. I am sure that this is not exactly what political correctness these days would accept as the ideal of the *Kulturstaat*, or is it? Burckhardt made his point even more clear when he chose as the title for his first chapter: *Der Staat als Kunstwerk* (The State as a Work of Art), thus referring to the unrestricted power of the tyrant to shape the State and with it society and each individual subordinate citizen in any way he wanted, similar to an artist.

- Final comment: After what I just pointed out, the quoted part of Maihofer's statement and its reference to words like Culture or *Kulturstaat*, the ones with a capital C or K, have little to do with our present-day understanding of both arts and cultural policy. It has even less to do with those provocations some artists and even NEA-jurors like to trigger in America every once in a while in order to shock a mainly conservative Congress.

This is exactly one of the major points Maihofer, in his meaningful paper on the "Cultural Obligations of the Modern State," was trying to make. He wanted to identify an almost natural barrier between the autocratic and a possible modern understanding of the *Kulturstaat* (giving to the latter a meaning which can be summarized as follows: proper relations between the state and cultural life exist where cultural pluralism and artistic freedom is guaranteed, also materially, and where the citizens are encouraged to make use of the resulting benefits). This view contradicts Ernst Rudolf Huber, the main advocate for the concept and term of *Kulturstaat*. In his understanding, much in line with the *Hegelian* tradition of the *Ordnungsstaat* and based also on Arnold Gehlen's definition of culture as shaping nature towards what is good for man's life, the state has a dominant role not only in securing but also in providing the main cultural supply to achieve greater homogeneity of a country.<sup>8</sup>

Maihofer found Huber's position highly questionable and confronted it with what he called a "universal and human concept of culture," along the lines of Kant and others, asking the individual to make full use of his freedom, but also be aware of his responsibility to use this freedom in the right way, that is: not to interfere with the freedom of others to do likewise.

As you might imagine, such concepts did not develop easily after World War II, since many of those responsible for the legal framework or those working in the main courts had learned or exercised their profession in the former regime. The road toward an enlightened definition of the state's role in culture

was indeed rough since it had, with common concepts of the omnipotent state, to pass some ideological hurdles which had prevailed for fifteen years during the Weimar Republic and even earlier. I can highlight this with an example, which you may at first find strange. The director of the statistical office of the *Land Thüringen* described the rather empirical domain of *Kulturstatistik* in his book on cultural statistics of 1928<sup>9</sup> in the following way:

The care of the spiritual and intellectual life (*Pflege des geistigen Lebens*), including education and *Bildung*; which also included theater, libraries etc.

The care of the psychic and moral life (*Pflege des seelischen Lebens*), including religious matters,

The care of the physical life (*Pflege des körperlichen Lebens*), including medical care, sports;

The administration and political life, including the legal system, defense, elections etc.

This is not too far from the all-encompassing Renaissance definition of *Kulturstaat*, since statistics, at the time, were produced mainly as working tools for public administrators and politicians. However, there was a major weakness in such a worldview: The **real** social and cultural conditions in Germany and other parts of Europe had gone in a much different direction, approaching the ideas of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill which inspired pieces like *Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*. A somewhat more pragmatic but still very instrumental and even etatistic view of the role of the state in culture was developed around the time of the Prussian cultural minister, Carl H. Becker (I believe he was a Social Democrat!), who stated:

Cultural policy means the deliberate utilization of spiritual values in the service of the people and the state to achieve internal stability and for the external dealings with other peoples.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. NEW LEGAL APPROACHES

In the emerging German democracy after the war it was Thomas Oppermann who,<sup>11</sup> shortly after Huber, paved the way to a modern understanding of public cultural administration, which approaches the ideas Maihofer was envisaging some twenty years later. Oppermann made the distinction that, while normally under the so-called *Eingriffsverwaltung* the state would exercise its power in many fields like police functions, regulating traffic or managing

water supply, such behavior would seem highly inappropriate in the cultural field. Here, the role of the state would have to be defined, according to Thomas Oppermann, in the form of a so-called *Leistungsverwaltung*; whereby the state organizes its tools and rules in order that the cultural or scientific life may freely develop. This view of a different, but active role of the state and state administration in the cultural field as compared to other important state functions, began to influence public life, as well as jurisdiction up until the late 1980s when it became firmly established.

Actually, it was already in March 1974 when the idea of the *Kulturstaat* left the sphere of academic reasoning and found legal ground. In German cultural and media policy, this reasoning seldom derives from legislation, instead it is usually found in judgments of the Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*).<sup>12</sup> For example, in 1974 the court had to directly tackle the question of cultural funding and administration regarding the question of whether phonographic recordings should be given the same tax advantagesChalf rate in the VATCattributed to books and the press. This was denied, but it was upheld that cultural administration and public funding remained an obligation of a state as a *Kulturstaat*, as it was referred to in this ruling. However, the state was to maintain its important role to protect cultural freedom and promote quality and pluralism.

The court has also, in other rulings mainly concerning broadcasting, extended the responsibilities of the state to include securing a “basic supply” (*Grundversorgung*) of qualified information, knowledge and aesthetic or historical values to all citizens via institutions and initiatives, including the media, which are divided in our country between a strong public (in most cases not state-driven!) and the private sector. In this respect, market forces alone were not considered sufficient.

It seems almost logical that this plurality can be furthered by decentralization in the cultural field. However, the *Länder* were by no means the only institutional level to which such rulings had been directed. In fact, the above-mentioned tax case of 1973 involved the federal government. Today it would probably have also concerned the European Community, which now has some say in the harmonization of VAT and other trade-related taxes. As we can see, there have been serious efforts made towards a practical definition of what *Kulturstaat* actually means, including the responsibilities of central, regional and local authorities required to bring it to life.

Only once in a while, some *Länder* representatives verbally contest such a balance of power in political or legal declarations. The *Länder* representatives claim, in view of increasing cultural activities of the federal government and European bodies, a so-called “*Kulturhoheit*,” which would reserve, only for

themselves, the right to represent and shape the *Kulturstaat*. This is an almost hopeless effort to regain lost territories, since the increasing Europeanization or globalization of competences and markets forbid any provincialism as does the broader outlook of most individual artists and authors.

The prevailing pragmatism did not prevent an eminent as well as adventurous law professor like Peter Häberle from Bayreuth University from defining, once again, the whole legal system as being closely connected with cultural developments at large.<sup>13</sup> However, the perspective was now quite different than it had been fifty years earlier; the democratic constitutional state as such was now hailed as a major cultural achievement, which was quite a change in German academic reasoning. For Häberle it was only logical to develop this approach further into what he called *Kulturelle Verfassungslehre*, where such topics as cultural freedom, educational values, cultural pluralism, and the *kulturelle Bundesstaat*, the concept of federative cultural cooperation, required examination and further development.

But then the unexpected happened—German unification—and suddenly such a pragmatic understanding did not suffice. Artists and intellectuals of the former German Democratic Republic, among them several from previously privileged positions, demanded a so-called “*Kulturpflicht*,” a far-reaching obligation of the state to fund cultural institutions and their staff as part of a new constitutional framework. This did not happen. However, in 1990, Article 35.1 of the Unification Treaty (*Einigungsvertrag*) between the GDR and FRG included a popular phrase of some politicians—I might mention Wolfgang Schäuble, now chair of the Christian Democrats—which claimed that culture had been, for more than forty years, “*das einigende Band der Nation*”:

During the years of separation, the arts and culture have remained—despite different developments in the two German states—the basis of continuing unity of the German nation.

