

Twentieth-Century German- American Relations: Historiography and Research Perspectives

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RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES IN GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS in the first half of the twentieth century have long been a privileged area and have been affected by the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945. Most German documents up to 1945 became available for research only a few years later. Washington established a relatively liberal policy for the use of American records. Most State Department files covering the period up to 1945, for example, were accessible by the mid-1960s. Less than ten years later, by the early 1970s, State Department records were opened through the year 1949; these files are now open through 1954. Until the introduction of a thirty-year rule in Great Britain in 1967, the excellent availability of source material for historical research on German-American relations was indeed unique. This special situation was also reflected in document series published both in the United States and in the Federal Republic of Germany.

But despite the availability of printed and archival source materials, both American and German historians were slow to discover German-American relations, which have oscillated between confrontation and cooperation since the beginning of this century, as a major field of research. Two primary reasons might be cited for this delay: historians first wanted to document the Third Reich's responsibility for the beginning of hostilities in 1939 and the Nazi plans to dominate Europe and ultimately the entire world; and in the immediate post-World War II period historical writing concentrated on the description

of visible diplomatic actions rather than on indirect or informal influences in the international system, which are characteristic of American diplomacy, particularly in the interwar period.

Since the late 1960s research on German-American relations has intensified, first concentrating on the interwar period (which will be discussed below) and more recently also on the post-World War II years. The growing interest in the latter period needs no explanation. Interest in the interwar period reflects a shift in the methodological approach to the interpretation of international relations, both in the United States and in West Germany. Since the late 1960s attention has increasingly focused on the role of domestic constellations in the formulation of a nation's foreign policy and the interdependence of foreign and domestic policies. In addition, economic factors have become more and more recognized as being of central importance when interpreting twentieth-century international relations. This school of thinking, which tends to emphasize structural elements rather than personal factors, could be characterized by mentioning the names of two exponents of the approach: William Appleman Williams and Hans-Ulrich Wehler. The latter contributed to the reception of the so-called "Williams school" in the Federal Republic, especially by his publications on American imperialism.¹ The debate within Germany as to whether Williams's approach could be regarded as a useful concept not only for the interpretation of American foreign policy but also for a better understanding of specific German-American problems obviously served to intensify research in the latter of these.

Although special attention has hitherto been given to the interwar years and to the reestablishment and development of German-American relations after World War II, the early twentieth century has been neglected. In 1958 Erich Angermann drew our attention to the major importance of the so-called second Venezuelan crisis of 1902-3, interpreting it as a turning point in German-American relations,² but we lack more recent publications, especially on the first decade of the twentieth century. Therefore it is good news that two contributions covering this period will be published in the not too distant future. Ragnhild Fiebig just finished a dissertation on German-American competition in Latin America during the 1890s and the first years of the twentieth century. Extensive archival research made it possible to analyze the emergence of antagonistic forces that ultimately shaped German-American relations before World War I.³ The author convincingly proves the central importance of the Venezuelan crisis of 1902-3 as a decisive factor in the further development of relations between

Berlin and Washington. As suggested by Angermann,⁴ Fiebig points out that the outcome of the Venezuelan crisis predetermined American intervention in 1917, and it was certainly important in explaining the deterioration of German-American relations during the following years. The rise of this German-American antagonism undoubtedly is an important research topic that needs further attention, especially in the larger context of the rise of antagonism between Great Britain and Germany and the emergence of a "special relationship" between Great Britain and the United States during the years following the Venezuelan crisis of 1895-96.⁵ The forthcoming study by Reiner Pommerin should contribute to this end.⁶ Both an analysis of bilateral relations and their interpretation in the context of the shifting balance in the international sphere since the 1890s are necessary to put American intervention of 1917 into a long-range historical perspective.⁷

The issues that led to a continuing deterioration of German-American relations from the eve of World War I to American intervention have been well documented.⁸ Reinhard Doerries's studies on bilateral relations are of particular value. In his book on Count Bernstorff and in various articles Doerries shows that the ambassador was one of the few officials in imperial Germany who did not underestimate the economic, strategic, and political importance of the United States. But the ambassador's opinion could neither influence his government's view of the United States nor its amateurish ambitions in Mexico.⁹

