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For editorial comments or inquiries, please contact  
the editor at [wetzell@ghi-dc.org](mailto:wetzell@ghi-dc.org) or at the address below.

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German Historical Institute  
1607 New Hampshire Ave NW  
Washington DC 20009-2562  
USA

Phone: (202) 387-3355

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## Preface

This issue of the *Bulletin* features a thematic *Forum* on “Rethinking Cross-Border Connections,” edited by three GHI research fellows – Andreas Greiner, Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş, and Mario Peters, who are pursuing research projects on mobility infrastructures in a global history perspective – in cooperation with Roland Wenzlhuemer. Their research reflects the fact that the German Historical Institute focuses not only on German, North American, and transatlantic history but has, for some time, also been supporting and conducting research in global history. The *Forum’s* examination of border crossing is also connected to the research program on the history of migration and mobility that has developed at the institute since 2015, and which grew out of the GHI’s longstanding engagement with the migration of German speakers to North America from the seventeenth century to the present.

As the guest editors’ introduction to the *Forum* explains in greater detail, the common theme of the *Forum’s* three feature articles – and the guest editors’ own research projects – is that they examine cross-border infrastructures not only with the aim of revealing increasing connectivity but pay equal attention to deficiencies, disruptions, and blockages in mobility, thereby providing a corrective to narratives of globalization that stress ever-increasing connections. The international team of junior scholars writing in this *Forum* explores this theme via three very different case studies: Andreas Guidi (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, INALCO, Paris) examines cross-border mobility in interwar Europe through the figure of Carlos Fernandez Bacula, a diplomat involved in the drug trade, dubbed “Dope Ring Diplomat” by the tabloid press. Lars Kury (Institute for European Global Studies, Basel) analyzes the transformation of the Strait of Malacca into a global transit corridor in the second half of the nineteenth century. Charlotte Hoes

(University of Göttingen) investigates the complex cross-border network of the early twentieth-century international wildlife trade through the lens of a German animal trade company. The *Forum* concludes with an essay by the distinguished global historian Roland Wenzlhuemer (Munich Centre for Global History, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich), in which he traces his own “journey from researching global connectivity to emphasizing elements of disconnection.”

This issue’s conference reports report on a series of conferences on different aspects of the history of mobility and migration – on child migration, information networks during and after the Holocaust, and the socio-spatial dynamics of mobility – but also reflect the wide spectrum of historical topics examined at GHI conferences: the connections between the history of anti-Semitism and the history of sexuality; the history of Utopian settlements; digital history; and the pursuit of science in conservative religious settings after 1945.

Please turn to our news section for recent GHI news. For up-to-date information on upcoming events (which are mostly taking place in person again), publications, fellowships, and calls for papers, please consult the GHI website at <http://www.ghi-dc.org>, check our twitter account at <https://twitter.com/GHIWashington> or sign up for our digital newsletter at <https://ghidc.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/ghidc/subscribe.jsp>. We look forward to welcoming you again in both Washington and Berkeley.

**Simone Lässig** (Director) and  
**Richard F. Wetzell** (Editor)





# **Forum: Rethinking Cross-Border Connections**

**Edited by  
Andreas Greiner  
Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş  
Mario Peters  
Roland Wenzlhuemer**



# Rethinking Cross-Border Connections: An Introduction

Andreas Greiner

German Historical Institute Washington

Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş

German Historical Institute Washington

Mario Peters

German Historical Institute Washington

Cross-border connections have long been a central topic at the German Historical Institute (GHI) Washington; not only in its daily life but also in its research program. Founded with a focus on transatlantic history, the Institute has always been concerned with political relations, cultural ties, and economic networks across the United States, Germany, and Europe. Likewise, connections in the form of migration remain a core research field at the GHI. Its longstanding engagement with the migration of German-speakers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has culminated in the recent launch of *Migrant Connections*, a digital research infrastructure for historical sources on German immigration to the United States.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.migrantconnections.org/>

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2 <https://transit.hypotheses.org/>

Since the mid-2010s, the GHI has considerably expanded its geographical scope and put an even greater emphasis on transnational connections through new research projects situated within the fields of global history/transregional history as well as Latin American and transpacific history.

Migration became a central pillar of this geographically broadened approach as GHI-affiliated researchers now look beyond the flows of European migrants across the Atlantic and analyze migrant groups and receiving societies around the world, especially in an inter-American and transpacific perspective. The GHI's Pacific Office at UC Berkeley, California, founded in 2017, serves as a hub for these endeavors. Mobility has become the second central pillar of this research program. Studying different mobile groups, objects, information, and ideas, recent and current GHI researchers have worked on expanding the study of migration history to include the history of mobility flows in a broader sense. The conference series and standing working group *In Global Transit*, for instance, puts refugees' experiences of mobility and travel front and center and explores the spatial and temporal dimensions of transit – the peculiar phase between departure and arrival.<sup>2</sup>

The three co-editors of this thematic forum on “Rethinking Cross-Border Connections” joined the ranks of the GHI in 2020/2021 – itself a time of heightened immobility due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Spatial mobility and its social impacts and asymmetries are at the core of our individual research projects, which all investigate global mobility infrastructure systems. Mario Peters, marrying mobility studies with the history of knowledge, studies the history of the Pan-American Railroad, a never completed railroad from Canada to Patagonia. He examines the cooperation and exchange of knowledge between North American and Latin American experts working on this transcontinental infrastructure project in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Andreas Greiner and Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş both focus on airborne

infrastructure. Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş explores the changing role of air routes and airports in global refugee movements and asylum migration. Covering the period from the 1930s to the 1990s and focusing on the Rhine-Main Airport Frankfurt, the project investigates both the specific humanitarian potentials linked to airborne escapes and their limitations in the face of tightening migration regimes. Andreas Greiner's project studies the development of world-spanning airline services in the interwar period. Focusing on the commercial airlines of imperial states and their route networks to overseas colonies and dominions, Andreas Greiner applies a multi-layered approach to infrastructure history and investigates how local conditions and actors could exert decisive impacts on global structures.

Besides a mutual interest in large-scale infrastructure, there is one theme common to all our projects, namely the deficiencies of these logistical systems and the weakness of the connections they engender. Carefully planned railroad tracks were never laid; airports in tropical areas succumbed to the annual rainy season; the airplane's promise of moving people across large distances only pertains to a fraction of the world's population, and certainly not to those needing it most. Our research on cross-border infrastructures, therefore, is not only about connectivity, mobility, and exchange, but also about their presumed opposites: fissures, disruptions, and blockages in infrastructures and thus in the flows of mobility proceeding along them. The blind spots in global networks caught our attention, and we believe that disintegration and disentanglement are equally important keystones in the history of mobilities and migrations as the flows of goods and people themselves.

With this shift in focus, our research joins a growing corpus of literature in the field of global history writing. Ever since the rising trend of global history in the early 2000s, numerous studies have celebrated the exploration of past border-crossings and far-reaching transregional relations. The reassessment of

**3** Emily S. Rosenberg, ed., *A World Connecting 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

**4** Skeptical voices: Sebastian Conrad, *Globalgeschichte. Eine Einführung* (Munich, 2013), 27; Richard Drayton and David Mortadel, "Discussion: The Futures of Global History," *Journal of Global History* 13 (2018) 1: 1–21; Jeremy Adelman, "What is Global History Now?" *Aeon*, March 2, 2017, <https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment>; Andreas Eckert, "Die Globalgeschichte wirft den Anker aus. Globalgeschichte ist mit dem erstarkenden Nationalbewusstsein in die Kritik geraten. Hat sie zu sehr im Globalen geschwelgt?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 10, 2017. For a critical analysis of the vocabulary of Global History: Stefanie Gänger, "Circulation. Reflections on Circularity, Entity and Liquidity in the Language of Global History," *Journal of Global History* 12, 3 (2017): 303–318. For a critical reflection on the concept of global history from the perspective of area studies, see Gabriela de Lima Grecco/Sven Schuster, "Decolonizing Global History? A Latin American

the past as "A World Connecting"<sup>3</sup> (Emily S. Rosenberg) has indeed formed one of most crucial historiographical changes in the new millennium. The initial enthusiasm, however, has provoked growing skepticism toward smooth narratives of ever-increasing connectivity, mobility flows, and networks.<sup>4</sup> As a result, new scholarly works began to reconsider global history as an interplay of connections and interruptions, of integration and exclusion, of expansion and reterritorialization. Two approaches, in particular, have informed this trend: first, the approach that focuses on tensions between flows and control and the ways in which global entanglements went hand in hand with the making of new forms of territorial control, spaces, and border practices;<sup>5</sup> second, the approach that "zooms in" on the connections themselves in order to examine the infrastructures, media, and journeys that enable and embody exchanges across borders and to reveal their internal logics, contradictions, and ruptures.<sup>6</sup>

The authors of this introduction have pursued this recent dialectical take on global history in several conference panels and in an international conference, *Roads to Exclusion: Socio-Spatial Dynamics of Mobility Infrastructures since 1800*, that was jointly organized with Roland Wenzlhuemer of the

Perspective," *Journal of World History* 31, 2 (2020): 425–446; Frederick Cooper, "What Is the Concept of Globalization Good for? An African Historian's Perspective," *African Affairs* 100 (2001): 189–213.

**5** Among others: Claudia Bauman/Antje Dietze/Megan Maruschke, "Portals of Globalization. An Introduction," *Comparativ* 27 (2017) no. 3–4: 7–20; Michael Geyer,

"Spatial Regimes," in *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, eds. Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier (Basingstoke, 2009), 962–966; Matthias Middell, "Global History and the Spatial Turn. From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization," *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 149–170.

**6** Among others: Martin Dusingberre/

Roland Wenzlhuemer, "Editorial. Being in Transit. Ships and Global Incompatibilities," *Journal of Global History* 11 (2016), no. 2: 155–162; Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Mobilität und Kommunikation in der Moderne* (Göttingen, 2020); Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Globalgeschichte schreiben. Eine Einführung in 6 Episoden* (Munich, 2017).

Käte Hamburger Kolleg *global dis:connect – Dis:connectivity in Processes of Globalization* at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Held at the German Historical Institute from September 8 to 10, 2022, this conference explored the intended and unintended dynamics of inclusion and exclusion entailed in transportation infrastructures around the globe. Coming from academic institutions on four continents, the conference participants discussed the exclusionary effects in infrastructure planning, its spatial and social practices, its effects on marginalized groups, as well as the resilience and resistance of these groups.<sup>7</sup> Several participants could not travel to Washington due to visa restrictions and took part via Zoom. Organizing a conference with participants from all around the world, therefore, was also a very practical experience of exclusive and inclusive infrastructures.

<sup>7</sup> See conference report in this issue.

### **This Bulletin Forum**

With a thematic focus on global connections and simultaneous processes of disruption and disentanglement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the *Bulletin Forum* brings together a broad range of historical and geographical settings. Its central aim is to help amend still-dominant narratives of connectivity. It complicates what is usually subsumed under the term “connection” and sheds light on the multiplicity of connections, their different intensity and temporality, the tensions between different types of connections, tight and loose, and their absence. The contributions address topics such as the role of borders, the channeling and limitations of human and non-human mobility and contested or subversive movement that escaped attempts to control. Of equal interest is the grounded character of cross-border connections, that is their specific localities and the ways they affected the larger contexts.

The first article, by Andreas Guidi, provides an engaging example of such a grounded analysis: the spectacular case of

8 *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire. Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. David Lambert and Alan Lester (Cambridge, 2006); *Globale Lebensläufe. Menschen als Akteure im weltgeschichtlichen Geschehen*, ed. Bernd Hausberger (Vienna, 2006) 9-27; Isabella Löhr, "Lives Beyond Borders, or: How to Trace Global Biographies, 1880-1950," *Comparativ* 23 (2013), No. 6: 7-21.