#### 4. CHALLENGES TO THE *KULTURSTAAT*

Instead of extending the discussions about *Kulturstaat* or *Kulturnation* from the viewpoint of legal experts, I will analyze how such concepts work in the field of cultural policy and in concrete institutional or project environments, and what can be done to improve their implementation. There have, in fact, been different efforts to modernize the concept of *Kulturstaat*. In the last ten to fifteen years, there have been efforts to re-label it as a so-called *Kulturgesellschaft* (cultural society). In the late 1980s we were even approached by the office of the chancellor to undertake a study about this seemingly new

and more open-minded concept which has not left decisive marks on the cultural scene. However, if taken seriously, it should have totally changed the approach towards cultural developments, especially among bureaucrats. Instead of spending their time administering mainly a few local or state-owned arts institutions, state administrators would have to give such institutions greater autonomy and concentrate on the facilitation of “intersectoral tasks” such as linking artistic and cultural policy issues with numerous other political, social or economic fields of action. In addition, they could have increased the number of independent arts and artists initiatives on their funding lists and claimed their role as innovators. In the end, we had to put a question mark behind the title of our book on the proposed *Kulturgesellschaft*.<sup>14</sup>

In the mid-1980s the term *Kulturgesellschaft* was indeed used by many different fractions of the political life, by the ruling Christian Democratic Party and their Secretary General Heiner Geissler, for example, as well as by the Greens. The term also appeared in the draft of a new manifesto of the Social Democratic Party. These few examples show that such a term would face quite a few conflicting interests, so it was no surprise that it could not really survive in the political arena. Among the heatedly debated questions since the mid-1960s was that of artists’ participation in the process of arts funding. During the 1980s, a controversy arose between representatives of the arts community and the so-called Arts Foundation of the States (*Kulturstiftung der Länder*). This institution was created fifteen years ago by the federal states but, in fact, it is the participation of central government which provides a large part of the money for the foundation and thus influences many of the activities, among them the *Deutsche Literaturfonds* and the *Kunstfonds*. These are examples of national funds, with a high degree of autonomy, which, until now, have been run mainly by the major associations of the literature/book market or the fine art scene. The funding strategy and the major decisions of this Foundation are, however, firmly in the hands of *Länder* officials which have found some kind of revolving mechanism to address their different interests, e.g., when important historical pieces of art are bought and distributed among German museums.

The German Arts Council, in particular, found it inconceivable that only bureaucrats and politicians were entitled to make real decisions in this important and beneficial foundation, especially considering the clause of “freedom for the arts” (*Kunstfreiheitsgarantie*) in the German Constitution. Of course, the foundation has a Board (*Kuratorium*); however, it has been condemned to merely an advisory role. Such practice also contradicts a long record of public arts funding administered by specialist boards, juries, arts associations, and other non-governmental decision-makers. Important national arts foundations

in other countries, e.g., the *Pro Helvetia* in Switzerland or federal and state endowments in the U.S., provide good examples of how to handle this question more sensibly. I admit that concern for this issue is more a matter of principle which may very well be occasionally contradicted by reality. I do not want to glorify writers and artists in their role as decision-makers when it comes to selecting colleagues (or dismissing others!) since, in many cases, they would probably not perform better than dedicated bureaucrats or other experts. But when it comes to setting guidelines for arts funding or deciding on budgets influencing artistic careers, artists' participation should seriously be considered.

The European unification process is another area where the concept of *Kulturstaat* could have led to reforms. We are living in a culture, which is on its way to Europe. One should be aware that some of the old definitions at least the term of *Kulturstaat* show quite clearly that we are still bound to the nation-state, while real life has gone beyond state boundaries. This becomes obvious if we look at some of the developments in contemporary art, in the music industry and in much of the TV-programming; advanced artists and those working in the culture industries are no longer bound to national or regional frontiers. Therefore, new definitions should develop without losing track of the basic *Kulturstaat*-idea of public bodies be they local, regional, national, or European or even better, foundations under some public supervision securing plurality and freedom of expression, as well as intervening through incentives (e.g., tax benefits) or direct funding, wherever necessary.

My colleagues and I actually started to debate this new understanding in our European conferences and projects, for example our proposal to link cultural policies with issues dealt with in the human rights and equality movements. New universal concepts of cultural rights as human rights<sup>15</sup> and of ensuring a fair chance for cultural achievements by women or minorities including their better visibility in the media<sup>16</sup> are emerging. They will play a larger role in international agendas in years to come.

This presentation is not merely a plea for a more balanced cultural ambience for the urban surrounding (as much as I admire the efforts made in theory and practice of environmental esthetics in Britain and the United States). On the contrary, the times we are facing will be different from those of (alleged) abundance and growth. Therefore, in the near future it will be insufficient to merely **know** what could or should be done. There must also be a willingness or even desire to **act**. Political correctness or a bureaucratic understanding of equality will no longer be sufficient; we may also need genuine personal concern and, again, a sense of solidarity. If this type of behavior and, at the same time, respect for cultural rights in the broader sense as part of our stock-taking

of human rights, is not being rapidly developed, life in our large cities might soon mirror that in Belfast, Beyrouth, Calcutta, Lagos, Los Angeles, Mexico, Rostock, Sarajevo, or the quarters around a certain *Beautiful Laundrette* in the city of London. Restructuring of depressed areas, as it is done in Washington (and in nearly any large city around the world) will not bridge cultural gaps. We must be aware that such approaches could even widen them further. It is in such scenarios that local and community arts can play a vital role.

In a way, such issues are essential in the construction of our European future; perhaps even more important than the upcoming introduction of the euro, which certainly has its own values, especially for the trade of cultural goods. Such issues help us to enter into a dialogue and better understand how cultural interchange in the larger Europe will work. We should actively help shape this interchange and, at the same time, learn from other experiences. I might mention, in this respect, the longer traditions of human rights in some of the neighboring countries, from whom Germany still has a lot to learn. Even in matters of literature and writing we need better exchanges across the border since a strictly national debate, such as is now being held about the new orthography rules in the German speaking region (*Rechtschreibreform*) is both useless and frustrating.

Another reform issue: Could a set of more clear-cut competences for either the *Länder* or the federal authorities run up against achieving such goals? Despite the long tradition and relative success in the decentralization of cultural institutions, as well as in providing a wide range of different funding sources, the German federal system of cultural policy in funding is not in its best shape (and even less inspiring for other countries). The obvious need for structural and functional reform came after German unification in 1990. Unification meant an additional five *Länder* and seventeen million people, thus creating more complexity to that system. As a result, ideas for structural and or functional reform were, unfortunately, neglected.

## 5. TOWARDS A CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION?

Before discussing possible aims of such a reform, it might be helpful to look at the structure as it currently stands. Figure 2 presents a scheme devised for a Handbook,<sup>17</sup> which is being published in 1999 in its third edition. All signs of subordination in this scheme have deliberately been avoided, since the main actors have different functions and are often cooperating in common institutions or tasks. Other countries' structural schemes in the Handbook look quite different, such as the one from France resembling the shape of a solar system with the planets revolving around the sun *Le Ministre* representing

the different departments of the Paris *Ministère de la culture* and other official bodies.

This structural equality in the German system has little to do with the recent changes of the federal government after the German elections in the fall of 1998. Contrary to the belief or expectations of many foreign observers, the establishment of a minister of state in charge of cultural affairs at the chancellor's office resulted only in a modest internal reshuffle in the government. The Ministry of the Interior and, to a lesser extent, the one for Economics and Foreign Affairs lost its competencies for culture but not a true cabinet post. The role of the new office will, therefore, highly depend on the ability of its incumbent, Michael Naumann, to bring different voices together and to sell his policies or new ideas to fellow-politicians on all levels including to the European Union where he will also be the spokesperson and to the public at large.

As indicated earlier, the traditional administrative type of funding and intervention of the state and local authorities in cultural affairs has reached a certain limit. This approach has tended to concentrate, in fact, on just a few local or regional institutions and therefore cannot fully live up to the diverse needs of today's societies in general and of the productive artists and their publics in particular. In contrast, one could imagine a better or more efficient division of labor between the different public and private actors in the cultural field.

Thorough, sometimes painful investigations into the mission and the reality or performance of public service institutions in the arts and media fields are a must for me this has now been almost a lifetime activity. While much of this work needs to be done with regard to improving services of individual institutions or with regard to local and branch-concepts of cultural policy, there are also tasks and problems requiring a broader, national and international perspective and comparison. Academic thinking, on these levels, hopefully with a true interdisciplinary and intercultural approach, is an important but never sufficient contribution to a much-needed **new deal** for the arts and media in Europe. This approach would also require a debate on the freedom of imagination and expression for motivated individuals, animated by financial incentives leading to more quality production, broader educational concepts, a better dissemination and exchange. This approach would also lead to forums for debate and an assessment, possibly improving legal checks and balances.

As far as the *Länder* are concerned, a more task-oriented policy regarding management in matters of common interest (*ländergemeinsame Aufgaben*) is long overdue, as well as a reform of the Standing Conference of Cultural Ministers of the *Länder* (KMK), a body not really capable of acting quickly on behalf of all the *Länder*.<sup>18</sup> Should the *Länder* prove unable to reach such re-

forms, the gradual emergence of an increasingly powerful central ministry seems more probable than ever before, despite the federal nature of our constitutional system.

Contrasting this perspective, the rebirth of a consultation and cooperation body of *Bund, Länder* and local authorities (*Gemeinsamer Ausschuß für Kulturarbeit*), which had existed thirty years ago seems a more plausible alternative. The consultative body was dismantled after a short period due to fears from the *Länder* that they would lose some of their competencies (which they de facto lost anyway in the course of the 1970s because of their inability to tackle new, common problems in the arts and media). If, for example, the public authorities would also invite representatives from the non-governmental side, e.g., from the *Deutscher Kulturrat*, into such a body, a true representation of the main actors in a *Kulturstaat* could eventually become reality.

