Hélène Miard-Delacroix, Reflections on the Pre-History of the Present. 25 Years of the "Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland"

The publication of the most recent volume of the diplomatic documents of the Federal Republic of Germany (1984) provides us with the opportunity to ponder on the historical situation 30 years ago. By analysing this period with a historical perspective, the article aims to establish whether this past can be understood as a precursor for our present concerns. In many regards, this period undoubtedly belongs to what can be viewed today as "history" (e.g. the USSR, divided Germany and South African Apartheid), but some issues faced by German diplomacy in 1984 are still current today. Although they were underestimated at the time, many characteristics of present conflicts were already clearly identifiable. In several ways, the practices and the objectives of 1984 German diplomacy can be seen both as an example and an inspiration for our modern time.

$\it Frank~B\"{o}sch,$ Between the Shah and Khomeini: The Federal Republic of Germany and the Islamic Revolution in Iran

Even contemporaries saw the Iranian Revolution of 1979 as an important caesura which increased fears of radical Islamic violence worldwide. As the Federal Republic had maintained very close relations to Iran during the time of the Shah, a severance of relations with the Islamic Republic in similar fashion as the USA was to be expected. On the contrary this article, based on archival sources, shows that West German politicians and businesses engaged with the new clerical leadership and in so doing were relatively unaffected by the public human rights discourse despite mass executions. The previous economic and cultural connections to Iran facilitated the setting up of political bridges and resulted in the role of the Federal Republic as a pragmatic intermediary, also towards the USA. As hitherto classified files reveal in detail, the Germans were also able to play a key role during the secret negotiations regarding the hostage crisis in the American embassy in Tehran. Even though the protests against human rights violations increased in the autumn of 1981, politicians and businessmen, in principal, continued with these pragmatically maintained relations.

Christof Dipper, Italian Contemporary Historiography. A Snapshot

Since 2012 anyone who wishes to apply for an Italian professorship must first receive the proof of his or her scientific suitability (*Abilitazione Nazionale Scientifica*). The commissions assigned this task thus receive a very clear insight regarding the applicants in their respective subjects. Over the past two years, 631 candidates in total have applied for *Storia contemporanea*; it is their output which will be presented and assessed here. As two thirds had to be considered as unsuitable, the overall assessment can only be negative, even if many applicants undoubtedly reach an international level of accomplishment. The reasons, first of all, are to be found in the collapsing university system, which in its current configuration would not be helped at all by the influx of additional money. From the perspective of cultural anthropology one could say, that a notable part of Italian faculties

have decoupled themselves from international standards against a background of policies marked by a remarkable degree of ignorance regarding the consequences of strategies hostile to education – such an assessment would, however, be a slap in the face for the excellent minority. The benchmark must be derived from the international consensus regarding *best practice*.

Richard Wolin, Heidegger's Black Notebooks: National Socialism, World Jewry, and the History of Being

Heidegger intended the *Black Notebooks*, which were recently published in Germany, as the culminating achievement of his 102-volume *Collected Works* edition. They represent, among other things, a stark reaffirmation of his philosophical commitment to National Socialism – and, as such, a point of no return for Heidegger scholarship. But what the *Black Notebooks* also disturbingly reveal is Heidegger's obsession with "World Jewry" in the most negative and cliché-ridden terms: as a pivotal source of cultural and social dissolution that must be eliminated in order to realise National Socialism's "inner truth and greatness" – as Heidegger himself put it in 1935. How, then, should one go about resolving the conundrum of a great thinker who remained entirely convinced that the Nazi regime, with its unbridled racism and exterminationist militarism, represented an adequate solution to the "decline of the West"?

Christopher Nehring, The Arrest of Till Meyer in Bulgaria – A Marginal Note from the Bulgarian State Security Archives

The arrest of Till Meyer, terrorist and member of the 2 June Movement, in Bulgaria in the summer of 1978 is to this day one of the less familiar chapters in the history of West German terrorism and anti-terror policy. This article presents new facts about the circumstances of the arrest which result from comprehensive research in the archives of the East German and Bulgarian state security services (Dyrzhavna sigurnost). This allows for the partial verification as well as crucial expansion of the existing understanding of the course of events. Meyer's arrest by the West German Bundeskriminalamt (BKA - Federal Criminal Police Office) in a foreign country which was part of the Socialist Bloc, which is the subject of the detailed reconstruction here, was an extraordinary act and part of a diplomatic rapprochement between socialist Bulgaria and the Federal Republic. It also occurred within the larger context of cooperation attempts on the part of the BKA under Horst Herold with Eastern Bloc countries, from which the East German Stasi was however excluded (for good reasons). In the East German Ministry of State Security, the arrest was castigated as a breach of trust on the part of their Bulgarian partner and led to harsh accusations.

Peter Hoeres, Trapped in the Analytical-Normative Westernisation of Contemporary History. A Critique of the Zeitbögen Concept

The article discusses the concept of *Zeitbögen* [time spans] to identify periods and to conceptualise German history in the 20th century, as it was recently presented in this journal by Anselm Doering-Manteuffel. In general, the concept may be re-

garded as being sustainable, even though certain details require correction. Above all, this critique is concerned with the concept's strong analytical and normative orientation towards "Westernisation". It constrains perspectives and ignores important developments of German and European history. In contrast, the paper advocates to broaden the concept's scope and to take into account other important trends and processes in order to overcome any kind of functionalisation of German history.

$\it Steffen \ Kailitz, \ Democracy \ and \ Economic Policy \ during the Weimar Republic from an International Comparative Perspective. A Reply to the Article by Tim B. Müller$

While the first German democracy was by no means doomed to failure, it was also by no means an "established democracy", as Tim B. Müller asserts. Unlike Müller's comparative cases – the USA, Great Britain and the Scandinavian states – democracy in Germany had only come into being after the First World War due to a revolution. Fundamental structural problems were severe burdens for this new democracy. It would be a major setback for research into Weimar to follow Müller and ultimately attribute the fall of the first German democracy to a single cause, namely that "the wrong men" around Brüning were in government "at the wrong time" and pursued a "wrong", i.e. non-Keynesian, economic policy.