Carlos Bacula. Bacula found himself in the middle of a media scandal in the 1930s. Holding a Peruvian diplomatic passport, he was accused of being the key figure of a world-spanning drug trade network. His case points to the importance of individual mobility within larger, cross-border trafficking structures; and it highlights how elite mobility can be both privileged and frail as he lost his diplomatic passport due to political changes in Peru. Moreover, the case reminds us that mobile connections were of both a material *and* a discursive nature: media, police, governments, and Bacula himself spread different, contradictory, and hyperbolic narratives about his connectivity. Those narratives reflected more general views about transborder connections, the threats associated with them, and the measures to be taken against them. Global historians have demonstrated that individual biographies of border-crossers can help to investigate larger global structures.<sup>8</sup> Andreas Guidi's article suggests that the narratives about such an individual, rather than its actual biography, allow us to examine diverging perceptions, fears, and expectations regarding the power of borders and their transgression.

Lars Kury's article investigates the Strait of Malacca – the water corridor connecting the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean between what today is Indonesia and Malaysia – and the historical tin trade along the straits. Tin was in very high demand in the nineteenth century and extracted on a large scale on the Malay Peninsula. Lars Kury uses the exploitation, trade, and transportation of tin along and through the Strait of Malacca as a starting point for a reflection on transit and shifting connections in global history. Trade patterns in the region shifted over time due to political changes, economic demands, technological developments, and topological factors. This led to the relative decline of the trade port of Malacca and production sites in the coastal hinterland as well as to the rise of new mining districts and trade hubs, in particular Singapore. The article thus highlights the temporal dimension of spatial con-



nectivity. It overcomes a linear concept of globalization by zooming in on a global transit corridor and showing how connections within this bustling shipping channel transformed and both weakened and strengthened over time, depending on global as well as local factors.

In the last article of this forum, Charlotte Hoes makes a compelling case for the existence of inner ruptures within seemingly “flawless” connections in her study of the German animal trading company L. Ruhe KG, one of the largest wildlife traders in the world at the time. At first glance, the case of Ruhe’s animal trade seems like an epitome of global connectivity. But by focusing on the company’s activities in the 1920s – the peak of its trade business – the article reveals the many different factors preventing the global wildlife trade from ever becoming a flawless operation. The lack of transport links, such as the much-needed shipping line from Hamburg to Djibouti, as well as the lack of adequate railroad connections within East Africa, which forced the traders to take the animals on long cross-country marches, increased the stress on the animals, and jeopardized profits. Then there were the “administrative challenges”: import permits, passports, and examinations by veterinarians. Diseases were impossible to control. And so was the non-compliant or even resistant behavior of caught animals. Charlotte Hoes demonstrates that research on the global wildlife trade can help to critically scrutinize the dominant narrative of global connectivity.

In sum, this special issue highlights the simultaneity of growing connections, ruptures, and disintegration and thus the complexity and multi-layered nature of globalization processes. Writing global history beyond the ubiquitous connectivity-narrative, as all authors of this special issue aptly demonstrate, requires careful, meticulous source-based analysis because the weak or even non-existing connection can easily slip the historian’s gaze. And it sometimes requires a bit of luck in the archives, as Roland Wenzlhuemer recognizes in his concluding essay. While we set out with an

institutional history of how the GHI came to its interest in global disentanglements and disintegration, Roland Wenzlhuemer provides a personal account of how the topic came to influence his work. His conclusion, reflecting on his own research and archival experiences, underlines that global connectivity and what he calls “disconnectivity” were not mutually exclusive, but simultaneous and interwoven processes.

**Andreas Greiner** is a research fellow in Global and Transregional History at the GHI Washington. He received his Ph.D. in History from ETH Zurich in 2019. Before joining the GHI in January 2021, he was a postdoctoral fellow in the Max Weber Program at the European University Institute in Florence. In 2021, Greiner received the Walter-Markov-Prize of the European Network in Universal and Global History. His research focuses on infrastructure networks, their spatiality and materiality in the long 19th and early 20th centuries. In his current project, he examines the entangled history of intercontinental airline networks in the interwar period.

**Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş** is a research fellow in Global and Transregional History at the GHI Washington. She earned her Ph.D. in History from Heidelberg University in 2018 and is the author of *Verflochtene Nationsbildung: Die Neue Türkei und der Völkerbund, 1918-38* (2020). Her fields of research include global and international history, Ottoman-Turkish history, the history of migration, and mobility studies. In her ongoing second book project, she explores air routes and airports as sites of refugee history and migration control.

**Mario Peters** is a research fellow in American History at the GHI Washington. Prior to this position he was a Feodor Lynen postdoctoral fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt

Foundation and Visiting Scholar at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Previously he was an assistant professor, teaching Latin American and Caribbean history, at Leibniz University in Hannover, Germany. He is the author of *Apartments for Workers: Social Housing, Segregation, and Stigmatization in Urban Brazil* (2018). His current research interests are spread across the intersection of mobility studies, environmental history, and the study of Inter-American relations.



# The “Dope Ring Diplomat”: Privileged Mobility, International Intelligence, and the True Crime Press in the Interwar Period

Andreas Guidi

Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), Paris

Among the prisoners of the Tourelles concentration camp, run by the Nazi occupiers in Paris during the Second World War, Carlos Fernandez Bacula was surely the only one who had attended one of the wealthiest boarding schools, in Sankt Gallen, had a diplomatic career in Vienna and Oslo, and engaged in militancy in a Latin American socialist party. Some inmates might have recognized his face or life story because, a few years before the outbreak of the war, Bacula had gained a certain celebrity in the international press as a notorious drug trafficker.

Dubbed the “Dope Ring Diplomat” by the tabloid *New York Mirror* in 1938, Bacula stood for what sensationalist journalists were looking for in the 1930s: mysterious and extravagant drug traffickers to give faces and names to the anxiety concerning porous state borders.<sup>1</sup> Such anxiety was propagated by the media while governments imposed stricter regulations on mobility. Traffickers and their scandalous crimes also epitomized the dangers that narcotics posed to the morality and hygiene of the national body politic. The obsession with transnational

<sup>1</sup> John Kobler, “Behind the Capture of the ‘Dope Ring Diplomat,’” *New York Mirror*, July 3, 1938. See also: David C. Petrucci, “A Scourge of Humanity: International Crime, Law, and Policing in Interwar Europe” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2015), 239.

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**2** Among the many titles: Kathryn Meyer and Terry M. Parssinen, *Webs of Smoke: Smugglers, Warlords, Spies, and the History of the International Drug Trade* (Lanham, 1998); Douglas Valentine, *The Strength of the Wolf: The Secret History of America's War on Drugs* (London, 2004).

**3** Diana S. Kim, *Empires of Vice: The Rise of Opium Prohibition across Southeast Asia* (Princeton, 2020), 3–4; Steffen Rimner, *Opium's Long Shadow: From Asian Revolt to Global Drug Control* (Cambridge, MA, 2018), 2.

**4** Cyrus Schayegh, "The Many Worlds of Abud Yasin; or, What Narcotics Trafficking in the Interwar Middle East can tell us about Territorialization," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 2 (2011): 273–306; Ramazan Hakki Öztan, "The Great Depression and the Making of Turkish-Syrian Border, 1921–1939," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 52, no. 2 (2020): 317–323.

**5** Ryan Gingeras, "In the Hunt for the 'Sultans of Smack': Dope, Gangsters and the Construction of the Turkish Deep State," *Middle East Journal* 65, no. 3 (2011): 426–441; Ryan Gingeras, *Heroic,*

and global networks active in narcotics smuggling was a feature that these publications shared with international organizations founded after the First World War. Interpol and the League of Nations (LoN) had special sections dedicated to tackling the illicit narcotics trade worldwide. Closely linked and cooperating with these institutions were national agencies such as the Swiss police, the *Sûreté nationale* in France, and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), founded by the United States government in 1930. This increased surveillance made narcotics trafficking, and more specifically the opium trade, a matter of discussion for diplomacy, economy, society, and popular culture on an unprecedentedly globalized scale in the 1930s.

Characters like Carlos Fernandez Bacula were not only privileged objects of the mass media back then, but they also continue to attract the attention of both academic studies and trade books that set out to retrace the origins of "organized crime" and the manifold "connections" around drug trafficking. These works often search for a prelude to the American-led "war on drugs" launched by President Richard Nixon in the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, historians who study the interwar narcotics trade use increasingly sophisticated approaches. They focus on the intersection between imperialism and prohibition(ism), as well as on the origins of anti-opium policies from international conferences (Shanghai in 1909, The Hague in 1912) to permanent institutions founded after the First World War.<sup>3</sup> Historians of the Middle East have investigated how local actors interpreted these policies while facing the creation of new borders.<sup>4</sup> Whereas some scholars have shed light on the relationship between narcotics and state-making, others have discussed the narcotics trade as linked to moral discourses, social interventions, and the complex configurations of local and foreign actors that made up this business.<sup>5</sup> Most

*Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, 2014); Liat Kozma, "Cannabis Prohibition in Egypt, 1880–1939: From Local Ban to League

of Nations Diplomacy," *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 3 (2011): 443–460; Kostas Gkotsinas, *Epi tis ousias: Historia ton narkotikon stin Ellada (1875-1950)*

(Athina, 2021). Haggai Ram, *Intoxicating Zion: A Social History of Hashish in Mandatory Palestine and Israel* (Stanford, CA, 2020), 36–37.

of the works in this vein focus on a particular state and its specific authorities, though they all refer to the role played by international institutions such as the LoN. Moreover, using the particular case of Carlos Fernandez Bacula, David Petruccelli has discussed the development of international policing in interwar Europe. Petruccelli argues that this internationalization reflected a territoriality emerging from the end of imperial rule in Central Europe, which was perceived as a moral and political necessity, and was less driven by liberal values than what contemporaries might have expected based on earlier developments of policing.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Petruccelli, "Scourge," 20.

This article builds on these contributions while also proposing different angles from which we can write about a trafficker. "Dope affairs" are a lens through which we can analyze the interaction between authorities and mobile individuals. But they also allow us to critically assess how different archives have organized information around them; and to assess the institutions that produced sources on trafficking as well as references to earlier events and to other activities of the persons involved. State and interstate institutions operated in a context in which the press made trafficking a popular subject, contributing to creating a new social profile of smugglers and the world around them. Investigating drug trafficking thus intersects with questions of mobility, politics, and media. Bacula's case, this article argues, shows how the narcotics trade relied on privileged forms of mobility at a time when immigration restrictions were becoming more rigid. Secondly, it shows that the networks of the illicit drug economy were emphasized by surveillance institutions, although the suspects could counter accusations by emphasizing other connections related to their political activism. Thirdly, this article argues that the press contributed to creating the character of Bacula in order to stigmatize international syndicates that were transgressing the "normal" national and moral boundaries.

In tackling these issues, this article proposes three interventions in the historiography of narcotics trafficking. Concerning

**7** Alan A. Block, "European Drug Traffic and Traffickers between the Wars: The Policy of Suppression and its Consequences," *Journal of Social History* 23, no. 2 (1989): 315–337.

**8** Salvatore Lupo, *The Two Mafias: A Transatlantic History, 1888–2008* (New York, 2015).

**9** Devi Mays, "Becoming Illegal: Sephardi Jews in the Opiates Trade," *Jewish Social Studies* 25, no. 3 (2020): 1–34.

**10** Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Peter B. Evans, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge, 1985), 169–191; Peter Andreas, *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America* (Oxford, 2013).