There are, of course, other cultural policy traditions in Europe which could be envisaged as superior to such cooperative models. However, experience shows that, generally speaking, populist or commercially oriented conceptions are just as problematic as the traditional types of administration. The idea of conducting public relations via the arts, which in France sometimes merged with state policy concepts, concentrating on large-scale, often prestigious events (so-called *grands projets*) will not fulfill the needs of a *Kulturstaat*. When public efforts are tied too closely to global commercial management and marketing strategies, they tend to lose touch with social or individual roots of creativity. Soon they will be mistaken for original private offers, and consequently run the risk of being considered redundant in times of shrinking public budgets. Public funds earmarked for the arts should respect diversity and not be utilized to achieve strictly commercial ends.

## **6. THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF PUBLIC FINANCING: PRIVATIZATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE?**

A few more words about the issue of public participation in the financing of the arts. As we have seen, our Federal Court has subscribed to the principle of this type of funding and Figure 1 may actually have seduced us to believe that with around 16 billion DM in all public cultural budgets in Germany, the sector is not that bad off and the system need not be criticized. As much as that may be true, it would, nevertheless, be a bit premature for onlookers to envy us, as in the case of Ellen McCulloch-Lovell. As you may have heard or read during the last two or three years, cuts in the arts budgets were severe in some of the cities. Just a few examples for the effects of what has been labeled the “cost disease in the arts” by William Baumol, a leading American economist:

- The city-state of Berlin closed one of its famous public institutions, the Schiller-Theater and may eventually do likewise with one of the operas;
- The city of Frankfurt, which used to boast one of the highest cultural budgets in Germany (ca. 14 percent of all expenditure) had to cut 50 million DM in one year;
- The city-state of Hamburg has announced the closure of six to eight of its outlet libraries;
- In Lübeck, the ballet ensemble considered to be one of the pillars of the traditional German theater system in addition to opera and dramatic theater was closed. This may also occur in Leipzig. In Cologne, the theatre was handed over to the troupe, leaving only a basic financial structure (Cologne lost its counselor for cultural affairs because she could no longer bear the financing problems).
- In the eastern *Länder*, many of the institutions mentioned before are still in danger, particularly libraries and youth centers which have already begun to close.

All of this has happened since German unification. Special financial contributions from the Federation to cultural institutions, projects and infrastructures of significance in the new eastern *Länder* (former GDR), which amounted to 1 billion DM or more per year, had been freed between 1990 and 1993. This kept many cultural institutions in business and their employees at work. But years of a less successful economy, the increase of unemployment and other social costs, caused the *Bund* to intensify its austerity measures, which shortly impacted the budgets of states and cities. In 1994 the investment in the new eastern *Länder*, as well as other federal activities were reduced to around 5 percent of the country's cultural budget.

Yet, it would not be fair to attribute all of the financial problems to unification and the *Bund*, as the differences in value systems may have also contributed to the current situation. Can one really expect, for example, from every *Polizeiminister* the same dedication to the *Kulturstaat* as Maihofer had in the past? Perhaps there have been institutions that escaped this type of thriftiness and have, in fact, increased their share of funding, as in the case of museums?

In recent years, there has been a museums boom. Constantly new museums are being opened. This demonstrates that there have been varying degrees of decreasing (as in the case of theaters and public libraries) or increasing support (e.g., museums) to different fields in the arts. Reaching more than 40 percent in the early 1970s, public theaters now account for only 29 percent or

around 4 billion DM of the total of state and city cultural budgets. Despite this decline in public funds, there remains a tremendous number of theaters including some eighty full-staffed public music theaters or opera houses with an average attendance rate of about 85 percent. Their maintenance amounts to approximately three billion DM per year. As our own opinion polls have revealed,<sup>19</sup> this fact is not being questioned, not even by those who would or could never attend a performance.

One of our early studies from 1975 dealt with this question in greater detail. As propagated by the intellectuals, we also believed that opera was an elitist dinosaur that would disappear sooner or later. What we found was that among all the publicly funded cultural institutions (libraries, museums, adult education (*Volkshochschule*)) opera had the most democratic public. More precisely, opera is the public cultural institution in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, where the public inside the auditorium resembles most closely the general setup of the population. What a surprise! For every million inhabitants, there is one public opera house. If you see it that way, it is not that much in a *Kulturstaat*. The same ratio, applied to the United States, would appear, I am sure, almost as a nightmare.

Taking up another frequent American viewpoint, I might add a word about the role of public and private actors in the arts since this is one of the potential conflict areas in Germany, similar to the experience in other countries. You have heard of the sometimes devastating effects on civic life and cultural infrastructures of what is sometimes called *Thatcherism* in Britain. There have been other similar moves elsewhere in Europe. Europe is currently in the middle of a debate on privatization: Could or should private market forces or corporate sponsoring replace or complement public finances in the arts? Referring again to the German figures on arts funding and trading of cultural goods, even an impressive sum of 600-800 million DM, provided by private patrons for the arts annually should not be overestimated, since this represents not more than 3-5 percent of the relevant figures of public spending (which is also more evenly distributed). When it comes to institutions such as theaters and/or orchestras, this type of income makes up much less than 1 percent of their total expenditure and will for the coming years be of no value in the struggle for reasonable funding structures.

How are we to address the question of transferring public responsibilities to private firms? Fortunately in Germany, such a serious proposal has not been made. Even the Federal Association of Industry (BDI) appealed to the public authorities, through its Arts Circle, not to lower their engagement. The private sector, it was argued, has other links with the arts and could not step in.<sup>20</sup> A

statement in their recent “Greenbook,” edited together with arts foundations and NGOs, explains why:

Well beyond its role as a ‘soft locational factor,’ culture is becoming increasingly important for the business sector as an ‘instrument of orientation’ and ‘raw material for creative action.’ Investments into culture as a living space are, therefore, much more than a question of image-design: it is a signal for our increasing readiness to accept responsibility in society and to take part in its spiritual re-orientation and structural reforms. . . .

One should not expect the market forces to solve all global problems or questions which encumber people. A universal system of order, reducing the individual to its economic function, measuring all its thoughts and actions according to their commercial usability would soon exhaust itself. Wilhelm Röpke, one of the forefathers of the system of our market society, demonstrated that the market needs, for its functioning, cultural and moral forces which it cannot produce on its own, but rather presupposes and wears out. No society can, in the long term, just count on economic success and neglect the forces of cultural regenerationCfrom basic research to the arts, from a human neighborhood to ethical standards. These are autonomous forces that may not bring immediate returns, but will benefit society as a whole in the long run.

The economy, too, is living from reliability and motivation, which cannot be calculated just in monetary terms. The economy is part of our culture through its design of products and services, through the way we shape working conditions and our relations with employees, customers or suppliers, but also the cities and environments where we are productive. . . .

The responsibilities of the *Kulturstaat*, the obligation of the state and local communities to sustain cultural life, cannot be shifted to the business sector. The promotional instruments of the private sector should be seen in close contact with public cultural policies, yet they cannot replace them. They have only complementary, animating or corrective functions.”<sup>21</sup>

Our cultural system needs the interchange and the reciprocity of many different actors in order to function and be productive. When dealing with the functions of the state or of private forces in the future, we should never forget that, in most cases, things are not just black or white.

Let me illuminate this point with a chart of our public library system, Figure 3. Let us reflect for a moment: Are libraries really just public, in the narrow sense, and not a good example for a multitude of interests and forces involved in the production and consumption of library services?

The chart does not address funding, but rather concentrates on the daily public-private partnerships existing side-by-side with solely publicly-financed libraries; the latter will surely cost more, but who is to say what interchanges are more important in the end? The whole system would not be able to function without these interchanges, without complementary forces, or, as the good old American motto prescribes it, without checks and balances.

Thus we have finally come to the major thesis I would like to propose regarding the functioning of a *Kulturstaat*, if we still want to use this term. If we do not want to leave the path of institutionalization, if we are afraid of contradictions with professionalism that may occasionally arise via participation processes or if we are ideologically or academically stuck with advocating privatization, we would not be able to enable the *Kulturstaat* to benefit. In fact, following the implementation of a true privatization policy in Germany, those who would suffer the most would not be just libraries and other cultural institutions. Rather, the highly profitable and highly dynamic culture industries would be affected the most; which would include the book market, which has, despite the trends, retained much of its diversity.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The final outlook is grim but not hopeless. Investments in productivity rather than subsidies are required in Europe. This also means that public policies and funding should compensate what the Swedish parliament used to call, already twenty-five years ago, the “negative effects of commercialism,” including trends toward cultural standardization through the media. The European Research Institute for Comparative Cultural Policy and the Arts (ERICArts), which is currently being made operational, will address some of the challenges evident in this field of research and political action. The “Cultural Awareness Clause” in the Treaty of the European Union (Art. 128.4) could, for example, be interpreted as a mechanism to increase and deepen intercultural contacts between eastern and western Europe, as well as other parts of the world.