For more than fifty years, historians have been preoccupied with the issues of responsibility for World War I, American intervention, and the German "problem." A vast number of publications have been devoted to German war aims, American peace proposals, and Woodrow Wilson's struggle for a stable order in postwar central Europe. Terms such as "imperialism of idealism," "higher realism," "Puritanism and liberalism," "response to revolution," and "containment and counter-revolution" characterize the driving forces of Wilsonian diplomacy and at the same time indicate the wide range of divergent historical interpretations.¹⁰ The military defeat of imperial Germany turned out to be relatively easy when compared with the task of determining how to influence the internal political structure of Germany and how to integrate a "new" Germany into the international system or, more precisely, into a Western community challenged by Bolshevik revolution. This is the central theme of Klaus Schwabe's voluminous book *Deutsche Revolution und Wilson-Frieden* (German revolution and Wilson peace, 1971) in which he gives a detailed account of German-American relations from October 1918 through June 1919. In

supplementing Gordon Levin's interpretation, Schwabe makes a clear distinction between short-range and long-range aims in Wilsonian diplomacy toward the German problem. Germany was first to be punished before it could be reintegrated into a community of states, the author argues when discussing certain inconsistencies of Wilson's policy at Versailles.¹¹

By interpreting Wilson's domestic defeat on the Versailles Treaty as an American retreat from Europe, Schwabe—explicitly repudiating Williams's thesis on U.S.-European policy in the 1920s—by and large follows the traditional interpretation of American foreign policy after World War I.¹² But did Washington really retreat from Europe? Was the United States of the 1920s isolationist? Can one make a distinction between economic diplomacy and foreign policy in general or between economic isolationism and political isolationism in particular?¹³ The way these questions are answered is necessarily of great significance for the interpretation of German-American relations in the interwar period. In following the approach of the Wisconsin school, I am inclined to reject the thesis that American policy toward Europe in general and Germany in particular was isolationist in the 1920s.¹⁴

Many historians still hesitate to accept any economic interpretation—and the resulting political implications—of American foreign policy that stresses the importance of overseas markets and defines an expanding American export trade as a necessity for the United States because of its economic structure. But there has been a consensus among historians for a long time that American financial involvement in postwar Europe was considerable, despite an alleged retreat from the Old World. And there is a growing list of publications dealing with America's involvement in the reparation problem. Dieter Bruno Gescher published his dissertation covering the years 1920–24 in 1956. This primarily chronological account of events was taken up by Eckhard Wandel in his book on the period 1924–29, which was limited to the description of the financial mechanisms.¹⁵ More recent publications leave no doubt that this American financial involvement in Europe—through both reparations and war debts—had far-reaching political implications.¹⁶ But what exactly was the political significance of this American financial involvement? Did the Dawes Plan, for example, inaugurate the end of French predominance in Europe, as Stephen Schuker has suggested in his important book? In the context of German-American relations, Werner Link presented an epoch-making analysis in 1970 of American stabilization policy in Germany and its political dimensions.¹⁷ Link's book is of central importance in

explaining the origins and mechanisms of German-American cooperation of the 1920s. His interpretation of American foreign policy follows the approach of William A. Williams and his students. By applying this interpretation to German-American relations after World War I the author convincingly proves that Germany was of central importance for the United States both as a market and as a partner in the struggle to establish a worldwide open-door policy. Special attention is given to the German-American commercial treaty of 1923, which was based on the unconditional most-favored-nation clause and must be regarded as a model for American commercial treaties concluded with other states. In evaluating the importance of the German market Carl-Ludwig Holtfrerich goes a step further than Link does. In analyzing the effects of German inflation on foreign trade, Holtfrerich's quantitative analysis not only confirms the importance of the German market for some key United States products; in addition, he is convinced that inflationary expansion in Germany decisively contributed to overcoming the worldwide depression of 1920–21.¹⁸ Therefore it cannot be surprising that Germany became the cornerstone of Washington's policy toward Europe: "There can be no economic recuperation in Europe unless Germany recuperates," as Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes put it in December 1922.¹⁹