**11** Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (Chicago, 1991).

**12** Jean-Louis Briquet and Gilles Favarel-Garrigues, "Introduction: Violence, Crime, and Political Power," in *Organized Crime and States: The Hidden Face of Politics*, ed. Jean-Louis Briquet and Gilles Favarel-Garrigues (New York, 2010), 3.

mobility, it offers a perspective centered around an individual rather than cohesive groups. Since Alan Block's article on drug trafficking in interwar Europe, there has been a tendency to write the history of the narcotics trade by paying attention to ethnic or regional categories.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation sees Greeks and Jews as playing a central role in the heroin trade of the interwar period, later replaced by other Mediterranean actors like the Corsicans of Marseilles (the so called French Connection) and the Sicilians (Cosa Nostra) in the 1960s. Most of these studies focus on a national or a rather "classic" transnational perspective on emigrant communities keeping illicit bonds with the homeland, such as "the two mafias" active in Sicily and North America.<sup>8</sup> In a recent article, Devi Mays has retraced the trajectory of Sephardic Jews active in the illegal opium trade of the interwar years beyond a simple explanation based on kinship or cultural values. Mays's study provides an excellent reading of how family and migrant networks adapted to the illegalization of opiates.<sup>9</sup> Carlos Bacula's trajectory, by contrast, does not quite fit a transnational reading of trafficking which mobilizes the notions of diaspora, community, or minority. The most interesting aspect of his trajectory is how he used and abused his diplomatic status to move narcotics through Europe and to North America.

This leads to the second intervention, the nexus between trafficking and politics. Charles Tilly and Peter Andreas have offered groundbreaking insight into the nexus between state making, "organized crime," and the smuggling economy.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, state actors could be involved in criminal organizations: Alfred Mc Coy's work documented the tangle of the CIA, guerrilla officials in the heroin's "golden triangle" of Southeast Asia, and mafiosi in the expanding drug trade during the cold war.<sup>11</sup> Gilles Favarel-Garrigues and Jean-Louis Briquet have collected different case studies from around the world to historicize the links between transnational crime and the state beyond a frontal relationship.<sup>12</sup> Here as well, Bacula's case is intriguing: not only did he face arrests,



trials, and interrogations by different state authorities, but he was also directly affected by political turbulence. His fate depended on politics in Peru as well as in his countries of residence, including Austria or France. He does not fit the model of traffickers entering politics or corrupt politicians becoming traffickers. In his case, these two domains were complementary: the more Bacula was described as the main pivot orchestrating transatlantic smuggling, the more he described his movements and interactions as part of his militancy in the politics of Peru.

This article's third and final intervention concerns the role of the media and the perception of traffickers. Historians of the drug trade have often considered newspapers and magazines as sources of information rather than as objects of study. An underexplored aspect is how media used tropes, a particular vocabulary, and images to create the profile of these traffickers. However, the media played a key role in promoting political, diplomatic, or military intervention against certain activities, like nineteenth-century sex trafficking linked to illicit mobility.<sup>13</sup> The media can also normalize this intervention's devastating effects on local societies, as a study on Mexico has demonstrated.<sup>14</sup> Although press scandals and special genres such as "true crime" magazines boomed in the interwar period, their interrelation with the expanding drug trafficking still demands historical inquiry. The press emphasized Bacula's character as a "dope ring diplomat" for different purposes: to create a persona that merged vice and decadent lifestyle but also to praise or criticize the efficiency of law enforcement and, more generally, the functioning of state institutions.

Along these three lines of interpretation, this article contributes to the critical assessment of notions of connections and connectivity recently pursued by global historians and proposed by this special issue.<sup>15</sup> Stating that connections were diverse and far-reaching is not satisfying for the agenda of global history. Accordingly, this article investigates the

**13** Gretchen Soderlund, *Sex Trafficking, Scandal, and the Transformation of Journalism, 1885-1917* (Chicago, 2013).

**14** Julien Mercille, "The Media-Entertainment Industry and the 'War on Drugs' in Mexico," *Latin American Perspectives* 41, no. 2 (2014): 110–129.

**15** Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, 2016), 42; Roland Wenzlhuemer, "The Ship, the Media, and the World: Conceptualizing Connections in Global History," *Journal of Global History* 11, no. 02 (January 1, 2016): 165.

**16** National Archives Records Administration (NARA) – Record Group (RG) 59, A1 1487, Bacula. Statement by Bacula to the Swiss authorities, June 7, 1938. See also several notes written by the French police that stress his suspicious activities in Switzerland during and after the First World War (false passports, false names, illicit gambling), all while admitting that many accusations were likely false. Archives Nationales (France, ANF) – 19940434/9 Carlos Bacula. Notes dated November 20, 1923; June 10, 1930. On his father's emigration: Cecilia Bákula Budge, *Visión Cartográfica del Perú y América: Colección de Mapas de Juan Miguel Bákula Patiño* (Lima, 2014), 180.

transformation and the representation of these connections. In other words, the fact that Bacula and other traffickers, just like the authorities trying to tackle them, were connected across borders is not the conclusion, but an assumption that invites us to expand the analysis. Bacula's connectivity can be questioned with regard to its materiality (his mobility was not only privileged but also fragile as it depended on a diplomatic passport), its efficacy (it was limited by police and juridical decisions taken in different places), and its representation (shaped by the press, the authorities' assessments, and his own accounts). By broadening the range of sources and voices, attention is given to the flipside of connectivity: the reasons and the dynamics that made it coexist with volatility, fragmentation, incongruency, and hyperbole. Eventually, we cannot know for certain what Bacula did or did not do, but we can ask why he became so pivotal for discussing interwar trafficking. Rather than "reopening" the Bacula case to solve it, then, we can use this case to "reopen" the archives where his story has been preserved and the media which made it sensational.

## I. Tracing Bacula in the Archives

The protagonist of our story, Carlos Fernandez Bacula, was born in Lima, Peru, on 11 March 1888 as the son of a wealthy cotton trader. On his father's side, he was the descendant of a Croatian emigrant from Trpanj, Miho Bacula Jugović, who had arrived in Peru in 1874. When he turned 13, Carlos moved to Europe and attended Dr. Schimdt's private school in Sankt Gallen, one of the most prestigious and expensive boarding schools for boys worldwide. He studied in Darmstadt and Zürich and remained in Switzerland during the First World War. Supported solely by the money sent by his father, he later entered the Peruvian diplomatic service in Geneva before being deployed to Vienna in 1924 (or 1926, according to other sources).<sup>16</sup> Documents on his life in those years are scarce until, in 1928, Bacula was involved in a major heroin



**Figure 1.** Bacula portrayed in a 1934 mugshot. Archives Nationales (France), 199404349.

smuggling affair initiated by the Russian émigré Joseph Raskin.<sup>17</sup> Although Bacula remained on the radar of different authorities for almost thirty years, two moments linked to smuggling affairs stand out in his trajectory. The first relates to the investigation of the Raskin ring between 1929 and 1931. The second concerns an explosion in a clandestine heroin factory in Paris in 1935 which led, three years later, to Bacula's arrest for his role in the trafficking scandal involving the notorious smuggler Louis Lyon. Rather than the hero of a one-man story, however, Carlos Bacula emerges from the sources as a name within a network of traffickers, mostly as a broker offering services to more prominent characters.

Details about his activities are scattered in several archives, among which two sets of records stand out because of their international dimension: the records of the LoN section on opium and those of the United States FBN. The LoN archives have recently been digitized in their entirety and are now accessible through word search.<sup>18</sup> Their repositories are a valuable resource to reflect on how an international organization scrutinized and archived information. Although intergovernmentalism is key to understanding drug diplomacy and control in the twentieth century, scholars point to continuities between the League's framework and earlier conventions. The League's Permanent Central Opium Board, officially founded in 1925, saw American diplomacy take over the prominent role played by the British Empire in imposing restrictions on the opium trade during the early twentieth

**17** For a detailed account of the investigations concerning Bacula: Petruccelli, "Scourge," 238–290.

**18** <https://libraryresources.unog.ch/lontad>

**19** John Collins, *Legalising the Drug Wars: A Regulatory History of UN Drug Control* (Cambridge, 2021), 18–24; William B. McAllister, *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History* (London, 2000), 43–102.

**20** Richard Büchner, "Die neuste Entwicklung der Opiumfrage," *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* 20 (1924): 394–396.

**21** League of Nations Digital Archive (LNDA) – Seizures of Drugs – Smuggling of Heroin, April 1929, by Mr. Joseph Raskin – R3125/12/18750/157; Narcotics Traffickers' Files "B" – S212-2-B; Annual Reports – 1935 – Austria; Opium Committee - Procès-verbaux [minutes] 14th Session, January 1931. Various correspondence - File R3186/12/26230/3522.

**22** LNDA - Narcotics Traffickers' Files "R" – S212-13/R, Card 102.

century.<sup>19</sup> As a study on the opium question of 1924 has argued, the collection of information in the form of yearly reports with abundant statistics was one of the goals, although the coordination among the signatories was far from easy due to conflicting agendas and unequal infrastructural features.<sup>20</sup>

Bacula's name appears in different series of the LoN archives: in reports of arrests and smuggling cases; on the register of the thousands of international traffickers organized alphabetically (card no.B.364), which contains information on drug seizures as well as on other traffickers related to him; in annual reports organized by country, such as Austria; and in the minutes of meetings of institutions such as the Advisory Commission on the Traffic in Opium, which discussed the Raskin incident in 1931.<sup>21</sup> These documents span from 1930 to 1940 and provide rather general information on their protagonists. They mostly consist of succinct reports in English and French and, more rarely, newspaper clippings as well as correspondence from the countries involved (for instance Austria and Germany). The issue of opium trafficking was tackled internationally, which does not imply that all cases or smugglers displayed global connections. Many, like Bacula's partner-in-crime Joseph Raskin, were more effective in planning the movement of illicit goods than in moving across long distances themselves. Raskin's personal file contains two domiciles: Lodz and Vienna.<sup>22</sup> The list of places where drug seizures related to him were carried out mention Vienna, Cairo, Istanbul, and Belgrade, but the "governments involved" in tracking his activities point to a more complex geography including Austria, Egypt, France, Japan, Afghanistan, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Germany, the United States, and Bulgaria. In other words, the LoN files reflect a centralized production of summarizing sources rather than a composite repertoire in which documents from all these countries are collected.

Compared to the LoN, the United States governmental sources offer more detailed insight. One vital resource for the history

of drug trafficking is the FBN collection. In 1930, the United States Treasury Department created this bureau and placed Harry Anslinger, who had cut his teeth in the department's branch in charge of implementing the prohibition of alcohol.<sup>23</sup> The FBN's files belong to record group 170 (now named Drug Enforcement Administration, the agency that replaced the FBN in 1967). The hundreds of folders in this collection are mostly archived by subject and countries. Especially the country files allow for access to documents that hardly exist (or are not accessible) outside the United States, including in important opium-producing countries like Turkey.<sup>24</sup>

**23** Alexandra Chasin, *Assassin of Youth: A Kaleidoscopic History of Harry J. Anslinger's War on Drugs* (Chicago, 2016), 165–176.

**24** NARA – RG 170 A1 9 660 Turkey.

**25** NARA - RG 59 A1 1487 – Name Files of Suspected Narcotics Traffickers 1927-1942.

Even more important for this article's actor-centered approach are the traffickers' personal files. They belong to another record group (59) since they were produced by the United States Department of State. The series contains 740 folders that vary significantly in size. Many consist of a few pages with basic personal information, while others on prominent traffickers such as Bacula, Augusto Del Gracio, Elie Eliopoulos, or Lucky Luciano have several hundred. These files contain reports, letters, statements, personal documents, and newspaper clippings, which make them more diverse.<sup>25</sup> The bias of these sources related to the ambition to control and survey illicit flows worldwide with a focus on foreigners is evident. Their state-centered and criminalizing standpoint, though, coexists with variety in terms of document types and of the voices they reveal, including many statements delivered by the suspected traffickers, which makes this collection invaluable for historians of narcotics trafficking.

In addition to this material, this article uses files produced by the Swiss and the French authorities. A common trait of these repertoires is the presence of newspaper clippings. The press was therefore not simply a receiver of narratives created by the police. It also drew the police's attention since it contributed to shaping the perception of trafficking and traffickers. It is along this interwoven dimension of surveillance practices and representations directed at a broad audience that the

**26** Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, 2014), 21–37.

**27** Mathieu Deflem, *Policing World Society: Historical Foundations of International Police Cooperation* (Oxford, 2004), 138–139.

article sets out to understand how Bacula came to be identified as an important player in a hyperconnected, large-scale illicit business.