International cultural relations, a long-time tool in the power politics of many nations, need to be freed from official administrative burdens and become entrusted to arms-length-bodies, or autonomous organizations, as is the case in some countries.

The Goethe Institute, other agencies and networks pave the way for such a transfer of responsibilities to occur. Such examples could, hopefully, be followed by other European states. I do not underestimate the difficulties this may bring in the beginning, when common European institutes are being set up worldwide; it makes little sense to found individual national cultural institutes in the former Soviet and now independent republics in Asia. Our task under such circumstances should be to allow a common European heritage in arts and literature sow seeds for a new discourse and, hopefully, future cooperation. Is it really asking too much from governments in Europe to start this new approach by setting up common “European Libraries?”

Work also needs to be done inside our countries. We need to improve efforts aimed at better cooperation between public cultural institutions and independent grass root-initiatives. In addition such organizations must find ways to deal with the media industries in order to accommodate the success of such initiatives with public strategies. For example, their critics consider the multitude of channels promised via digital TV to be harmful. Cultural institutions with a public mission should face their responsibility and help guarantee cultural diversity in this sphere. This strategy will not secure all present permanent public-service positions, however, it may be helpful to recognize that a general high level of cultural activity in different formsCfrom entrepreneurial ventures over freelance and production-bound occupations to permanent jobsChave a better chance of survival.

Democracy does not promote the primacy of the state or the major economic forces of the marketplace, despite all their powers. Democracy lives to a greater extent from a diverse cultural public (*Kulturelle Öffentlichkeit*)Ca solution for coming out of this polarized dilemma, which some of the more “etatic” *Kulturstaat* models have always lived with. Cultural life requires constant reproduction by the public, its social groups as well as individuals and particularly gifted talents in the different fields of the arts, heritage, media, and education. To involve the state in this process is, in fact, only desirable if the concept of a dominating role of this state is discouraged. In this context, the critical discourse between professional artists or intellectuals and the average citizen should be promoted educational programs in the liberal arts reinstalled.

Common efforts will be needed and should be directed less towards the cultural sector as such than towards solving urgent social, spiritual or ecological problems. We have seen that most of these problems no longer have merely national, but rather global dimensions with local consequences. Such dilemmas can clearly not be solved by untamed political and economic interests, but are in fact often caused by them. Is it time to say good-bye to old ideas of the *Kulturstaat*?

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Parts of this lecture, held on March 27, 1998 at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., have been adapted to take account of developments in cultural policy after the elections for the German *Bundestag* in the fall of 1998.

<sup>2</sup> cf. <http://www.artec.org.uk/ERICArts>.

<sup>3</sup> in: Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI, ed., *Kulturförderung in gemeinsamer Verantwortung III - Bürger, Staat und Wirtschaft als Partner: Blaubuch des Aktionskreises Kultur*, (Bonn/ARCult Media 1997), 73.

<sup>4</sup> Werner Maihofer, "Kulturelle Aufgaben des Modernen Staates" in Ernst Benda/Werner Maihofer/Hans-Jochen Vogel, *Handbuch des Verfassungsrechts*, (Berlin: deGruyter, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> cf. W. Mommert: "Ein Gespenst geht um - Chefsache: Debatte um Bundeskulturminister," *General Anzeiger* (Bonn), February 25, 1998 and articles in many other papers.

<sup>6</sup> in: *Kunstzeitung*, February 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Jacob Burckhard: *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, (Leipzig, Kröner 1935).

<sup>8</sup> Ernst Rudolf Huber: *Die Problematik des Kulturstaates*, 1958.

<sup>9</sup> J. Müller, *Deutsche Kulturstatistik: Ein Grundriß für Studium und Praxis*, (Jena/Gustav Fischer 1928).

<sup>10</sup> quoted after Hans Arnold, *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik: Ein Überblick aus deutscher Sicht*, (München: Hanser, 1980), 10.

<sup>11</sup> in his *Kulturverwaltungsrecht* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1969).

<sup>12</sup> Decision of March 5, 1974 (*Neue Juristische Wochenschrift* 1974, p. 689-692).

<sup>13</sup> Peter Häberle, *Verfassungslehre als Kulturwissenschaft* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1982).

<sup>14</sup> Karla Fohrbeck/Andreas Johannes Wiesand, *Von der Industriegesellschaft zur Kulturgesellschaft?* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Human Rights and Cultural Policies in a Changing Europe – the Right to Participate in Cultural Life*. Report of the CIRCLE-Round Table, Arts Council of Finland (Helsinki, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> Danielle Cliche/Ritva Mitchell/Andreas Wiesand.

<sup>17</sup> Andreas Wiesand, ed., *Handbook of Cultural Affairs in Europe*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos 1995 and 1999).

<sup>18</sup> Decisions at the KMK must be taken unanimously, some even have to be ratified by all the *Länder* Parliaments.

<sup>19</sup> *KulturBarometer 1991* and *1995* as well as earlier surveys in the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>20</sup> Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI, ed., *Kulturförderung in gemeinsamer Verantwortung I and II: Manifeste/Positionen* ("Weissbuch"), and: *Die Krise überwinden* ("Grünbuch") (Bonn/ARCult Media 1995 and 1996).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Grünbuch "Die Krise überwinden," 1996, 9-11.

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## HOW TO PRESENT GERMANY AS A *KULTURSTAAT* ABROAD

Barthold Witte

Let me point out that I do not believe Hegel was right when he presented the state as something supernatural, which is always right. Further, the title of my presentation, "How to Present Germany as a *Kulturstaat* Abroad," implies that I am a follower of the traditional *Kulturstaat* concept. However, I would also concur with Andreas Wiesand that the natural tension between *Kultur* (culture) and *Staat* (state) should lead us to switch to another term, if there are others available—namely, *Kulturgesellschaft* (cultural society). Therefore, I would like to change the title into, "How to Present Germany as a *Kulturgesellschaft* Abroad." This term, I think, will be more resonant to the American public.

It has been mentioned that *auswärtige Kulturpolitik* (foreign cultural policy) is the third pillar of German foreign policy. In my later years as the director of cultural affairs in the Foreign Office in Bonn, I protested against this degradation because the third pillar is just number three. I maintained during the last years of my active professional life that foreign cultural policy is not third in rank, but indeed the basis for everything else.

In a democratic age, when foreign policy has ceased to be the privilege of some diplomats or a few cabinet ministers or monarchs, governments need to build a public consensus about what they are doing in the field of international relations and cooperation. This can only be achieved if governments direct their efforts towards programs which convince people at home and abroad that international cooperation is far better than international conflict, that peace and freedom are values in themselves which should not only define the individual life, but also the life of societies in a world which is growing closer and closer together. My contention would be that foreign cultural policy is not merely a pillar of foreign relations, but rather an indispensable basis for economic, political and military foreign relations.

In looking at foreign cultural policy in these terms, the task before me will extend beyond an exercise in definition. The question is: Does German foreign cultural policy live up to this expectation?

As far as public expenditure is concerned, there are many reasons for Germans to be proud of their government's foreign cultural policy as a very important part of government involvement in sponsoring non-governmental activities. The national consensus in Germany remains that foreign cultural policy is to be heavily funded with federal, *Länder* and municipal budgets. Presently, the annual cultural budget of the Foreign Office alone is about 1.2 billion DM. The overall public expenditure in this field is estimated at more than 4 billion

DM per annum. This figure includes not only what other federal ministers do in the field, but also the *Länder* and the municipalities. Compared to other major countries, Germany, at least in terms of public expenditure, is second only to France, and remains far ahead of the United States.

Now, where do these funds go? By explaining an inside view on where the funds go, I implicitly also define what the word “cultural” in the term “foreign cultural policy” actually encompasses. It is not the arts alone—arts, literature, film, and related fields—but also education, science and language instruction. All these fields are reflected in the expenditures from the overall figure that I gave you. About one-third of public funds go into programs to teach and to spread the knowledge of the German language abroad. This, of course, reflects the fact that the German language has increasing difficulties to compete with English, which is by far the leading world language. German also faces competition from other languages, such as French and Spanish, on a worldwide scale, as well as Arabic, Chinese and Hindi and other languages, which so far are not exported into other countries but are spoken by millions as their mother tongue. As far as languages are concerned—which are not only spoken as mother tongue, but which are also used as the second or third language as means of communication—German is in heavy competition with the second-ranking languages such as French and Spanish, with prospects being not too good.