The various steps of American stabilization policy as most clearly evidenced in the Dawes Plan and the influx of American capital into the German economy are extensively analyzed by Link.²⁰ The overwhelming empirical evidence presented proves that Washington not only realized important economic goals but that the American government was also in the position to influence political developments in Europe. This political dimension of American stabilization policy occurred primarily because after the war the United States became the decisive factor in German foreign policy planning. For Berlin close cooperation with the United States was essential for both economic and political reasons. The influx of American capital was vital for the reconstruction and stabilization of the German economy. This economic reconstruction process was also defined in political terms: a strong economy and particularly an active trade policy were regarded as the most important levers to further German revisionist aims against the Versailles Treaty, a strategy that had already been formulated during the years 1918–19.²¹ The resulting German dependence on the United States offered Washington various opportunities to influence German economic and political decisions informally. The abortive Stresemann-Briand talks at Thoiry (1926) might be cited as an ex-

ample. Because of its great dependence on the United States the Weimar Republic is described as a "penetrated system."²²

The German-American parallelism was brought to an end by the collapse of the Weimar Republic. The dissolution process of the close German-American cooperation needs further examination.²³ Was the shift from cooperation to confrontation the result of Hitler's "Macht-ergreifung"? Were there any long-established structural divergences between Washington and Berlin that came to the surface during the Great Depression? Is the development of German-American relations during the depression just part of dissolving international politics?²⁴ Can the "penetrated system" thesis still be defended, if one takes into account how quickly the German-American cooperation of the 1920s actually ended? What influence did the Hoover administration still have in Europe in the early 1930s?

Although the process of the dissolution of German-American cooperation during the Great Depression needs further investigation, our information about German-American relations during the Nazi years seems to be excellent. A large number of books, articles, and dissertations are available covering a wide spectrum of important problems, such as bilateral diplomatic and economic relations,²⁵ the United States as a factor in the strategic and political thinking of the Nazi elite,²⁶ Nazi propaganda in the United States and the *Deutschtum* of Nazi Germany,²⁷ American reactions toward the prosecution of Jews,²⁸ the impact of German immigrants in the United States,²⁹ and the challenge to the U.S. government's interests by National Socialist ideological, economic, and finally territorial expansion.³⁰ This Nazi threat manifested itself dramatically in the Third Reich's policy vis-à-vis Latin America, which developed into an important zone of conflict between Washington and Berlin.³¹ This already long list of research topics could easily be expanded. Clearly, the main problem one faces when interpreting German-American relations during these years is not the lack of information but a determination of the relative importance of these factors for the development of the German-American confrontation in the 1930s and for the entry of the United States into World War II.

Because of the close economic cooperation between the two states in the 1920s, the dissolution of German-American parallelism during the Great Depression hurt economic relations between Berlin and Washington. It was not primarily the dramatic reduction of bilateral trade between the two countries but the competition in underdeveloped areas such as Latin America and southeastern Europe that alarmed

the Roosevelt administration, as Lloyd Gardner has pointed out in his *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy*.³² Although aggressive German export drives reduced the U.S. share in the import trade of various countries, especially in Latin America, there was an even more important matter of principle involved: German autarky and bilateral trade schemes (with Japan and Italy practicing similar methods) seriously challenged the Roosevelt administration's concept of an "indivisible world market"—to use a phrase of Detlef Junker's.³³ In Washington many decision makers regarded this challenge to America's open-door concept not only as a matter of foreign economic policy or foreign policy in general; they also stressed the domestic consequences for the United States: "Every blow at our foreign trade is a direct thrust at our economic and social life," as Assistant Secretary of State Francis B. Sayre put it in 1936.³⁴ How did Washington react to this German challenge? Were there any active elements in U.S. policy toward Nazi Germany before 1938? What did it really mean when Secretary of State Cordell Hull and others talked about "economic appeasement"?

The lack of diplomatic activity in Washington's relations with Hitler's Germany up to the end of 1938, when President Roosevelt stated on November 15 that the Nazi pogroms "had deeply shocked public opinion" in the United States and that he himself "could scarcely believe that such things could occur in a Twentieth Century civilization,"³⁵ has given historians occasion to define United States policy vis-à-vis Germany as a policy of appeasement. Arnold Offner, for example, has repeatedly maintained that the overriding aim of Washington's European policy was "to appease Germany during 1933-1940." Offner titled his important work on American policy toward Germany in the 1930s *American Appeasement*. In his survey on the origins of World War II, Offner, referring to various similarities in British and American policy, speaks in general terms of an "era of appeasement." And he concludes that during the year 1938 "American diplomacy floundered in the sea of appeasement." But was there anything like a general appeasement of Nazi Germany by the English-speaking world, as British historian Ritchie Ovendale has formulated?³⁶