## **II. Trunks and Diplomatic Passports: Privileged Mobility in an Age of Restriction**

In the early twentieth century, the United States was the main destination for European migrants while it also represented an expanding market for narcotics coming from the Middle East. As authorities and conservative forces increasingly considered such movements as unwanted, however, Washington enforced two major restrictions. Firstly, the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act, which became effective in 1915, implied higher taxes and stricter criteria for the production, import, and sale of narcotics. A few years later, the Immigration Act of 1924 established quotas on aliens entering the territory, targeting Asians and Southern Europeans, who counted among the main suspects of drug trafficking.<sup>26</sup> Racist and eugenic considerations particularly addressed permanent immigration, but reinforced control also applied to short stays, since the application process for visas issued by American consulates also relied on stricter rules.

Yet the United States was not an exception. In the 1920s, the new postwar world order generally enhanced interstate cooperation to regulate and sanction mobility flows. The creation of Interpol in Vienna in 1923 made it easier for police authorities to track suspected criminals and politically “dangerous” elements (especially anarchists), while the Geneva International Opium Convention of 1925 restricted the trade of opium and its derivatives to pharmaceutical consumption. Interestingly, although the fight against narcotics smuggling was a common interest for the LoN and Interpol, any “formal connection” between the two “remained more fiction than fact,” as Mathieu Deflem has argued.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, mobility and trade related to narcotics underwent an accelerated shift

from regulation to restriction and criminalization. Transporting opium across borders became more difficult and riskier, but not necessarily less profitable. Since the worldwide demand was far from declining, the supply chain elaborated new methods, and the traffic expanded to different hubs.

Vienna, the city where Bacula resided in the late 1920s, was an important center for narcotics trafficking.<sup>28</sup> Viennese rings operated transactions with Egypt, back then one of the main transit countries for drugs directed to the Far East. Among the methods described by the reports collected in a LoN case file, one mentions clothes trunks filled with heroin.<sup>29</sup> The seizure contributed to convincing Ludwig Auer, a key actor within the already mentioned Raskin trafficking ring, to adopt a safer method. “Bacula owns this invaluable document, a diplomatic passport”:<sup>30</sup> With these words, later paraphrased by several newspapers, the Egyptian Central Bureau for Information on Opium described Bacula’s involvement in these traffickers’ activities in Asia (Tsientsin), Europe (France, Germany, Austria, etc.), Africa (Egypt), and North America (United States). The diplomatic status was Bacula’s specificity in a network that included persons of diverse background, active in different continents, and responsible for different tasks in the trade: Bacula’s passport made him vital for his partners and dangerous for the authorities because he could move the drugs into the American market without being searched by customs officers. Since traffickers depended on identity documents when they traveled, having a diplomat friend could also be an easy way to forge one’s identity. Bacula admitted that the Polish citizen Raskin pressured him to obtain a Peruvian passport, most likely so that he could transport narcotics under a false identity. But Bacula claimed that he only used his privileged status to mediate with his colleague at the Polish consulate in Vienna to help Raskin obtain a new Polish passport which, however, would not have been as useful.<sup>31</sup>

The unique role played by Bacula is also confirmed by Elie Eliopoulos, arguably the most wanted trafficker of the 1930s.

**28** Petrucci, “Scourge,” 245.

**29** LNDA – Illicit Traffic in Egypt by an Austrian Organization, R3120-12-157-11391. Photos attached to a letter by Jean Schober, President of the Vienna Police, to the Secretary General of the LoN, April 22, 1929.

**30** Bureau Central d’Informations des Narcotiques, Rapport Annuel 1932, Cairo, Imprimerie Nationale, 13.

**31** NARA – RG 59 A1 1487 – Bacula, Carlos Fernandez, Statement before the United States Attorney, November 4, 1931.

**32** NARA - RG 59 A1 1487 – Eliopoulos case. Statement by Elie Eliopoulos regarding the Narcotic Traffic made at Athens, September 1932.

**33** NARA – RG 59 A1 1487 – Bacula, Carlos Fernandez, Statement before the United States Attorney, November 4, 1931.

**34** *Ibid.*, Dearing to Grey, 16 October 1931; November 1, 1931.

**35** LNDA – Découverte d'une fabrique clandestine de drogues nuisibles à Gorna Djoumaya, R4792-12-12424-387. Extract from Minutes of the Seizure sub-Committee 7<sup>th</sup> Session, May 1935.

**36** History of Heroin, Bulletin on Narcotics, United Nations, 1953, [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/bulletin/bulletin\\_1953-01-01\\_2\\_page004.html#bf034](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/bulletin/bulletin_1953-01-01_2_page004.html#bf034).

In a widely cited statement, Eliopoulos explained how orders were processed through a Frenchman, Louis Lyon, and the Newman brothers, American citizens in New York. Eliopoulos profiled Bacula as the main drug courier, who allegedly transported the drugs in his diplomatic trunks at least six times through Miami, New York, and Montreal.<sup>32</sup> The trunks and the passports were also mentioned by a United States attorney in November 1931, when he interrogated Bacula upon his arrival in New York. While denying all accusations of narcotics smuggling, Bacula explained that he always mentioned his diplomatic status to prevent his belongings from being searched at customs (“I am a consul, you don’t make any difference?”).<sup>33</sup> Both intelligence services and traffickers were sure that he had been smuggling drugs, but they realized this too late, after he had already suspended this activity because he had lost what made it possible: a valid diplomatic passport.

Indeed, Bacula’s diplomatic status did not rest on solid ground. The interrogation of November 1931 in New York occurred while Bacula was travelling with a regular passport. Coming from Peru, he had been denied a diplomatic visa to the United States by the American consul in Lima because the latter discovered that Bacula’s service for Peruvian legations in Europe had been put on hold. The same consul talked to the Peruvian foreign minister, who admitted knowing nothing about Bacula’s functions in Europe.<sup>34</sup> That Bacula capitalized on his status for activities other than consular service is suggested by his frequent stays in France, where he could hardly have had obligations related to his offices in Vienna or Oslo. His tenure ended in 1931 as a result of a seismic shift in Peruvian politics described in the next section. Bacula remained based in Vienna and was rumored to have kept his connections to heroin traffickers.<sup>35</sup> Yet in the 1930s, he limited his activities to Europe. This corresponded to the general trend which saw an impressive drop in drug seizures at United States ports after 1930.<sup>36</sup> Although he was not able to travel



with a valid diplomatic passport anymore, Bacula kept the consulate's stamps at home, as the French police discovered during a search in 1938; other traffickers referred to him as a provider of false passports.<sup>37</sup> Bacula also allegedly convinced a colleague to become a long-distance drug courier. Germán Eduardo Argerich, the secretary of the Argentine legation at Belgrade and Bucharest, was involved in the transport of opium via train to Paris. However, Argerich's illicit career did not last long either. In June 1937, he was suspected by Yugoslav authorities of illegal activities. Argerich was immediately suspended by the Argentine foreign office and, a few weeks later, he was found dead, allegedly a suicide.<sup>38</sup> As late as 1948, the Swiss police referred to Bacula's links to other diplomats active in trafficking rings, like Francisco Madrid (Chilean representative in Bucharest) and Eliseo Ricardo Gomez (Uruguayan ambassador in Prague).<sup>39</sup>

Bacula was thus neither the first diplomat accused of smuggling large quantities of narcotics into the United States, nor the last.<sup>40</sup> One only has to think of Mauricio Rosal's case, the Guatemalan envoy to the Netherlands arrested at JFK airport in October 1960, smuggling 110 pounds of pure heroin.<sup>41</sup> The Peruvian diplomat's story reminds us that, for drug trafficking rings, transporting and smuggling the illicit goods is the most delicate phase of the trade. Therefore turning to the most privileged form of mobility, that of a diplomat like Bacula who did not have to undergo any luggage inspection, emerged as a new possibility; in the end, Bacula was suspected of smuggling drugs in person for about two years at most, a rather short time span. In this sense, Bacula's story tells us something more about connectivity. When national and intergovernmental authorities sought to move against large-scale transnational trafficking circuits, they did not only worry about the narcotics themselves or the volume of traffic. A more significant danger in their view was that such uncontrolled circulation could happen in the first place even as personal identification and the control of mobility were taking

**37** ANF – F7 14839. Police report, June 23, 1938; Statement by Georges Chabat, July 6, 1939.

**38** NARA – RG 59 A1 1487, Argerich, Dr. German Eduardo, Fuller to the Secretary of State, June 1, 1937; Note by the Secretary of State, July 9, 1937.

**39** Swiss Federal Archives (SFA) - E4321A#1991/114#267, Bacula, Carlos Fernandez. internationaler Schmuggler, The Police of the Zürich Canton to the Direction of the Swiss intelligence, July 28, 1948.

**40** For an occurrence of smuggling by use of a diplomatic passport in eighteenth-century America, see Andrew Wender Cohen, "Smuggling, Globalization, and America's Outward State, 1870-1909," *The Journal of American History* 97, no. 2 (2010): 377.

**41** Philipp McMan-dlish, "Envoy loses Post in Narcotics Case," *The New York Times*, October 5, 1960.



**Figure 2.** Some of the diplomatic stamps found by the French police during the 1938 search of Bacula's home. Archives Nationales (France), F7 14839.

more sophisticated forms based on the principle of national sovereignty.

### III. Politics and Trafficking: Missing Crossroads?

Although the bureaucratic documents that describe Bacula's affairs generally paid little attention to his political activism, Bacula often described it as his main (pre)occupation as well as the cause of what he perceived as persecution. In fact, neither drugs nor politics played a role in Bacula's run-ins with the law in the early 1920s. When he was accused of using false names, he retrospectively claimed that this was the revenge of a "subaltern police agent" from Geneva with whom he had had an altercation. According to Bacula, these names had nothing to do with fraudulent activities: one (Feller) was the name of his future wife's first husband, which, since they cohabited unmarried at that time, Bacula occasionally used

to avoid scandal; the other one (Norden), he claimed, was a deformation of the nickname that his fellow students had attached to him (Nordini, allegedly due to his capacity to imitate a homonymous magician).<sup>42</sup>

Bacula's activities seemed to have nothing to do with politics at that time. But things changed in the late 1920s. Facing the previously mentioned interrogation by the U.S. Attorney in 1931, Bacula explained his trips to New York by claiming that he traveled to obtain loans for Peru from companies on Wall Street. The diplomat stated that he was the "closest friend" of a candidate to the Presidency of Peru, Victor Haya de la Torre, whom he likely met in 1926 in Paris during the latter's exile. Although he did not overtly mention this name, Bacula added that he arranged meetings between the American ambassador in Lima and Haya de la Torre. He also claimed that during one of the trips to Cherbourg and New York in May 1931, instead of smuggling heroin, he was merely accompanying the Peruvian candidate on his electoral campaign. Since Haya de la Torre lost the election, Bacula claimed to have been placed on a Peruvian "blacklist." He added that the new Peruvian government would arrest him if he contacted the authorities of his country to obtain a new diplomatic passport. He used this argument to explain why he had tried to obtain a regular visa valid for New York from the American ambassador in Lima.

When asked about his "immediate plans" by the customs official, Bacula stated that he would first have to go to Paris and then readjust his political network so that he could eventually return to Peru, where he did indeed return in 1933. The U.S. Attorney lost his patience every time Bacula evaded his questions about opium. "I am not interested," he said "in the details of your political activities. That is none of my business."<sup>43</sup> This interaction between two men who were clearly trying to pull the conversation toward different topics might seem trivial or confusing. Yet, their exchange reveals an interesting discrepancy between two ways of representing transnational connections: United

**42** SFA - E4321A#1991/114#267, Bacula, Carlos Fernandez, internationaler Schmuggler. Petition by Bacula attached to a letter by the head of the Interpol Marcel Sicot to the Swiss Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Narcotics Trafficking, March 28, 1957.