After reunification, there was a sudden burst of interest around the world in things German. However, this did not last long. It accounts for the decision of the federal government, supported by all major parties in the parliament, to concentrate more than ever before on programs to promote the knowledge, teaching, and utilization of the German language in non-German-speaking countries.

Another major part of German foreign cultural policy is devoted to educational and research programs cosponsored or fully sponsored from available funds, ranging from subsidies for German schools, to the well-known Humboldt scholarships and including many projects in the field of education and research in developing countries.

Thirdly, exchange programs, mainly for the younger generation, figure prominently in this overall budget. Youth exchange has always played a major role in fostering German-American relations. Similarly, the *Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk* (German-French Youth Exchange) has assisted more than five million young people from both countries in the last thirty years. Here is, at least partially, an explanation for the fact that France and Germany regard themselves as the privileged partners in Europe and in many international activities.

Next, funding is set aside for media activities. In a world where media play a more prominent role in communication, it is quite obvious that foreign cultural policy has to concentrate on programs in this field. This does not concern only the radio or television programs of Deutsche Welle, but also, for instance, the translation of German books into foreign languages or the creation of easier access to the Internet. Web site maintenance is extremely important to German foreign cultural policy, as it enables quick and inexpensive dissemination of information.

Now, at least German music, arts and film are presented to the outside world, largely with government support. However, this does not apply to the presentation of German films for the Oscar competition. No public funds were involved in the nomination of a German film as one of the best foreign films for an Academy Award in 1997; the German production lost only by a narrow margin.

Music, of course, is something which Germany exported successfully for a very long time. When China opened to the outside world after the end of its "Cultural Revolution," one of the first big events in Beijing was a series of four concerts by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Herbert von Karajan. The television stations transmitted all of these concerts live all over China. As one can imagine, after the end of the "Cultural Revolution," which had been directed against any western influence in the country, the Chinese people considered this a really big event. And, of course, this appearance of the Berlin Philharmonic under von Karajan, who at the time was one of the most expensive conductors in the world, had to be sponsored heavily out of government funds. Without government funding the event would not have been possible.

Since then, private sponsorship is playing a growing role in making these types of events possible in Germany and abroad. And yet, it still represents only a small percentage. There have been estimates to which extent programs and framework of foreign cultural policy are being supported by private initiatives from industry, banks, commerce, etc. The figure is probably even lower than the 5 percent, which is estimated as the contribution from private sponsorship to the internal cultural scene of Germany. The amount of private funding is slowly growing; but it remains far below the American levels. The concept that a corporation can improve its national corporate identity or even international corporate identity by sponsoring cultural or scientific events is relatively new to the business sector in Germany.

Historically, the origins of German foreign cultural policy date back to Bismarck's times. This is not widely known. During the 1880s, the first school fund was created in the budget of the Imperial Reich, dedicated to co-financing German schools abroad. These were schools founded by German immigrants

in the United States, South America, Australia and other parts of the world, with the aim of retaining the national cultural identity of their children; they wanted to be good citizens of their new home country. They requested the assistance of the German authorities back home to do something about it.

Another of these first programs was a program initiated by President Theodore Roosevelt and Kaiser Wilhelm around 1905 to exchange university professors. After the First World War, the academic field received more attention because it represented one of the assets of the defeated German Reich, the Weimar Republic. In order to make use of this asset in the international field, programs to promote the studies of foreign students at German universities were created. This led to the founding of the Humboldt Foundation and the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD). The first programs were initiated to transfer a better knowledge of the German language to the candidates for their studies in Germany. The Goethe Institute, created in the early 1930s in Munich, helped lay the foundation for the promotion of the study of German abroad.

All of this was more or less directed along the lines of national interest. The national interest, first of all, was to accommodate the desire of those who had emigrated from Germany to other countries to retain their cultural identity. The second national interest was to add to the attractiveness of Germany as a country as the home country of modern universities. One should not forget that, for instance, the Johns Hopkins University, when it was founded in 1876, was created largely along the German model created by Wilhelm von Humboldt.

All this, of course, was taken into the network of activities of the Nazi Reich as an instrument to promote the imperialistic aspirations of the Nazi regime, a fact from which the so-called *Auslands-Deutsche* have suffered considerably during and after the Second World War, not only in the United States, but also elsewhere. When Brazil entered the alliance against Hitler around 1943, the first measure taken by the Brazilian government was to pass a law to prevent people from speaking German publicly, which included schools and even homes. The strong German minority in Brazil suffered much from this discrimination, which can still be felt to this day.

The creation of the Federal Republic in 1949 marked a major change in the lines of policy. From 1950 onwards, the first steps were taken to reestablish a foreign cultural policy for the newly created republic. The first aim had to be to contribute towards bringing Germany and Germans back into the family of civilized nations after the Holocaust, the Nazi dictatorship and the aggression which led to the Second World War.

What can you do as a German, when you want to be regarded again as a civilized partner? You look into your own history and present the good Ger-

many, as opposed to the bad Germany. It is not by coincidence that the Goethe Institute carries the name of Goethe. It was a look back to a better part of German history, which could be presented to the outside world as part of Germany's everlasting contribution to the spiritual, artistic, literary, and scientific development of the world. Alexander von Humboldt, after whom the Humboldt Stiftung is named, is another example, with his fame in Latin America still quite evident today.

Other motivations were added during the Cold War. The claim of the Federal Republic to represent the whole of Germany had to be underscored by cultural and academic programs offered to partner countries all over the world. Why did (and do) the Germans expand their foreign cultural policy all over the world while others restrict themselves to certain parts of the world? The answer points back to the 1950s and the early 1960s, the beginning of the competition between the GDR and the Federal Republic, when, for example, West Germany offered scholarship programs and possibly a Goethe Institute to countries that promised not to recognize the GDR. This was the agreement, and it worked. The result was that if sizable funds were available, they were to be used for programs all over the world. It contrasted with the French foreign cultural policy, which concentrated more on the Francophonie.

There is no privileged region for German foreign cultural policy, except one area which has evolved since the end of the Cold War. This is Central and Eastern Europe, which since the Middle Ages has been traditionally within the orbit of German cultural influence and where East Germany maintained a limited presence. Otherwise, programs and institutions are scattered more or less evenly all over the world. Cultural presence and the teaching of the German language have been useful for economic exchanges, better exports to and better investments in the respective country. The economic and political benefits of cultural programs abroad are beyond doubt.

Thus far, I have discussed German national interest in terms of foreign cultural policy. When, during the 1960s and 1970s, the human rights movement gained international strength, the contributions of culture, education, science and media to individual and national freedom and self-determination could not be overlooked. Goethe Institutes in Lisbon, Athens, Tehran, and other places played a helpful role by providing shelter for oppressed democratic oppositions. Less well known is the role of invitation programs. For instance, after the Tiananmen events in China in 1989, academic organizations under the leadership of the Humboldt Foundation, and with the financial and political support from the federal government, developed a large program for Chinese students, scientists and other academics to stay in Germany instead of going back to their country under a new repressive regime.

Current German foreign cultural policy is no longer guided by national interest alone, but also by the common pursuits of democratic states in the field of international politics. The German program to aid Chinese exiles in the academic field was largely possible because the United States had already taken measures to support Chinese studying in their country. This new rationale of foreign cultural policy originated when the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) negotiated the final terms of the Helsinki Accord. From my own experience I can tell that when the final act of the Accord was negotiated, the western delegates knew very well that they wanted to transfer the ideas of freedom and democracy by scientific and cultural means as well as through the media beyond the Iron Curtain. It worked. If one looks at the biographies of the people who at this time were called dissidents and who, like Vaclav Havel, became leaders in the newly democratic states, one can easily see how important the CSCE process, based on the Helsinki Accord, has been for them. The main thrust of the programs of the Federal Republic of Germany which sought cooperation with the then-Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe was directed by this aim: opening the door, opening the windows, so that the wind of freedom could blow.

Again, this is not primarily of national interest. Of course, many Germans view these aims as having been in the national interest, given that they lived for so long at the dividing line between East and West. Foreign cultural policy these days is becoming more and more the common business of like-minded states. Therefore, it is very important to bring, for instance, the American and the German policies closer together. This is being done through consultations and cooperation in many fields, but could still be improved.