Both a comparison of British and American policies toward Nazi Germany and the inclusion of economic factors into this comparative approach offer opportunities to challenge these interpretations and to describe American policy before the outbreak of hostilities in Europe as a more active one than a general appeasement formula might suggest. Recent historiography on British appeasement policy has

stressed the close interdependence of economics and politics in London's approach toward Germany. Bernd-Jürgen Wendt and others have demonstrated in great detail that the British policy of economic appeasement was not only aimed at reducing economic tensions in bilateral relations with Germany but was also seen in London as a means of pacifying Europe politically and therefore regarded as an integral part of overall foreign policy.³⁷ Economic agreements with Germany would obviously have great possibilities as "a stepping stone to political appeasement," as was repeatedly stressed by British diplomats.³⁸

Like the British policy toward Germany, the United States administration similarly based its policy on the realization of the close interdependence of economic and political problems. But the American concept of economic appeasement diverged fundamentally from the British approach. The Roosevelt administration shared the view that international cooperation in the economic field would reduce political tensions, but this did not mean agreement with British political strategies. Most members of the State Department advocated an uncompromising line toward the Third Reich: any concept of economic appeasement was to be applied on American conditions, namely, on the basis of an open-door policy as formulated in the reciprocal foreign trade program. Because this trade agreement system was expanding, it was argued, Germany would increasingly be subject to economic pressure in the field of foreign trade, which would be the basis for finally exerting political pressure on the Third Reich.³⁹ As the chief of the European desk put it: "The development of our trade agreement program will automatically put economic pressure on Germany, and in this we have a ready forged weapon in hand to induce Germany to meet general world trade and political sentiment."⁴⁰ According to the hard-liners in the State Department, trade concessions similar to those granted by London would only make it easier for the National Socialist regime to gain hegemony in Europe and to carry out its plans for world domination. Assistant Secretary of State George S. Messersmith stressed again and again that a hard line in the economic field would offer the opportunity to weaken National Socialist Germany both economically and politically.⁴¹ Ultimately the Reich would be forced to accept compromises both in the economic sphere and in foreign affairs. This active element of American policy toward Europe—which had been developed at a time when there was no question of a German military or strategic threat to U.S. security interests—is best evidenced in the Anglo-American trade talks of 1937–38.

The Anglo-American Trade Agreement of November 1938 was

a cornerstone of the economic "containment" strategy.⁴² The combined political-economic function of the agreement was repeatedly emphasized—by the State Department in particular. In the context of German-American relations the political significance of the trade agreement can hardly be overemphasized. In view of the isolationist trends in American public opinion and the neutrality legislation passed by Congress, the only instrument available for the Roosevelt administration in the field of foreign affairs up to 1939 was trade policy, specifically, the reciprocal trade agreements program. Even if one rejects the assumption that there were significant economic driving forces behind U.S. foreign policy, focusing instead on the political and ideological aspects of Roosevelt's prewar diplomacy, the instrumental use of trade policy nevertheless remains unaffected.

The importance of American trade policy in foreign affairs was clearly diagnosed by both the British government and the Nazi leadership. The British records clearly reveal the political relevance of the 1938 trade treaty with the United States. The delegates to the Imperial Conference of 1937 were informed by Neville Chamberlain that "the moral and psychological effects of such an agreement throughout the world would be tremendous, that it was through economic cooperation that American sympathy was to be won and that that sympathy would be of an incalculable value if we were once again involved in a great struggle." In July, the cabinet members agreed "to place on record the importance that they attached, from a political and international point of view, to the conclusion of a Trade Agreement with the United States of America."⁴³

In Berlin, the Anglo-American Trade Agreement was also interpreted as a political step directed against Germany. For the Nazi leadership it was therefore of utmost importance that these foreign policy aspects should not be discussed in public. Before the agreement was concluded the Ministry of Propaganda had confidentially given journalists an indication of its political significance; but at the same time instructions had been given that the trade agreement "should not give rise to speculation about a close political alliance of the western democracies."⁴⁴ When the trade agreement was signed, the German press was again expressly forbidden to indulge "in polemics about the agreement so as not to create the impression that we consider this as a victory of the democracies."⁴⁵ The Nazi leadership, however, was well aware that the conclusion of the trade agreement was of major political importance.