**43** NARA - RG 59 A1 1487 - Bacula, Carlos Fernandez. Statement before the United States Attorney, November 4, 1931.

**44** Geneviève Dorais, *Journey to Indo-América: APRA and the Transnational Politics of Exile, Persecution, and Solidarity, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, 2021), 55–83.

**45** International Institute of Social History Amsterdam (IISHA) - Labour and Socialist International Archives (LSIA) – 2533. Adler to Bacula, February 24, 1933.

**46** Daniel Iglesias, *Les mythes fondateurs du Parti Apriste Péruvien* (Paris, 2014), 45.

**47** "Aus dem Tagebuch eines Rauschgifthändlers," *Neue Berner Zeitung*, November 12, 1938. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

States authorities saw Bacula as a hyperconnected trafficker within a global criminal syndicate that targeted their country, while he depicted himself as a politician campaigning internationally to bring change to only one country, his homeland Peru.

Although both sides surely exaggerated the impact of his connections, Bacula remained dedicated to the cause. His friend Haya de la Torre led a party called *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (APRA). As historian Geneviève Dorais has argued, the Peruvian leaders of this party pursued an agenda of Latin American solidarity, anti-imperialism, and democratic socialism that was shaped by their experiences in Europe in the 1920s, a milieu that Bacula surely knew well.<sup>44</sup> A letter from Switzerland dated 1933 shows that Bacula was acknowledged as a representative of the APRA by the Socialist International and its secretary, Friedrich Adler. In this case, too, connections coexisted with disruption: the APRA networks outside Peru, growing in the years prior to 1931, remained active but faced the repression of their movement at home, against which they tried to mobilize important political and intellectual figures.<sup>45</sup>

As late as 1936, Haya de la Torre sent letters to Bacula in Geneva, where Bacula claimed to act as the APRA contact person at the League of Nations.<sup>46</sup> What irony that Bacula operated as an international politician in the same city that hosted an institution, the LoN Permanent Central Board on Opium, that was busy surveilling him as an international drug trafficker. A similar coincidence was later noted by a Swiss paper: "It may seem bizarre that the center of this narcotics association had its domicile, of all places, in Geneva . . . Here, under the wings of its enemy, this [trafficking] center felt completely safe because nobody would have suspected them in Geneva."<sup>47</sup>

At that time, Bacula was in Switzerland because he had been expelled from France. In this case too, he claimed

his political activities were the reason behind the sanction dated 1934: “I was charged unjustly,” he wrote, “with being active in the Left parties” or “as a leftist extremist, since I was a high-ranking member of the political party of the Peruvian opposition, APRA, which has nothing to do with ‘leftist extremism’ nor with communism.”<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, Bacula seemed to play both the revolutionary and the career diplomat. In a dossier he submitted to counter the charges that led to his expulsion from France, he included a certificate of his membership in the prestigious International Diplomatic Academy of Paris and letters of praise from Colombian politicians following a speech he made at the League of Nations calling for harmony between Peru and Colombia.<sup>49</sup> However, he also tried to purchase rifles for APRA to start an uprising: “Our day will come!” he wrote as late as 1938 to a friend, denouncing the illegitimate military repression in Peru against the majority of citizens who supported his party.<sup>50</sup> When the French authorities investigated a case of blackmail related to Bacula’s purchase of weapons from a dealer near Mulhouse, he first reassured them about his firm sympathy for France and his good relationships with politicians in Paris. Then, quite self-confidently, he stated that he had “full powers” representing APRA in Europe and that he expected to become Peru’s next president.<sup>51</sup>

After he was expelled from Paris, trouble continued in Austria. One year later, the Austrian foreign minister justified his decision to expel Bacula saying that he had remained “in touch with a number of international drug-traffickers,” although no narcotics were found during a search of his domicile in Vienna.<sup>52</sup> According to investigations carried out by attorneys in Vienna four years later, Bacula had indeed remained active in the illicit drugs trade after this expulsion. He had focused on Yugoslav and Bulgarian opium and heroin – which, as Vladan Jovanović has illustrated, counted among the purest

**48** NARA - RG 59, A1 1487, Bacula. Statement by Bacula before the Swiss authorities, June 7, 1938; SFA - E4321A#1991/114#267, Bacula, Carlos Fernandez, internationaler Schmuggler. Petition by Bacula attached to a letter by the head of the Interpol Marcel Sicot to the Swiss Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Narcotics Trafficking, March 28, 1957.

**49** ANF – 19940434/9. Carlos Fernandez Bacula. Annexes to minutes by the French police, October 10, 1934.

**50** ANF – F 7 14839. Bacula to Alfred Orpen, May 18, 1938.

**51** ANF – 19940434/9. Carlos Fernandez Bacula. Statement by Bacula, 1934. On the weapons affair, see: ANF – BB 18 6094 390.

**52** LNDA – Illicit Traffic, Activities of Carlos Fernandez Bacula, R4794/12/17953/387. The Austrian Foreign Minister to the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs, March 7, 1935.

**53** NARA – RG 59 A1 1487 – Bacula, Carlos Fernandez. Statement before the United States Attorney, November 4, 1931. On the opium trade in the interwar Balkans: Vladan Jovanović, *Opijum Na Balkanu: Proizvodnja i Promet Opojnih Droga 1918.-1941* (Zagreb, 2020). Bacula also made eight trips from Vienna to Bulgaria within only fifteen months, which raised the suspicions of French authorities: ANF - F 7 14839. Statement by the Head of the Bulgarian Police, August 5, 1938.

**54** NARA - RG 59, A1 1487, Bacula. Statement by Bacula before the Swiss authorities, June 7, 1938. Bacula's lawyer even managed to obtain a statement by the main suspect, the Yugoslav citizen Tomašević, in which the latter denied knowing Bacula in the first place. ANF – F 7 14839. Tomašević to Borella, October 21, 1938. See also: Jovanović, *Opijum*, 257-258.

**55** SFA - E4321A#1991/114#267, Bacula, Carlos Fernandez, internationaler Schmuggler. The Police of the Zürich Canton to the Direction of the Swiss intelligence, July 28, 1948.

and was coveted by traffickers – for the purchase of which he had organized meetings in Belgrade and Dubrovnik.<sup>53</sup> Yet once again, Bacula claimed that the expulsion from Vienna had nothing to do with drugs: “I am looked upon in Germany [referring to Austria after the Anschluss] as a Communist, although I am an enemy of Communism.”<sup>54</sup> Bacula then moved back to Switzerland until the extradition request from Vienna – now part of the Nazi “Third Reich” – was accepted by the Swiss government. In April 1940, he was handed over to the German authorities. In the meantime, French Vichy justice also demanded his extradition due to a verdict against him pronounced in 1940 in absentia.<sup>55</sup>

This is how Bacula landed in the concentration camp of Tourelles in Paris, as mentioned at the beginning. The camp was the site of a last *coup de théâtre*, this time linking politics and trafficking. In his request he forwarded after the war to be removed from the Interpol list of dangerous traffickers, Bacula proudly claimed that he “escape[d] from the Gestapo's claws and enter[ed], with ‘false names,’ the *Forces Françaises Combattantes* as a volunteer.”<sup>56</sup> Yet, this is not the only version of what happened. A confidential CIA document brings narcotics back into the picture. In 1944, the American intelligence service collected information about a prominent figure of the Corsican “milieu” in occupied Marseille, Simon Sabiani.<sup>57</sup> “Information from a confidential source” alleged that it was the notorious trafficker Paul Carbone, who had been connected to Bacula in the Raskin affair investigation of 1928,

**56** SFA - E4321A#1991/114#267, Bacula, Carlos Fernandez, internationaler Schmuggler. Petition by Bacula attached to

a letter by the head of the Interpol Marcel Sicot to the Swiss Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Narcotics Trafficking, March 28, 1957.

**57** On Sabiani's trajectory: Paul Jankowski, *Communism and Collaboration: Simon Sabiani and Politics in Marseille, 1919 - 1944* (New Haven, 1989).

who interceded with the German authorities to release Bacula from the camp. Carbone collaborated with the Germans and offered Bacula's services to the *Abwehr II*, the Nazi intelligence. The American source only mentions that the "Abwehr II was content for the time being merely to obtain from him particulars concerning [Bacula's] career." Bacula was freed from the camp and Carbone provided him with a home in France that he probably did leave to join the Resistance.<sup>58</sup> According to American intelligence, however, a German officer provided Bacula with false documents in the name of Bauer that allowed him to live in wartime Paris without being bothered by the French police or the Gestapo.<sup>59</sup>

After the war Bacula continued to be on the radar of Interpol and of several national law enforcement agencies like the FBN and the Swiss police. Although he was never arrested after the end of the Second World War, his file was only closed, upon his request, in 1957, when the Swiss police confirmed to Interpol that he had never been arrested in Switzerland, that he was already 69 years old, and that the last verdict against him, dated 1940, was established without rigorous juridical criteria ("*suffisance de droit*"). Already around 1950, Bacula had moved back to Peru. In the same request, he stressed that he was well aware of the booming illicit market in cocaine from his homeland, but that he had never traded in this drug. He concluded with a note about his last change of residence, from Lima to Santiago in Chile, where he moved "to reside in peace and breathe the pure air of freedom, so rare in the 'democratic' countries of Latin America."<sup>60</sup> Once again, he invoked politics as the reason for his mobility while denying all allegations of trafficking.

Bacula's trajectory in the interwar period and during the Second World War shows many intersections with both international narcotics trafficking and international politics. Swiss, French, German, Austrian, and American surveillance institutions were also often communicating and cooperating with one another. While this is doubtlessly a sign of increasing

**58** NARA – RG 263, A1 88, Sabiani, Simon. Secret Note by the Central Intelligence Agency, October 19, 1944.

**59** NARA – RG 59, A1 1487, Bacula. Secret note received from the United States Bureau of Customs, January 18, 1945.

**60** SFA – E4321A#1991/114#267, Bacula, Carlos Fernandez, internationaler Schmuggler. Petition by Bacula attached to a letter by the head of the Interpol Marcel Sicot to the Swiss Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Narcotics Trafficking, March 28, 1957; Answer by the Swiss Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Narcotics Trafficking, July 6, 1957.

61 LNDA – Illicit Traffic, Activities of Carlos Fernandez Bacula, R4794/12/17953/387. The Swiss Foreign Ministry to the Directeur of the Sections on Traffic in Opium and Social Questions of the League of Nations, February 27, 1939.

62 "Poudre blanche," *Déetective*, 344, May 30, 1935.

63 "Aus dem Tagebuch eines Rauschgift­händlers," *Neue Berner Zeitung*, November 12, 1938.

connectivity in the world of policing, each institution followed its own agenda and elaborated specific accusations. When the Swiss police, for example, arrested Bacula in 1938, they acknowledged pending criminal charges in France and Germany, but they also hesitated to extradite him since "both extradition requests show very little evidence that Bacula personally partook in these criminal actions."<sup>61</sup> Moreover, most institutions chasing and surveilling him showed little interest in Bacula's political activities. He must have sensed this and therefore emphasized his activism whenever he talked to officials.

#### IV. Constructing the "Dope Ring Diplomat"

Until 1938, Bacula remained a character primarily known to traffickers, police, and prosecutors. He became notorious and infamous only when the so-called "*affaire Lyon*" erupted in France. This incident allowed the French as well as the international press to retrospectively connect the dots of mysterious global crime syndicates all the way back to the Raskin-Eliopoulos case of 1928-1931. The *affaire* referred to an event in 1935: on a May afternoon, a massive explosion happened at 220 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré in Paris, very close to the Arc de Triomphe. The explosion revealed that a two-store *pavillon* in the courtyard served as a clandestine heroine factory, and that one of the two chemists involved had managed to escape while he was being taken to the hospital. This story immediately spread through the "true crime" press interested in the "underground life of the modern gangsters of Paris."<sup>62</sup> Three years later, based on a notebook found in the cell of a Sing-Sing inmate who had committed suicide, European police agencies were given names allegedly connected with a worldwide network.<sup>63</sup> While the head of this ring was a Frenchman, Louis Lyon, Bacula was mentioned as a close friend and important broker capable of supplying Paris with large quantities of opium produced in or transiting through the Balkans. What



nourished these suspicions was the fact that Bacula co-owned an apparently innocuous lingerie shop a few steps away from the *pavillon*.<sup>64</sup> This store was thought to be a sort of informal office connected to the illicit business. The press quickly noticed that the previously unknown Peruvian trafficker had an unusual profile which it could mobilize to amplify scandals.