Yet, if one asks the question how to assess the effects of foreign cultural policy, how to evaluate them, the answer is not easy because the quantitative approach is, of course, not sufficient. What is going on in the minds of people is something that one cannot easily squeeze into statistics. Foreign cultural policy is directed towards the minds of people, towards their behavior, towards their thinking. Hopefully as an enrichment for them. Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement in Germany that foreign cultural policy has been very useful from its very start in bringing Germany back into the family of nations, in building confidence towards the new Germany.

Most observers also agree that in order to make foreign cultural policy a success, several conditions must be fulfilled. First, short-term results cannot be expected, and therefore cultural exchange programs should not be used as instruments of short-term political actions such as boycotts. I say this in Washington for obvious reasons, because under different presidents, boycott actions in the cultural field have often marked the American policy. This is not the

German position. Secondly, the credibility of the message depends on the degree of autonomy that the programs and their executives are able to enjoy. The reason for this is that under the German system, somewhat similar to the British system on this matter, it is not the government that normally executes the programs. Largely autonomous organizations, such as the Goethe Institute, do the job. Thirdly, when presenting your country as a *Kulturstaat*, or rather, a *Kulturgesellschaft* abroad, we do not tell only the success stories, but also show failures and deficiencies (i.e., the whole picture). This is sometimes not easy to accept. From time to time, German politicians complain that these “dreadful people of the Goethe Institute” should produce a positive picture of Germany instead of presenting the critical debates on controversial issues. This is an ever-recurring theme, not only in Germany, but also in the United States. And last, but not least, the freedom of the arts, of literature and media, and of resurgent discussion, must be respected and promoted, at home as well as internationally.

All of these conditions limit the direct use of foreign cultural policy for political purposes. This is why these conditions very often are the source of conflicts. Let me sketch out these conflicts.

In the German case, these conflicts center mostly around the degrees of government influence on the freedom of expression, encapsulated in the critique of the Goethe Institute: “Why do they invite Günter Grass, who only criticizes the government, his own government, and does nothing else?” There is a natural tension between long-term political aims, under which foreign cultural policy is executed, and the freedom of expression and the freedom of culture and the arts. This tension leads to a redundant discussion about the degree of autonomy, which the so-called *Mittlerorganisationen* (mediating organizations) are permitted to enjoy. Andreas Wiesand has used the term “intermediary organizations,” which is perhaps a better term. A conflict about their autonomy is often the consequence of the stated tension. For instance: Is the German ambassador in Washington or elsewhere entitled to prevent a highly critical German film to be shown at the Goethe Institute? Or, who decides on the distribution of scholarships to foreign recipients? The ambassador or the ministry back home? Eventually, these conflicts are being resolved by compromises respecting a large degree of autonomy for the *Mittlerorganisationen*, with support coming from all major parties in the *Bundestag*, and are generally accepted in the cultural scene.

This cultural policy was, to a large extent, the result of the activities of a parliamentary inquiry commission that existed in the *Bundestag* from 1970 to 1975. The inquiry produced a comprehensive report on Germany’s cultural policy, a document that is still readable and which was adopted unanimously

by the *Bundestag* and almost fully accepted by the federal government. The guidelines of this report are still in force. Based on them, the Goethe Institute and the federal government concluded a cooperation agreement in 1976. As an answer to the question, "Is the ambassador entitled to prevent a film to be shown at the Goethe Institute?" this agreement contains a so-called veto clause which determines that the ambassador may indeed veto a specific event if he has a good political—not artistic or aesthetic—reason to believe that damage will be done by this event to the image of Germany abroad. Since the ambassador may sometimes make a wrong decision, there is a second clause stating that the *Auswärtiges Amt* and the central offices of the Goethe Institute in Munich can scrutinize the ruling.

This veto clause has very seldom been used. As it exists, it does its job in that it reminds the director of the Goethe Institute that he should also be aware of the political effects of the programs that are presented. The director will conclude that some issues, which may be controversial at home, may be discussed objectively in a foreign country. On the other hand, the ambassador will always have to bear in mind that he has no mandate whatsoever to apply his own aesthetic standards. Considering Günter Grass to be a pornographic author is his privilege. But this is not what should influence his decision in a veto case.

The whole system works quite well today—it is a compromise. Similar agreements or accepted rules govern the cooperation of the federal administration with all major mediating organizations. As a result, one can say that the natural tension between *Geist* and *Macht*, between government and the cultural scene can not find an easy solution. One has to find compromises, such as the agreement between the federal government and the Goethe Institute, which ensures the full autonomy of the individual Goethe Institutes to organize their own programs on the basis of funds made available to it, while it enables the federal government, in rare cases, to veto programs that put Germany in a bad light.

Let me make a few final remarks about the administrative side of the picture. Over the past five decades, the development of German foreign cultural policy led to the establishment of a highly complex system of governmental and non-governmental agencies. While the British government entrusts one body—the British Council—with the task of managing its foreign cultural policy, Germany has a large number of organizations at work. Even experts like myself find it difficult at times to identify the right partner for a given project in this complex system.

On the federal level, not only the *Auswärtiges Amt*, but also approximately ten other ministries, have their own funds for international cooperation in the

field of education, culture, science, and media. Furthermore, the federal government has no monopoly since the *Länder* claim their share based on the constitutional distribution of legislative power—the *Kulturhoheit*—which gives the *Länder* responsibility for their culture, education and media. In addition, all major cities have their own international links, twinning agreements, etc. As far as the non-governmental sector is concerned, it is very common for more than one mediating organization to have guarded claims in the same field. I will give you the example of post-graduate or post-doctorate scholarships for foreigners in Germany or for Germans abroad. There is not only one organization, but several that are providing funding from the federal budget for these scholarship programs. This may have its advantages for the applicant. If he is denied a scholarship by one foundation, he may turn to another organization for assistance.

The system is extremely complex. It has attracted much criticism. The inquiry commission of the *Bundestag*, therefore, asked the federal government to make drastic changes in order to simplify the system; however, the government did not follow suit. I feel that this was the right decision. It is indeed a miracle that the system works without major deficiencies. One of its advantages, indeed the most important one, results from its complexity, namely a remarkable limitation of government power and therefore an effective protection of liberty.

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## THE AMERICAN VIEW: A COMMENT

Charles Maier

Let me say as an introduction that I direct a center of European Studies, which is indebted heavily to German cultural policy. About eight years ago we were a recipient of one of the three Centers of Excellence Awards initiated by the German chancellor. That gift dwarfs most everything else in its contribution to our budget. Second, the home in which our Center is housed is a museum that is itself a monument of *Kulturpolitik*.

Around 1900, Harvard gave the Kaiser's brother an honorary degree in part because local Germanophiles feared that Anglophilia was sweeping the university. In gratitude, I presume it was gratitude but maybe the Kaiser's gratitude was ambivalent, plastercasts were sent of German cathedrals and monuments. For many years they languished in a gymnasium: the Hildesheim Cathedral doors, the facade of Freiberg in Sachsen, the road screen of Naumburg and other artifacts, including four authentic baroque sculptures, not just plaster, of the Seasons. Then a museum was built for this collection paid for by the Anheuser Busch family; a remarkable, beautiful museum, and a prewar instance of *Kulturpolitik*. My remarks however are about cultural policy in general. I am struck by both Barthold Witte's and Andreas Wiesand's comments about cultural policy and what it represents. It will be a happy task to respond.

Let me start by saying how uneasy I am with this term *Kulturstaat*, and I am not much more comfortable now that it has been transformed into *Kulturgesellschaft*. To illustrate why, let me begin with a little inspirational reading from the historian, Friedrich Meinecke, taken from his *Politische Schriften*:

Just as so directly and palpably in these stirring days our culture is conscripted exclusively to serve the state, so in the invisible realm, our state, our power, our policies, and our war serve the highest values of our national culture. Culture is the sap of the tree that issues forth in blossoms and leaves. It would wither were the axe struck into the roots. All those among us who dreamt of a culture without a state are now waking up in view of the danger that threatens culture. The era of alienation between culture and politics, which in recent decades had left so many perceptible traces, has come to an end. The clock strikes once again the hour of their deepest unity. It is the task of German culture to make sure that it pursues a free and unfettered alliance with German politics. Fully imbued with the highest consciousness and that ethic of autonomy that Kant preached to us, let culture grasp the

hand of the state and become a weapon in that hand. For the day is coming that culture itself unconsciously nurtured and ennobled by devoting itself unawares to the state. Everything that only within the framework of the nationstate can strive for the heights, for the light and for the spirit is what helps make the nation vital and strong. We are gladdened and emboldened when we realize that every still and solitary stirring of the spirit, every dedication of self to something higher and holy, has a secret connection to the nation's vital drawing of breath and to the most powerful discharge of its strength. This is the highest ideal of modern life, which we want both to perceive and bring about. For all of now—as a people with a state and with a culture—the task is to measure up to all harsh realities of life with a fearless vision, and at the same time to gaze with our inner sunlit eyes into the very depth of spirit. This is the ideal we want to preserve and defend in the world. (Friedrich Meinecke, *Politische Schriften und Reden*, Georg Kotwoski, ed., Darmstadt, 1958, p. 81)