The example of the Anglo-American Trade Agreement clearly

demonstrates the integration of economic factors into American foreign policy toward Nazi Germany. A comparison between British and American foreign policy strategies might add new dimensions to the historical evaluation of relations between the United States and the Third Reich. The British and American files on the 1937–38 Anglo-American trade talks—which were not included by David Reynolds in his study on Anglo-American relations during the years 1937–41⁴⁶—contain impressive empirical evidence that should encourage such an approach. In taking account of these materials it is possible to go much further than did Callum MacDonald in his book *The United States, Britain, and Appeasement*. MacDonald states in his criticism of Offner's appeasement thesis that "a shift from appeasement to containment . . . took place in October 1938."⁴⁷ I would like to emphasize, however, that American policy toward Germany must be described as a containment strategy long before Munich. Further research on the political, strategic, and economic elements in Anglo-American relations in the late 1930s and early 1940s will certainly contribute to clarifying American policy toward the Third Reich and make clear that there never was an American appeasement of Nazi Germany.⁴⁸ From the Roosevelt administration's perspective, any compromise with the Third Reich would have undermined not only basic principles of American foreign policy but also the president's aim of an "indirect U.S. world leadership."⁴⁹ The projected Pax Americana as outlined in the Atlantic Charter implied serious threats to the British Empire. One can hardly imagine how Roosevelt could have been prepared to tolerate a Nazi Empire (collaborating with Japan) while he set about the task of dismantling the British Empire—despite the long-standing "special relationship" between Great Britain and the United States.

The extent to which National Socialist expansion was regarded as a major threat to America's global interests is also reflected in the Roosevelt administration's postwar planning. One of the main problems was to deal with defeated Nazi Germany in a manner that would eliminate the danger of future German aggression.⁵⁰ The most extreme approach was suggested by Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, who wanted to deprive Germany of the industrial capacity that had enabled it to upset the international status quo twice within a quarter of a century.⁵¹ But these discussions about a harsh approach toward Germany were soon to be reduced to a historical episode by a series of events that shaped the postwar international order in general and American policy in particular. Within two years after the defeat of the Third Reich the part of Germany under the immedi-

ate control of the Western powers had again emerged as a cornerstone of American stabilization policy toward Germany, which is symbolized in both the "destructive" Joint Chiefs of Staff directive 1067 of April 1945 and the "constructive" directive JCS 1779 of July 1947. This focus on the Western sectors was certainly a key factor in bringing about the economic revival of West Germany and finally the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The reconstruction of West Germany during the years 1945 to 1949 and the consolidation of the Federal Republic in the early 1950s has become a major field of historical research. The broad range of projects is perhaps best reflected in a number of essay collections,⁵² as well as in the excellent edition of documents on the *Vorgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*.⁵³ Because of the key role the United States played in the West German reconstruction process, American policy toward the Western zones of occupation and the Federal Republic has been of particular interest to both historians and political scientists.⁵⁴ This special interest is also evidenced in the impressive OMGUS project undertaken jointly by the Institut für Zeitgeschichte and the Bundesarchiv, which made many files of the American military government available for research in West Germany.⁵⁵

There is general agreement that the reconstruction of West Germany has to be seen in the context of international relations, particularly in the context of growing East-West tensions. There is no doubt that Germany was "a major theatre in the 'cold war.'"⁵⁶ But what exactly was the role of the United States concerning these growing East-West tensions in Germany, which resulted in the partition of the former Reich?⁵⁷ The debate on the reparation problem might be taken as just one example of the wide spectrum of divergent interpretations which are represented in the works of Bruce Kuklick and Otto Nübel and which is part of the ongoing controversy about the origins of the Cold War.⁵⁸

Although most commentators agree in principle on the interdependence between these international developments and German domestic issues, we are confronted with differing interpretations of the relative importance of external factors for specific developments in West Germany. Two questions might be raised here which are closely connected with American reconstruction policy in Germany and in particular with the Marshall Plan: (1) When did the reconstruction process actually start? and (2) Did the United States insist that West German recovery take place in the framework of a restored private capitalist system?