Dozens of articles written on him in 1938-1939 were archived together with the police documents on the same affair. Most newspapers and magazines added very little – and not always accurate – information to the intrigues disclosed by the police and the prosecutors. They also resembled one another, since the basic information was taken from press agencies. Still, nuances in the way the characters of the story were portrayed inform us about how the trope of the “international drug trade” intersected with different perceptions of morality concerning society and politics.

The arrest of Bacula following the Lyon affair was made known by American newspapers on May 30, 1938. The Associated Press, referred to by several newspapers, quoted the head of the FBN, Harry Aslinger, rejoicing about the arrest that targeted “one of the biggest men in the narcotic business” and “smashe[d] a ring which did an enormous business both in the United States and Europe.”<sup>65</sup> The European press found Bacula’s diplomatic status especially intriguing. *Paris-Soir* described the moment of his arrest in Switzerland as follows: “- Are you Fernandez Bacula? - Correct, said the man with a distant smile. - Please follow me to the police station, you are under arrest. - But I am a Peruvian diplomat! You will regret your boldness!” The French newspaper highlighted Bacula’s self-confidence as he allegedly falsely claimed to be a diplomat while law enforcement officers carried out the arrest unimpressed. It also portrayed the role of *le diplomate trafiquant* as pivotal, claiming that “heroin, *coco* [cocaine], and opium continue to flow undisturbed throughout the world through certain diplomatic luggage.”<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> ANF – F 7 14839. Note by the French police, July 18, 1933.

<sup>65</sup> “Ex-envoy jailed as Drug Smuggler,” *The New York Times*, May 30, 1938.

<sup>66</sup> “Des tonnes d’héroïne transportées par voie diplomatique,” *Paris-Soir*, June 4, 1938.

**67** John Kobler, "Behind the Capture of the 'Dope Ring Diplomat,'" *New York Mirror*, July 3, 1938.

**68** LNDA – Illicit Traffic, Activities of Carlos Fernandez Bacula, R4794/12/17953/387. Report by the French police, November 2, 1938.

In July, the *New York Mirror* published an illustrated story about the "Dope-Ring Diplomat." The story mentioned the methods and objects used for smuggling heroin (bowling balls, not mentioned in other sources) by "Senor Bacula." It described him as a "polished gentleman" whom "nobody could touch" because of his former diplomatic immunity. Bacula – the "man of mystery" and "Peruvian playboy" – had enjoyed "fine schooling, and his parents, wealthy and prominent, gave him the advantages of culture." Once posted to Vienna, "Bacula had the time of his life" spending a fortune until, "reluctant to lower his standard of living, he became desperate." The tabloid explained how he became involved with traffickers who blackmailed him, a "game from which you withdraw only in an ambulance – or a coffin." This was a story of rise and fall in which the winners worth praising were American law enforcement and customs officers who, with Bacula's arrest, significantly reduced the moral danger posed by heroin in their country. The perspective connecting trafficking with American society was well visible through images of peddlers and addicts that surrounded Bacula's photograph in the article.<sup>67</sup>

The journalists highlighted Bacula's diplomatic immunity, even though they knew that his special passport was no longer valid in 1938. They also knew that international trafficking scandals based on events of ten years earlier, such as the omnipresent references to the Eliopoulos case, were less interesting for their readers than delving into current ones. Quickly, then, they became interested in another plot revolving around Bacula's connections to Victoria Salti, née Behar, co-owner of Bacula's lingerie shop in Paris. She was described as a friend of Louis Lyon's and as Bacula's mistress, thereby composing a criminal, transnational triangle at the core of the 1935 explosion in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the corresponding heroin trafficking.<sup>68</sup> Salti lived in London and was portrayed by the English press as a "fashion expert" whose association with a "restaurant keeper" (Lyon) and a former diplomat surely was as bizarre as it was intriguing for the

readers.<sup>69</sup> The tabloids emphasized Mme “Vickie” Salti’s taste for dresses and cars, which also testified to Bacula’s stature as a *viveur*. In an interview with the London *Daily Express*, Salti claimed that Bacula “is one of the best-dressed men in Europe, very distinguished looking” who “used to entertain lavishly” with “magnificent” parties. Salti’s account of Bacula revealed not only a glamorous lifestyle but also allegations of Bacula’s shipping “bombs and other munitions” to the APRA and even to Spain during the Civil War.<sup>70</sup>

The Bacula case also had implications for national politics, especially in France, where the explosion and the investigations had happened. The French press attacked corruption within its own justice and political system. This was evident in newspapers with an explicit political line, both on the far left and the far right. Among those close to the leftist *Front Populaire*, *L’Humanité* and *Ce soir* were the two that dedicated the most space to the Lyon-Bacula affair. At the other extreme of the political spectrum, the philo-fascist, ultranationalist, and antisemitic *Le Défi* also took a stance on the issue. Writing for *L’Humanité*, Lucien Sampaix vehemently attacked the “marquis and fascist” Lionel de Tastes due to his complicity with Lyon as well as Bacula. De Tastes was Lyon’s lawyer, and he had accompanied Bacula on one of the latter’s suspicious travels to New York. The lawyer was a target for the left for another reason as well: he had participated in the attempted right-wing, fascist and anti-republican riot in Paris in 1934 that preceded the electoral victory of the *Front Populaire*.<sup>71</sup> Sampaix went further and accused the prefect of Paris, Jean Chiappe, of complicity with the fascist rioters.<sup>72</sup> Protecting drug traffickers and protecting fascists was seen as a common feature of the right. Insisting on the dangerous ties between Bacula – whose alleged leftist sympathies remained unmentioned – and many high-ranking politicians in France, the journalist claimed: “We find the same gang of corrupting and corrupt ones, of buyers and of sellouts [*d’acheteurs et de vendus*]. And now, willy nilly, it is necessary to get rid of this!”<sup>73</sup>

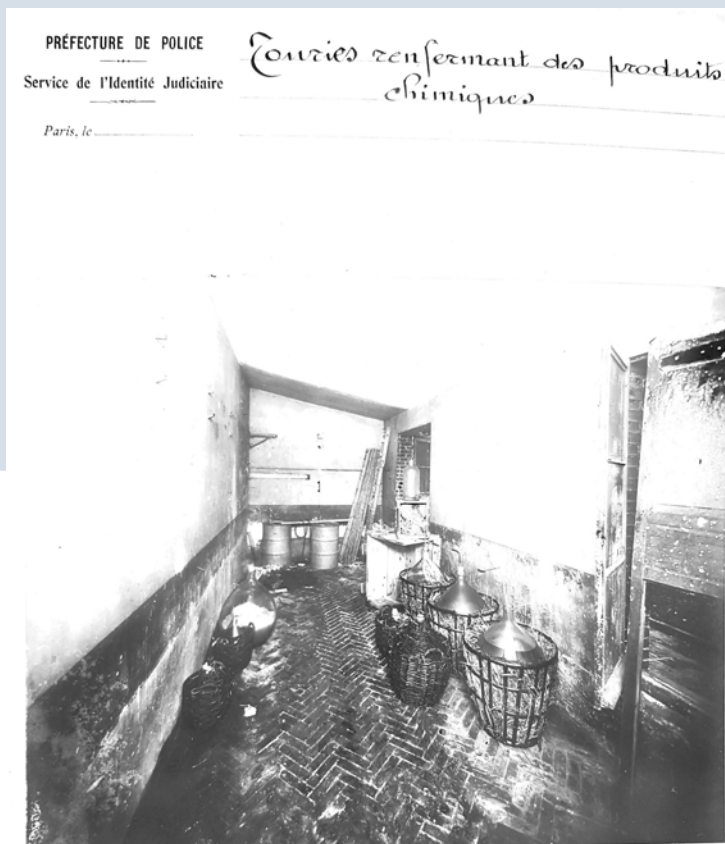
**69** “French Police Offer Guard to Ms. Salti,” *The Daily Express*, June 11, 1938.

**70** “London Drug Ring Witness Talks to the Daily Express,” *The Daily Express*, June 10, 1938

**71** Brian Jenkins and Chris Millington, *France and Fascism: February 1934 and the Dynamics of Political Crisis* (London, 2015), 88.

**72** On Chiappe’s role during the February riots: Emmanuel Blanchard, “Le 6 Février 1934, Une Crise Policière?,” *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire* 128, no. 4 (2015): 15–28.

**73** Lucien Sampaix, “Le gang de la drogue et ses protecteurs,” *L’Humanité*, June 13, 1938.



**Figure 3.** One of the rooms in the building at 220 Faubourg Saint-Honoré after the 1935 explosion. Archives Nationales (France), F7 14839.

**74** Roger Dorsel, "La drogue," *Ce soir*, June 22, 1938.

**75** "Un document écrasant de la main de TL.-Th. Lyon," *Ce soir*, June 23, 1938.

*Ce soir*, the newspaper founded by the communist writer and journalist Louis Aragon, equally accused de Tastes, although its less politically virulent criticism was primarily directed against the inefficiency of the justice apparatus. The international connections behind the Lyon-Bacula affair were used to discredit the French police: "All police institutions around the world have been working on these poisoning elements [*ces empoisonneurs*], the *Sûreté nationale* has its own dossiers; let them be known. It knows the names, let them be published!"<sup>74</sup> One day later, *Ce soir* revealed that the "king of dope" Louis Lyon had been a counterespionage agent for the French state and an informant of the national police after the First World War. *Ce soir* also quoted Lyon accusing the prefecture of Paris of protecting Eliopoulos, which raised the rhetorical question: "Can the *Sûreté* freely investigate one of its collaborators?"<sup>75</sup>

Interestingly, the connections between de Tastes, Lyon, and Bacula were also used by Jean-Charles Legrand, the leader

of the far-right *Front de la jeunesse*, who attacked de Tastes based on personal frictions. In his newspaper *Le Défi*, Legrand denounced “the dope workforce: Lyon, Bacula, de Tastes, Dormoy [former interior minister and *député* of the French Socialist Party], Sarraut [former prime minister and interior minister at that time, member of the Radical Party], marquis, mischievous ones, and all the rest.”<sup>76</sup> With the same rightist-populist tone, Legrand regretted that, while de Tastes was still free, “any average citizen, without support and ties, would already sit in prison” for the same misdeeds: “Why does such a regime of favors benefit de Tastes? How did he acquire and pay for this? Who is paying? Who is squealing [*qui chante*]? Who is protecting de Tastes?”<sup>77</sup> Here again, the protection of cross-border criminal rings was deplored as detrimental to France’s integrity: this rhetoric resonated well with the tone of the “true crime” magazines. Bacula and his associates were always described as glamorous, cosmopolitan, wealthy Parisians, “wholesalers of dope, who meet in the bars of the Champs Élysées, and whose smallest business paid in *casch* [sic!] reaches up to a half million francs at least.”<sup>78</sup>

As these examples show, the international connectivity of drug trafficking could be displayed in different terms. In most cases, the connections were a steppingstone to denounce or highlight other aspects, such as the dangers for society, frivolous and glamorous lifestyles, as well as social and political critique addressing one specific country.

## Conclusion

The three main sections of this article have demonstrated that Bacula was regarded as the epitome of the interwar drug smuggler. All sides involved, from the national police authorities to international law enforcement organizations and the press, saw him as a peculiar character who, however, became interesting only through his connections to a larger web of transnational contacts, transactions, mobility, and flow of

<sup>76</sup> Jean-Charles Legrand, “Saute, Marquis,” *Le Défi*, June 19, 1938.