A very liberal historian wrote that—well, not so liberal but pretty liberal—in the first days of August of 1914. It is not atypical because the rhetoric of the *Zusammenhänge* (connections), between culture and power, really marked the ideology of late Wilhelmianism. (Perhaps this is the trouble with historians: we have deformed capacities for memories. I forget things from my children's childhood that my family remembers, but I remember a text I worked with almost forty years ago). The Meinecke connection between culture and power—the evocation of culture as a weapon of the state—is the source of some of my discomfort. Making *Kulturstaat* into *Kulturgesellschaft* does not change it much. What bothers me so much about this combination is the implication that if Germany's policy is based on culture, then does it not suggest that other nations may not be cultured, or even uncultured? I do worry about the logic, that, if we Germans are the cultural, or the culture-society, *Kulturnation*, *Kulturgesellschaft*, well, perhaps the others are somewhat (to use the Russian) *nikulturny*.

The echoes of this policy are not those of 1933. There is no problem that such an evocation recalled Nazism. But they really do resonate with the ideas of 1900 or 1914. They are echoes of this discussion of culture and power. And I hear some similar finalities unconsciously reemerging in other spheres. Certainly I agree with Jeffrey Herf that unified Germany is not politically problematic in the sense some observers feared in 1989-1990. Still, echoes are there in the sense that the new architecture of Berlin, the power of the national capital and its restored buildings may impose a certain implicit agenda, or new

approach to politics. Such considerations thus lead to the question that Meinecke raised: Does the state serve culture or culture the state? And I believe that this question—which I do not like just because it can be posed—is inherent in the notion of cultural policy. Hence, I wanted to start with this concern about the whole concept of cultural policy. If it is based on the notion that somehow **this** culture or **this** state or **this** society has some peculiar virtue by being able to pursue it, it implies the others do not quite have the same claim on culture.

Now, let me look at some parallels or comparisons. More precisely, let us consider the notion of cultural “representation” rather than policy as such. In effect, cultural policy is a means of assuring cultural representation, but not the only one. Clearly, if we look at French cultural policy we find a state and a nation that is certainly as ambitious and as self-assured and as potentially arrogant in its cultural presentation as anything that contemporary Germany or others might produce. We know that Francophonie is really a preeminent concern and has a function.

Britain relies for cultural policy, at least with respect to Americans, on natural affinity, the special relationship. British cultural policy markets itself under the artifacts of the British Council. It knows that American intellectuals have to watch its plays and its TV series. I love Theater in Berlin. But obviously you cannot import German theater to the United States in the way one can import British television or British theater.

Italy, a country that is very dear to my heart, renounces any active cultural mission at all except among its emigrants. And this is interesting: Italians remain confident that those who come to Italy will be swept away, whether by the painting or the music or the delicate whispers of spring air in Roman evenings, or whatever. Of course there are exceptions. There is the Agnelli Foundation, whose funding is very volatile and very small, relatively speaking. The consulates are preoccupied with tending the relationship in this country to the Italian-American community, which is not usually an academic or intellectual community. And then Italy relies on Armani and Ermengilda, Zegna, Ferragamo and other upscale products to establish a presence. Hence we have different styles of cultural politics.

Why must Germany have such an active cultural policy to assure cultural representation? One reason is that it has no post-imperial residue. The imperial past is what provides confidence and inner consistency to the notion of cultural representation. Germans do not have this, nor have they had this since 1918. When I hear that east Central Europe may be the natural arena for cultural policy, if there is an area of the world where cultural policy is appropriate, it raises a little concern, since Germans often have a sort of missionary sense about eastern Europe.

To summarize, Germany is a country that wants to run without a major-league foreign policy which means cultural representation, as well as politicalCbut without the assets of empire, without the asset of Francophonie, without the asset of having a world language, the equivalent of Latin for the 20th century. These absences provide difficulties for cultural representation and Germany is not willing to make a choice, such as Italy makes, just to forget cultural policy and rely on the charm of the place once you get there. Perhaps Germany cannot do so: arriving in Hannover, one will not quite have the same sense as arriving in Florence, even though there are very many nice destinations, too.

The previous comments and comparisons were designed to reveal some of the general challenges for cultural policy and representation, and my own personal hesitations about the whole project itself, that is my uneasiness at joining (or hyphenating) *Kultur* and *Gesellschaft*, *Kultur* and Nation, *Kultur* and *Staat*, in the context of the so-called peculiarities of German history. Now I wish to explore some of the specifics about goals, structure and what I call tonality of German cultural policy. With respect to goals, German cultural policy was essentially dictated by two conditions. One was the Nazi legacy. The other was Cold War vulnerability. What the Nazi legacy meant, I do not have to belabor. One aspect was the legacy of conquest, which had to be overcome, and the need to make Germany a good neighbor. The other aspect was more an internal one and less a question of external representation. But it is important, and it has been mentioned here: that is, the devastation of the intellectual landscape created by the Third Reich. Germany, if you look at the fifty years since the war suffered from that in a major way, less perhaps in literature and art, but especially in the social sciences and the natural sciences. The often-derivative nature of postwar *Wissenschaft*, and the need to catch up was critical in the evolution of cultural policy. While one is catching up, it is hard to have a cultural policy unless it is one that tries to overcome the damage and attract people from abroad. In any case, the Nazi legacy was something that had to be overcome. At the same time it enjoined and stimulated a benevolent policy. The other key impulse was Cold War vulnerability. Clearly, what Germany did not want was to be forgotten or abandoned. These legacies meant that two or three partners were crucial in any sort of cultural policy and in foreign policy in general.

Of course, one partner was Israel. I served on a review committee for the two institutes of German history that the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft has financed in Israel through the *Minervagesellschaft*. When I was there, I learned that in fact the MPG finances about seventy institutes in Israel, an enormous number, for which the Israelis are appropriately very appreciative. It is a major contri-

bution. However, it is a partnership conditioned by history. The other partnership is with the United States, and this one reflects more the Cold War.

Generally speaking, German-American relations are the most “massaged” relationship that, so far as I know, two big, autonomous independent liberal countries maintain with each other. Despite this cultivation, the degree of German insecurity about the relationship never abates. Werner Weidenfeld’s book (*America and Europe: Is the Break Inevitable?* Gütersloh, 1996) reflects just the most recent version of this. But there have been so many times when Germans have worried that Americans were losing interest. We were continually suspected of “decoupling,” whether strategically or emotionally, or whatever. That preoccupation continues. My own plea to Germans who are in representative positions when they come to visit me is to let us ease up on the bilateral concerns and think about relationships more contextually. These two relationships with Israel and with the United States have helped shape the peculiarities of German cultural policy. To put it crudely and provocatively: much of German cultural representation is designed to overcome a certain perpetual insecurity that can be expressed as follows: “We will not be loved and they will never cease harping on the Holocaust.” These subtexts remain present in the terms of so many of our interlocutors or our *Gesprächspartner*: the German foundations and the party foundations, official visitors from the embassy, speakers proposed by the consulate. The underlying message of so much cultural policy remains “we are not who we were.” If this is a “peculiarity” compelled by history, there are also peculiarities arising from structure. Previous speakers have brought these out, therefore I do not have to say much about them. One peculiarity of the structure is that German cultural representation is 95 percent government-financed, although there is a major degree of competitiveness or multicentrism in the financing and agencies involved.

There is a built-in-pluralism to German cultural policy, and I think that is advantageous. Not only this, but even an adversarial pluralism, which has been touched on, too. The Goethe Institute, as the foreign office sometimes fears, is the sort of hangout of the *Nestbeschmutzer*. Still, despite its provocative and often counter-cultural program, the Goethe Institute enjoys great independence. And it does present us “*das andere Deutschland*” (the other Germany). If we want to see films about Turks, if we want to hear stories about Jews who have made their home now in Germany or are making films about other Jews who have made their home in Germany, or if we want to hear avant-garde authors, or see somewhat brutish modern art, the Goethe Institute is the place to go. And that is great. That is really precious. For what are the sources for German cultural policy and what tolerances do they allow? The Foreign Office can remain preoccupied by Germany’s image. I once sought to organize

a conference with the German Historical Institute, which the Foreign Office correspondence critiqued for being too critical. It was hardly dissident at all. Clearly, there is more left. Then, of course, there are the activities sponsored by the MPG or the universities. There are the industrial foundations, and then there are the political party foundations.