It has long been taken for granted that the beginning of the economic reconstruction process was brought about by foreign aid (particularly the Marshall Plan), currency reform, and the introduction of the social market economy to West Germany. This traditional interpretation has been repeatedly challenged by Werner Abelshauser, who argues that "the deadlock of German industry was broken and a substantial beginning was made before currency reform took place in June 1948" and that the social market economy had already been significantly modified toward corporatism by the time the ultimate breakthrough took place in the early 1950s. But Abelshauser also confirms the leading role of United States policy in Germany for the beginning of the economic recovery by drawing our attention to the paradox that although specific American contributions seem to have been less crucial for this breakthrough, "the U.S. Military Government was quite successful in priming the German economy with German means and resources at a very early stage of postwar development."⁵⁹ This early priming of the German economy must certainly be seen as part of General Lucius Clay's pragmatic stabilization policy before the inauguration of the Marshall Plan.⁶⁰ And such a development could not have taken place against the declared will of the U.S. government.

Another controversial issue is the question whether the U.S. government's policy toward postwar Germany was guided by the assumption that the restoration of democracy and capitalism in West Germany necessarily went hand in hand. Significant political forces in postwar Germany were bent on establishing different socioeconomic systems as alternatives to capitalism, but they failed to realize their anticapitalist objectives. The so-called revisionists take it for granted that a major aim of the Truman administration was to reintegrate West Germany into a Western capitalist system and to revamp the German economy according to the American model of free enterprise. Lloyd Gardner, for example, described policy toward Germany as being reactionary: "What actually took place in Western Germany . . . was an American counterrevolution—against the policy of . . . German social democrats, and, finally, European radicalism." In challenging the revisionist interpretation, Dörte Winkler even went so far as to speak of the American policy of socialization in Germany. More recently, Werner Link in his article on the Marshall Plan supported Winkler's approach. Link is convinced that "the American Government would not have rejected a [German] democratic decision to socialize basic industries." But this interpretation has to be revised again in light of the British files. As Horst Lademacher and Rolf Steininger were able to

prove, the Attlee government's plans to socialize the Ruhr mines were blocked by the U.S. government. Financial difficulties forced the British government to accept the American position. As General Robertson put it: "He who pays the piper calls the tune."⁶¹

The debate on the motives and the failure of British socialization policy in Germany is more than just another example to underline the vital role of the United States in the West German reconstruction process. This debate also makes clear that the results and mechanisms of United States policy toward postwar Germany cannot be exclusively understood by a purely bilateral view. Again, the inclusion of the British factor and in particular research in the British archival material open new dimensions for the interpretation of America's role in the West German reconstruction process. Continued research on the Marshall Plan would offer an excellent opportunity to advance such a multilateral approach.

Although a number of publications deal with the Marshall Plan, many questions concerning its impact on Germany have yet to be satisfactorily answered.⁶² What exactly was the impact of the Marshall Plan on economic growth and the shaping of the economic order in West Germany? Can the Marshall Plan be interpreted as a "crash program"⁶³ or was it part of long-range policy planning? What is the function of West Germany in the context of Washington's European policy and the origins of the Cold War? Can the significance of the Marshall Plan for the various European countries be compared? How were the economic interests of the United States defined when the plan was inaugurated? And, finally, what were the elements of continuity in the American stabilization policy in Europe during the 1920s and the late 1940s?

There are obviously striking similarities between American stabilization strategies in Europe after both world wars. In both periods Germany became the cornerstone of American policy toward Europe, and as in the late 1920s, the problem of how to stabilize Germany and Europe was primarily defined in economic terms. This interpretation is convincingly presented by Werner Link in his comparison of United States reconstruction policies during the two postwar periods.⁶⁴ Both in the 1920s and after World War II American stabilization policies in Germany formed the basis for extraordinarily close German-American cooperation in the political field as well. It is important to emphasize the continuities of the cooperative phases in German-American relations and to report their "success." But it is also necessary to explore the causes of conflicts of the past to become more sensitive to potential

frictions between the two powers in the future. A reexamination of German-American relations during the first half of our century (a period for which a vast number of unpublished sources are available) might not only contribute to a better understanding of developments during the second half of the twentieth century; it might also aid in recognizing divergences between the two powers more quickly. And this could be a first important step in solving actual and potential problems in German-American relations. Because of the experiences of the past, such a reexamination of various phases in German-American relations should give more attention to the political dimensions of economic factors and above all follow a multilateral rather than a bilateral approach. As history shows, the relations between the two powers since the beginning of this century have had far-reaching implications for the international system and have been vital for both Germany and the United States.