<sup>77</sup> Jean-Charles Legrand, “Marquis de Tastes Prince de la drogue,” *Le Défi*, June 26, 1938.

<sup>78</sup> Marcel Montarron, “Les courtiers de la drogue,” *Detective*, June 16, 1938.

goods. Interestingly, Bacula's voice has been retrieved only in the answers that he delivered – never in public – to official queries: when forced to answer questions at customs or when asking for surveillance to stop, Bacula did talk and write in detail about himself, although he always described his connections and movements as fragile, forced by necessity, or indeed as playing out in a domain in which his addressees were little interested: Peruvian politics. The same connections that made him a special character were also those that caused him trouble: a new government in Peru removed him from the consular service and other traffickers denounced him, leading to his deportation when the mandate to arrest him was executed in Switzerland. Does Bacula's trajectory imply that, after all the scandals in which he had been involved, he "got away with it" – after a relatively easy internment experience during the Second World War, growing old in Chile free from trouble? Or does it imply that, based on the very limited evidence put forth against him, since he was never caught in the act, he was a victim of conspiracies and the institutions' obsession with crime syndicates?

While these questions must be left unanswered, this article has shown some aspects related to the potential and limits of inquiring into cross-border connections, the theme of this special thematic forum, through "dope affairs" and the individual smugglers that they bring into focus. Bacula's case shows that trafficking networks relied on individual mobility, which was as vital as it was fragile, since stratagems of smuggling stood in perpetual tension with stratagems of border surveillance. It also shows that connections of mobility could be represented in contradictory, incongruent, and hyperbolic terms. Played off against each other, the two dimensions highlighted by the police and by Bacula – trafficking and politics in exile – did not produce a coherent story, yet they both invoked cross-border connections as a motive of anxiety for state authorities. A third element revealed by the article is the tension between the strongly repetitive representation

of smuggling by the press – based on detailed but occasional accounts – and the diverse implications that stories and pleas addressing the readers could have, ranging from praise of law enforcement to the denunciation of corruption.

While these conclusions point to the advantages of an actor-centered approach to the global history of narcotics, they also invite us to be cautious about overstressing a biographic perspective. The problem here is the volatility of information based on references to the same few sources. In Bacula's case, the bulk of what we know comes from the statement by Elie Eliopolous (itself produced vis-à-vis anti-narcotics authorities), the answers Bacula gave to the United States attorney in 1931, or the summary of accusations produced by the Nazi German prosecutors. It is a hazardous task to carve a "subject" and a consistent "personal" story out of this fragile record. It is more promising to use the different narratives and tropes related to criminal connectivity irradiating around a person like Bacula to investigate the social, political, and cultural realities with which the narcotics trade intersected. In other words, it was an increasingly strict international border regime, the coexistence of exile politics and international organizations in Europe, as well as a discourse on the corruption of institutions and society which made the 1930s a fertile ground for investigations and scandals about hyper-connected drug traffickers.

**Andreas Guidi** is Associate Professor (*Maître de conférences*) of History at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) in Paris. After obtaining his Ph.D. from Humboldt University in Berlin and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris, he was a research and teaching associate at the EHESS and the University of Konstanz. In 2021-2022, Guidi was a visiting fellow at the GHI Washington. He is the author of *Generations of Empire: Youth from Ottoman to Italian*

*Rule in the Mediterranean* (Toronto, 2022); his articles have appeared in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and *Southeast Europe and Black Sea Studies*. His current project investigates drug trafficking in the twentieth-century Mediterranean.



# Flowing Connections in the Strait of Malacca: Nature, Trade, and the Rise of a Global Transit Corridor, c. 1850–1900<sup>1</sup>

Lars Kury

Institute for European Global Studies, Basel

In the stormy autumn of 1795, on his way from Madras, India, to the Moluccas (also known as Maluku Islands), the British engineer Walter Caulfield Lennon crossed the Strait of Malacca. Located between the Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra, the Strait of Malacca offered Lennon by far the shortest path between the Indian Ocean World and East Asia. Lennon's sailing ship, the *Suffolk*, had been held up in the Bay of Bengal by the transitional period at the end of summer, when the southwest monsoon turns northeast and heavy rains make navigation almost impossible and reached Malacca more than six weeks after leaving the Indian coastlines.<sup>2</sup> His

<sup>2</sup> Walter Caulfield Lennon, "Journal of a Voyage through the Straits of Malacca on an Expedition to the Molucca Islands under the Command of Admiral Rainier

with Some Account of Those Islands at the Time of Their Falling into Our Hands, and Likewise Suggestions Relative to their Future Better Management in Case of Being

Retained in Our Permanent Possession," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 7 (1881 [first published 1796]): 51–74.

<sup>1</sup> This article is part of a Ph.D. project that develops the analytical value of environmental transit corridors for the theoretical grounding of global history, using the Strait of Malacca's imperial transformation in the second half of the nineteenth century as an empirical example. For additional information see <https://europa.unibas.ch/en/about-us/people/academic-staff/lars-kury>. I wish to thank Madeleine Herren as well as the editors and reviewers of this issue for their valuable suggestions and comments on earlier versions of this article.

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3 Lennon, "Journal of a Voyage," 62.

4 *Ibid.*, 64.

5 Rudolf Martin, *Über Eine Reise durch die Malayische Halbinsel* (Basel, 1900). For the scientific results of Martin's journey, see Rudolf Martin, *Die Inlandstämme der Malayischen Halbinsel: Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse einer Reise durch die Vereinigten Malayischen Staaten* (Jena, 1905).

report to the East India Company was written during the British occupation of Malacca during the Napoleonic Wars and explored its economic potential in anticipation of future British rule. In his account, the numerous layers of foreign rule set the historical pace. By the end of the fifteenth century, Malacca had already risen to become the most important center of power in the Southeast Asian archipelago. Originally used as a transshipment hub for Muslim traders traveling between India and China, the port of Malacca became entangled in the struggle for imperial control among the Europeans in the early sixteenth century. As an outpost of the Portuguese Empire since 1511 and from the mid-seventeenth century onwards under Dutch colonial rule, Malacca developed into a microcosm of the early modern trading world. When Lennon visited Malacca in 1795, the ancient city still enjoyed a reputation as a trading hub for both regional and global markets. Although its harbor was largely isolated from its own hinterland by impenetrable jungle, Lennon mentioned that Dutch Malacca was "situated in the most favourable way for uniting all the resources of a rich country with an easy communication by sea to foreign markets."<sup>3</sup> In fact, the British placed great confidence in Malacca's environmental advantages for prosperous trade even in the upcoming nineteenth century. Comparing Malacca with the recently established Navy Post in Penang, Lennon argued, "Malacca is better situated for trade, particularly that carried by the Malays in their prows; and it is the key of the straits, since no ship can pass but in the sight of it."<sup>4</sup> After a short layover in Malacca, the *Suffolk* meandered further eastwards, fighting tides and unpredictable currents, in an utterly unexplored maze of reefs, islands, and channels, on her way out of the strait.

A century later, in the spring of 1897, the Swiss anthropologist Rudolf Martin crossed the Strait of Malacca in the same direction, heading east from Colombo, on a North German Lloyd steamer.<sup>5</sup> Only three shipping days after leaving Colombo, his steamer turned into the strait, passing Sumatra to the south



and the Nicobar Islands to the north. Enclosed between the British Empire in Malaya and the Dutch Empire in Indonesia, however, the Strait was no longer comparable to the passage Lennon had encountered a century before in 1795. In Martin's account, the number of shipping channels had increased drastically, and telegraph cables lined up tightly on the bottom of the sea before reaching out into the world. The stretches behind the strait's coastlines, once places of hidden Hindu shrines and dense Malaysian jungle, were now overgrown with palm oil and rubber plantations. And where once sailing ships crossed paths on their way between India and China, now a maritime highway of hundreds of steamers connected the markets in the East and West. "It was not 400 years ago," Martin recalled later, "that the first European ship entered this strait seeking the Malacca that the Portuguese were told was the most important spice market in the whole East. [. . .] Today, Malacca is a place abandoned by European trade, almost exclusively a Chinese city; the harbor is silted up, the ruins of a mighty Portuguese cathedral still peer down from the height of the hill - the last witnesses of former splendor and culture." Further southeast, Martin reached the end of the strait, entering the waters of Singapore, a place that recorded an unprecedented rise in economic importance throughout

**Figure 1.** A painting of the Dutch port of Malacca at the height of its commercial glory, in the mid-eighteenth century. The port continued to serve as the Strait of Malacca's main transshipment hub until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Source: Didot, *Histoire générale des voyages* (Paris, 1750), Wikimedia Commons.

6 Martin, *Über eine Reise durch die Malayische Halbinsel*, 2. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

the nineteenth century. "In 1809," Martin finally remarked, "there were only a few Malay huts and boats of the Orang Laut here, those sea gypsies who at that time roamed almost all the coasts of the Malay Archipelago. Today, on the same spot, a city of over 200,000 inhabitants arises, nearly incomparable to any other port in the world."<sup>6</sup>

Both Lennon's and Martin's accounts offer insights into the nineteenth-century history of a global transit corridor that is characterized by a complex interaction of continuity and transformation: On the one hand, the Strait of Malacca, the shortest link connecting the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, continued to be one of the most important transit corridors throughout the nineteenth century. At the same time, the global connectivity of the various locations along the strait's coastlines, such as the port of Malacca, seems to have changed fundamentally in the nineteenth century. Where a cosmopolitan group of traders had encountered a global hub for the trade in Southeast Asian spices in the 1790s, a century later only ruins indicating its former glory remained. Instead, just a few miles to the East of Malacca, on a spot where in the early 1800s only a Malaysian fisherman's village had existed, by the end of the nineteenth century a new transit hub had emerged: Singapore.

In line with recent research on infrastructure in global history, this paper proposes to use the analytical value of transit corridors in order to unravel the interplay between global connections and disconnections in the case of the Strait of Malacca. I argue that non-artificial transit corridors are particularly valuable for illustrating the dynamics of global connectivity and the interdependence of included and excluded spaces. To develop this argument, I will first discuss the value of a theory on transit corridors for global history and the use of the Strait of Malacca in particular as an example for the study of global connections. In the next section, I will use the development of the tin trade across the Strait of Malacca as an example in order to examine how changing

trading routes could create new global connections and at the same time sever existing ones, often resulting in the marginalization of previously commercially significant places and communities. In this section, I will be arguing that the discovery of new tin deposits in the Malay hinterland of the Malacca Strait, starting the 1840s, caused a huge shift in the global connectivity of the various places along the strait's coastlines. On a conceptual level, my essay proposes to conceive of the Malacca Strait's imperial transformation in the second half of the nineteenth century as the making of an environmental type of infrastructure.<sup>7</sup> In addition to human agents, this also requires to include non-human factors and forces like the hinterland's nature and local environmental conditions into the historical analyses of global connections.

## I. A Global History Theory on Transit Corridors: The Strait of Malacca as a Case Study

In recent years, the field of global history has entered a phase of consolidation. Instead of previously dominant smooth narratives of transregional relations and one-way narratives toward an ever more integrated world, scholars nowadays explore the coexistence of connections and disruptions. Instead of enthusiastic studies on moving goods and ideas, the field has been increasingly debating the tense interplay between excluded and included spaces and the role of those who so far remained in the shadows of cosmopolitan convergence.<sup>8</sup> This development has gained particular momentum within the historiography on global infrastructure. Following Sujit Sivasundaram's observations on the nineteenth-century port of Colombo, for instance, the physical making of connections has always been related to boundedness and disconnections.<sup>9</sup> Whenever we speak of global connections, we inevitably overlook those people and places who do not have a share in these connections. Others make similar arguments regarding communication technologies or mobility infrastructure, such as the railway, the telegraph, or maritime

<sup>7</sup> On Environmental Infrastructure, see Emmanuel Kreike, *Scorched Earth: Environmental Warfare as a Crime against Humanity and Nature* (Oxford, Princeton, 2021); Martin Kalb, *Envirioning Empire: Nature, Infrastructure and the Making of German Southwest Africa* (New York, Oxford, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Examples include Zoltán Biedermann, *(Dis)Connected Empires: Imperial Portugal, Sri Lankan Diplomacy, and the Making of a Habsburg Conquest in Asia*, (Oxford, 2018); Zoltán Biedermann, "(Dis) Connected History and the Multiple Narratives of Global Early Modernity," *Modern Philology* 119, no. 1 (2021): 13–32; Sujit Sivasundaram, "Towards a Critical History of Connection: The Port of Colombo, the Geographical 'Circuit,' and the Visual Politics of New Imperialism, ca. 1880–1914," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 2 (2017): 346–84; Roland Wenzlhuemer, "Connections in Global History," *Comparativ* 29, no. 2 (2019): 106–21.