Party foundations are semi-official: they are both independent and yet have certain representational missions thrust upon them. In the United States we do not have the equivalent; we have party-oriented think tanks, which is somewhat different. The point is that Germany has developed an adversarial system in which some public and quasi-public funding sources represent a positive view, while there are alternative quasi-left views presented through the Goethe Institute. There will eventually be as well whether it is numerically insignificant or not an intellectual Right in Germany. We see some tendencies emerging already. It shall be an interesting question whether they shall be incorporated in this dissident presentation of German culture, which gets presented abroad. Because that will be a much more difficult decision for the ambassador to make than one concerning publicity given to, say, Günter Grass or the like.

None of these countervailing pressures are unique to Germany. When I recall the pressures that the USIA and the NEH faced in the 1980s, they probably dwarfed the pressures that German agencies for cultural policy have experienced: Charles Wick and Lynn Cheney, who had such powerful cultural roles, were clearly not great entrepreneurs of diversity. For this reason I think the German structure is healthy. A cultural policy must allow adversarial representation. I believe that everybody at this seminar has made that point.

This is no easy task, and I have never personally had to deal with either the forces of provincialism or the forces of orthodoxy. In other words, I have never had to appear before Senator Helm's committee or its counterpart. In a certain sense, the question in the United States is always: How does a cultural presentation play in Peoria? The German equivalent: How does it go over in Passau? It is the same thing. For all the difficulties I believe that probably the Germans are on track with multiple agencies. The battle for cultural diversity is always a difficult one and multiple agencies at least permit a structural bias on behalf of dissent.

Briefly looking at the issue of internal financing with regards to all the praise of private philanthropy in the United States, it should be recognized that American financing is clearly not just a private matter. When private gifts are made to American cultural production, a public subsidy is involved. Tax subsidies are being provided. When my friend down the street can finance a museum acquisition, say, in a grandiose manner and I cannot, my taxes also go to

overcome any budget stress that arises from his decreased tax burden. This last point finally summons us to think about what the real role of culture is. This issue has not yet been raised today, but I think it is worth putting on the table: What is the role of culture for the society that is turning it out? I am not asking about its manifest role. We all like culture; it is important; we all agree on that. But what latent functions does cultural production serve?

In the United States, the role of cultural sponsorship has always been played in part a legitimating role for business leaders who exist in an ostensibly non-class-divided society. What Veblen said about higher learning in America and about the leisure classes still holds, to a degree. In America, culture in a sense legitimates the market, that is, the private economic sector. And it does so through founding or giving to universities, to opera, to museums and libraries. In Germany, culture still seems to legitimate state power more than the private sector. And I believe that in that sense, the old notion of culture at the service of power is still around. In France, I would argue, culture legitimates a very stratified elitist ordering of society mostly through institutions of higher education.

The functions of culture will depend increasingly on race and ethnicity. And even in America, since market forces alone would be unhappy with non-popular culture, the state also serves some compensatory role. Not surprisingly these state agencies (NEH, NEA, USIA, etc.) are always threatened by populist reactions. Whereas in Germany (this is very striking) the state (I use the term at all levels) need not apologize for cultural sponsorship.

When I ask my question, how do we measure effectiveness, how do we measure output, if the output of culture is not just culture, I do not want to suggest that culture is only a legitimization mechanism for elites. It serves a far broader role in establishing the coherence of the whole society. It is still noteworthy that in America, the churches, which should not be underestimated, clearly are a source of popular culture, maybe not in the big “K sense” of the word *Kultur*, but in the small “c sense” of the term culture.

The issue of providing national coherence points to another dimension of contemporary culture in both Germany and America: the role of memorialization. Increasingly, I think the culture of memorialization, as Jeffrey Herf alluded to, becomes important in both our countries. Part of what is involved is the “heritage” business, which many observers have described especially for Britain and the United States. But part of what is involved is also the politics of what is called by political theorists the “politics of recognition” in the multicultural pluralist society. We in the United States see the culture of memorialization, or of memory work, more basically deployed by groups who claim victim status. Each minority in a certain sense has some claim on this status. Steven Spielberg

perhaps is our most gifted presenter of these claims in both his recent movies: *Schindler's List* and *Amistad*. Understandably there is also a politics of repentance in Germany, which finds expression in cultural manifestations. Increasingly in both our societies, the issues of cultural politics (sometimes debated in terms of monuments or exhibitions) are the politics of memory, the politics of recognition and the politics of repentance.

I am not sure that this is a great idea. I have said elsewhere that I would rather have a more forward-looking type of orientation. But nonetheless, we are all caught in this phase for at least a while longer yet. But the culture of memorialization presents certain problems. The Germans are quite used to dealing with the issue of memorialization and repentance in speeches, monuments, and in print. But, increasingly there are other problems that are inherent. Our cultures are increasingly cinematic visual culture and pop musical. Since the Reformation, Germany has been one of the world's obsessive print cultures, in a good sense; and now it makes the transition to a much more polymorphous visual and musical culture. Perhaps museums give us access to the visual realm of culture: We can talk about spinning the turnstiles. But face it, MTV is the cultural product that most of our young people probably cope with early on. How it should be integrated into cultural policy remains unclear.

This consideration leads to my final few remarks on the conditions, prospects, and perhaps appropriate responses for cultural policy. The first condition is the fragmented audience. Culture is no longer an elite project and it is no longer even a coherent project. Nonetheless, "multi-culti" is becoming an even more politically contested term in Germany than it is in America. If there is any one theme that best characterizes the emerging rhetoric of the intellectual right wing, it is the contempt for what they call "multi-culti" or multiculturalism. Multiculturalism thus provides a real adversarial theme for the Right, with regards to fragmented audiences. But all our audiences are going to become more and more fragmented; more quickly in America, but clearly in Germany, as well. That is why, as Barthold Witte recognized, the whole notion of dealing with *Auslands-Deutsche* became obsolete very early on. But this prospect leads to further the question: What does it mean to have a national culture? This in turn introduces the issue of globalization, which already has been mentioned.

Globalization is the second pervasive condition for cultural policy. It is not a problem for the United States. And that is the triumph of the English language. Personally, this causes some regret: I spent so much time trying to learn a few European languages. Now, as I move into the next stage of life, I reflect that I could have dispensed with it all. Just think what I could have done with all that time. The point is that it is very hard to make a case to people to

learn languages. We appeal to such values as acquiring a “profound” knowledge of other societies. We all believe in this, since we have all invested so much time; at least those of us who were not raised bilingual. Certainly language is important to culture. The French are clearly determined to defend it. The Germans defend it more fitfully. Unfortunately for Germany, when English is the passport to a worldwide elite—whether it is in South Asia or in Africa or in Asia—the relevance of German language acquisition really has to be scrutinized. What is the goal of trying to preserve this besieged language abroad?

We Americans who come of age at the end of the 20th century are enjoying a type of world imperial situation, a little like coming of age in Rome in 180 AD. The French are like the Greeks of the early Roman Empire. They know their language is really the language of learning and philosophy and speaks to God or to lovers. Germans do not quite have that French confidence in language. But without the sense of linguistic mission, the goals of national cultural policy must be questioned. One answer is the Europeanization of cultural policy, which in fact is clearly a very progressive stance that German cultural policy has taken up. Indeed my recommendation as a benevolent outsider would be to applaud the Germans an allowance for a sponsorship of multiple cultures, whether within the cadre of Europe or even globally. But if this is indeed the sensible way to go with cultural policy, then I would urge dropping the *Kulturnation* as a theme of the enterprise.

And drop even *Kulturgesellschaft* as a concept. Germany makes its most valid appeal, in my view, as sort of a *Wissenschaftspartner*. That is, Germany offers an expertise of learning and technology and music and art which is there to be tapped into, yet not as something particularly German, but because Germany happens to offer this wealth of cultural products. It is the richness and bounty of the output, not its national origin that will draw non-Germans to this particular cultural region in Central Europe.

Now, obviously, such a prescription is easy for me to make because I look out from Washington today and I say, “Well, we do not have to worry about this. Germans have to worry about that.” But it does strike me that maybe at the end of the day we all really have to rethink the siting or locations of culture. And if we rethink the siting of culture, then we must all envisage a communication of values that is less territorial and more socially functional.

Here perhaps is the arena where Germany can be most innovative in its cultural policy because it is clear that the French are incapable of doing this and the British do not see the problem in the same way. And there are not too

many nations who are really giving much thought to this new challenge besides the United States.

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