Notes

1. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1959; 2d rev. ed. New York: Dell, 1972). See especially Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Der Aufstieg des amerikanischen Imperialismus. Studien zur Entwicklung des Imperium Americanum 1865-1900* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), and his earlier article, "1889—Wendepunkt der amerikanischen Aussenpolitik. Die Anfänge des modernen Panamerikanismus—Die Samoakrise," *Historische Zeitschrift* 201 (1965): 57-109; on the reception of the Williams school in West Germany, Werner Link, "Die Aussenpolitik der USA 1919-1933. Quellen und neue amerikanische Literatur," *Neue Politische Literatur* 12 (1967): 343-56; Link, "Die amerikanische Aussenpolitik aus revisionistischer Sicht," *ibid.* 16 (1971): 205-20; Hans-Jürgen Schröder, "Ökonomische Aspekte der amerikanischen Aussenpolitik, 1900-1923," *ibid.* 17 (1972): 298-321.
2. Erich Angermann, "Ein Wendepunkt in der Geschichte der Monroe-Doktrin und der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen. Die Venezuelakrise von 1902/03 im Spiegel der amerikanischen Tagespresse," *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien* 3 (1958): 22-58.
3. Ragnhild Fiebig, "Lateinamerika als Konflikttherd der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen, 1890-1903," (Ph.D. dissertation, Cologne, 1984).
4. Angermann, "Wendepunkt," 57-58.
5. Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980); Kennedy, "British and German Reactions to the Rise of American Power," in Roger J. Bullen et al., eds., *Ideas into Politics: Aspects of European History, 1880-1950* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 15-24.
6. Reiner Pommerin, *Deutsch-amerikanische Beziehungen zwischen Realität und Perzeption, 1890-1917* (forthcoming).

7. See Alfred Vagts, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten in der Weltpolitik*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1935).
8. Hans W. Gatzke, "The United States and Germany on the Eve of World War I," in Imanuel Geiss and Bernd-Jürgen Wendt, eds., *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1973), 271-86.
9. Reinhard R. Doerries, *Washington-Berlin 1908/1917. Die Tätigkeit des Botschafters Johann Heinrich Graf von Bernstorff in Washington vor dem Eintritt der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika in den Ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1975; American ed. forthcoming); see also Doerries's articles: "Imperial Berlin and Washington: New Light on Germany's Foreign Policy and America's Entry into World War I," *Central European History* 11 (1978): 23-49; "The Politics of Irresponsibility: Imperial Germany's Defiance of United States Neutrality during World War I," in Hans L. Trefousse, ed., *Germany and America: Essays on Problems of International Relations and Immigration* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1980), 3-20; see also Jürgen Möckelmann, *Deutsch-amerikanische Beziehungen in der Krise. Studien zur amerikanischen Politik im ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1967); Kennedy, "British and German Reactions," 24.
10. Williams, *Tragedy*, chap. 2; Arthur S. Link, *The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson and Other Essays* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971); Klaus Schwabe, *Woodrow Wilson. Ein Staatsmann zwischen Puritanertum und Liberalismus* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1971); N. Gordon Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics: America's Response to War and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counter-revolution at Versailles, 1918-1919* (New York: Random House, 1969).
11. Klaus Schwabe, *Deutsche Revolution und Wilson-Frieden. Die amerikanische und deutsche Friedensstrategie zwischen Ideologie und Machtpolitik 1918/19* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1971).
12. *Ibid.*, 658.
13. See Melvyn P. Leffler, "Political Isolationism, Economic Expansionism, or Diplomatic Realism? American Policy toward Western Europe, 1921-1933," in *Perspectives in American History* 8 (1974): 413-68; Klaus Schwabe, *Der amerikanische Isolationismus in 20. Jahrhundert. Legende und Wirklichkeit* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1975).
14. An excellent survey of differing interpretations of American foreign policy in the 1920s is given by John Braeman, "American Foreign Policy in the Age of Normalcy: Three Historiographical Traditions," in *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 26 (1981): 125-58.
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38. Hudson minute, July 8, 1938, Public Record Office, Kew, FO 371/21647.

39. See especially the debate within the State Department on the German trade agreement offer of October 1937 in Record Group 59, 611.6231/998ff., National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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41. Numerous documents in the Messersmith Papers, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware, and in the relevant files in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, and the State Department records.

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