<sup>9</sup> Sivasundaram, "Towards a Critical History of Connection," 347.

**10** Martin Meiske, *Die Geburt des Geoengineerings: Grossbauprojekte in der Frühphase des Anthropozäns* (Göttingen, 2021); Eike-Christian Heine, *Vom grossen Graben: Die Geschichte des Nord-Ostsee-Kanals* (Berlin, 2015); Belge Boris, "(Dis) Connected: Railway, Steamships and Trade in the Port of Odessa, 1865–1888," *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* 3, no. 5 (2020): 49–69; Mikko Toivanen, "Disconnectivity in the Age of Globalization: Coastal Ecology, Telegraphy, and Empire in the Sunda Strait, 1863–1883," *Arcadia*, no. 28 (2021).

**11** The development of an analytical concept on the use of environmental transit corridors in global history is the subject of the Ph.D. project this article builds on. For previous theoretical reflections on the phase of transit in global history, see Roland Wenzlhuemer and Michael Offermann, "Ship Newspapers and Passenger Life: Aboard Transoceanic Steamships in the Late Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Transcultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012): 77–121; Wenzlhuemer, *Doing Global History*, 145–68;

transport facilities.<sup>10</sup> These studies all agree that infrastructures not only share a unifying but also a dividing impact. They privilege some while working to the disadvantage of others. They often displace residents and local industries or make old transportation and trading routes irrelevant. Historical narratives of worldwide entanglement are therefore increasingly based on a tense interaction between global connections and disconnections, reflecting in a sense the twenty-first-century post-globalizing world.

Broadly speaking, transit corridors refer to areas and zones that experience a particularly high rate of passage by people and goods and have been shaped by these to some degree.<sup>11</sup> They typically connect two points, commercially or geographically, and therefore serve as a distinct link. Among the most prominent examples are the territories around the Suez Canal connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, the tunnels at Mont Cenis or at Gotthard in the Western Alps, and the Strait of Malacca in Southeast Asia linking East Asia and the Indian Ocean World.<sup>12</sup> Their histories are shaped by a multitude of transregional exchanges and contacts. Moreover, from the perspective of the traveler or commodity passing through, transit corridors mark part of their journey between two ports, cities, or markets. In transit corridors, one might therefore say, the phases in-between the starting or end point of a global connection – the transit phases so to speak – occur in multiple clusters. In line with recent literature on shipping channels in global history, such a supposedly highly

Martin Dusenberre and Roland Wenzlhuemer, "Editorial – Being in Transit: Ships and Global Incompatibilities," *Journal of Global History* 11, no. 2 (2016): 155–62.

**12** On the Suez Canal, see Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge, 2013); on Mont Cenis, see Wenzlhuemer, *Doing*

*Global History*, 121–44. Further examples include the Eurasian caravan corridors of the Silk Road. See Jagjeet Lally, *India and the Silk Roads. The History of a Trading World* (London, 2021).

connected space provides an ideal case for a detailed investigation of global connections.<sup>13</sup>

Transit corridors play a pivotal role in historical narratives of globalization. In this paper, I argue that the entanglement of global connections and disconnections is especially reflected in a long-term perspective on non-artificial (or environmental) transit corridors. They offer a contrasting paradigm to the many artificial infrastructural projects of the imperial age and allow to be conceptualized as environmental infrastructures. It is in these spaces, where the actual transit between two distant places becomes tangible, and where global connections are created, interrupted, or redirected. Or, to put it another way: Looking at environmental transit corridors in a diachronic perspective, historians can trace processes of both connectivity and disconnectivity and weave both into their narrative of historical globalization. This applies to the Strait of Malacca especially in relation to the following points:

First, the Strait of Malacca's history as a transit corridor reaches far back to pre-modern times. Surrounded by the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra Island, the strait has been the shortest route between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean for centuries.<sup>14</sup> This environmental passage is therefore an excellent example of both continuities and change – transit operations continued throughout the centuries but took different forms and directions. Well before the nineteenth century the passage had been a highly frequented route, located at the southernmost tip of the Asian mainland, connecting the East Asian markets of China, Japan, and the Southeast Asian archipelago with those of India, Europe, and the East African coastline. One could even say its unique location made it an environmental type of infrastructure.<sup>15</sup> This allows historians to trace the increase or decrease of border crossings, changes of global trade, and the general development of transit operations along the strait's coastlines all the way back to the pre-modern era. In fact, centuries before the technological transformations of the nineteenth century, the passage had

**13** See, for instance, Huber, *Channelling Mobilities*; Wenzlhuemer, "Connections in Global History."

**14** For the geostrategic importance of the Strait of Malacca, see Donald B. Freeman, *The Strait of Malacca: Gateway or Gauntlet?* (London, 2003).

**15** For an overview of trade and migration in the Malacca Strait region in the early modern period, see Malcolm H. Dunn, *Kampf um Malakka: Eine wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Studie über den portugiesischen und niederländischen Kolonialismus in Südostasien*, (Wiesbaden, 1984); Nordin Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Strait of Melaka: Dutch Melaka and English Penang, 1780-1830* (Copenhagen, 2007); Peter Borschberg, *The Singapore and Melaka Strait: Violence, Security and Diplomacy in the 17th Century* (Singapore, 2010); Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Strait of Melaka* (Honolulu, 2008); Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto, *The Portuguese and the Strait of Melaka, 1575-1619: Power, Trade and Diplomacy* (Singapore, 2012).

**16** Pinto, *The Portuguese and the Strait of Melaka*.

**17** See, for instance, Goh Chor Boon, *Technology and Entrepot Colonialism in Singapore, 1819–1940* (Singapore, 2013); George Bogaars, "The Effect of the Opening of the Suez Canal on the Trade and Development of Singapore," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 42, no. 1 (1969): 208–51.

**18** Wong Lin Ken, "The Trade of Singapore, 1819–1869," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33, no. 4 (1960): 4–325; Wong Lin Ken, "Singapore: Its Growth as an Entrepot Port, 1819–1941," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 9, no. 1 (1978): 50–84; Chiang Hai Ding, *A History of Strait Settlements Foreign Trade 1870–1915* (Singapore, 1963), 51–79.

witnessed a considerable number of crossings by Arab traders, European colonialists, Asian merchants, naturalists and adventurers from all over the world.<sup>16</sup> It therefore provokes comparisons, namely the question how such non-artificial infrastructures related to human-made structures imbued with great political significance, such as imperial infrastructural projects in the nineteenth century. What was the impact of technological and political endeavors such as the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the introduction of the treaty ports in China and Japan, the construction of roads and railways in the Federated Malay States, or the global demand for new raw materials on the Strait of Malacca's commercial statistics?<sup>17</sup> And which connections characterized the Malacca Strait's economic networks both before the nineteenth-century infrastructural revolution and in its aftermath? Commercial connections and the indicators of global trade are particularly promising for comparisons such as these, as the settlements along the Strait of Malacca's shores proved to be ideally located not only for the export of tropical commodities, but also for the special characteristics of global entrepot trade.<sup>18</sup>

Second, investigating environmental transit corridors, historians can also raise questions about the interplay of local and global developments: Did the demand for new commodities change the local importance of the transit corridor? Were non-artificial infrastructures exploited by the European empires to provide geostrategic and commercial gateways or, by contrast, did they grant the local population an unintended gain in power? And how did local conditions shape the global connectivity of different locations in the transit corridor, especially in times of infrastructural, technological, and economic change? Transit corridors are particularly well suited for considering these local idiosyncrasies because they offer a variety of small-scale opportunities for comparison. Along a maritime transit corridor, for instance, there is usually not just one port of call for ocean-going cargo vessels, but several, each with different local specifics and advantages. These may



be commercial, geographical or geomorphological. In the late nineteenth century, for example, deep-sea steamers could no longer call at the same ports in the Strait of Malacca as pre-modern sailing ships had done before. Environmental transit corridors were therefore not only impacted by local environment conditions, in this case by insufficient water depth, but even by new technologies in shipbuilding which led to ever larger ships capable of carrying more cargo. In other words, the coastline's geomorphological nature had an impact on the number and type of ships calling at a port, thereby affecting both the port's trading activity and transregional connection. Similarly, the demand for early modern trading goods like spices or textiles in the eighteenth century required different local facilities at the strait's ports than in the early twentieth century, when the demand for Malay rubber placed new infrastructural and geographical requirements on transit ports. Again, local conditions such as a port's connection to plantations or mining fields determined whether it would remain competitive. Therefore, environmental transit corridors condense the possibility of establishing connections to different places and actors. As a result, connections occur in the plural, they differ, and they become comparable. In the case of the Malacca Strait, for instance, different ports, hinterlands, or merchants may be integrated into a study of connected and marginalized spaces.

Third – closely linked to the local dimension – investigating non-artificial transit corridors allows for conceptualizing them as what Environmental historians nowadays call “environmental infrastructures.”<sup>19</sup> This approach directs the attention of historians to relations between infrastructure and nature and the multiple agents involved in the imperial transformation of colonial territories. It is therefore important to conceive of transit corridors not only as passages – the ocean highway, so to say, where the transit phase of global connections is most clearly tangible – but also as a geographical space that comprises more agents and forces besides ships

<sup>19</sup> See Kreike, *Scorched Earth*; Kalb, *Environing Empire*.

and seamen. Rather, the Strait of Malacca encompasses the transit ports and human agents such as colonists, merchants, and the economies and enterprises located in the port cities. This includes not only sea-based but also land-based infrastructure and logistics that organize the transportation of goods and people between East and West and between the Malay hinterland and the world market. Moreover, the strait was frequented by local merchants who cultivated the corridor well before the arrival of Western enterprises. Such a comprehensive view on the strait even includes non-human actors such as the physical environment and biological agents: the tropical waters, calm and blue in the January winter yet battered by heavy rains in the summer monsoon; the coastlines, the seabed, the cliffs and sand dunes, the bays and rivers that drain into the strait; the minerals and raw materials mined in the strait's hinterland, and the mountains and plains whose climate correspond closely with the maritime world. It even includes biological agents like animals and diseases, which sometimes hindered, and sometimes facilitated the imperial projects in the Malacca Strait. In other words, conceiving of the Malacca Strait as environmental infrastructure includes multiple agents and forces; and the diversity of possibly connected elements across the Strait appears in a variety of actors and stakeholders that go far beyond the mere passage.

To employ these conceptual thoughts on environmental transit corridors empirically, it is necessary to bring nature, empire, and local idiosyncrasies into dialogue with one another. For this purpose, I suggest focusing on environment factors like, for instance, the distribution of minerals needed for the extraction of tropical commodities. The commercial history of these minerals and commodities reaches far back to pre-industrial times and was heavily impacted by nineteenth-century imperial and ecological expansion. This approach provides an analytical space that relates technological and infrastructural transformations to the natural environment. Furthermore, it requires a range of sources that track the

changes in connectivity over time: First, historical scientific publications offer important insights since they dealt with the ecology and economic potential of colonial lands.<sup>20</sup> Second, colonial correspondence among governors, engineers, naturalists, or merchants frequently indicate continuing interest in these resources and the commercial exploitation of the tropics. Finally, commercial statistics and trade returns provide insights into the quantitative shifts in local and global trading connections.

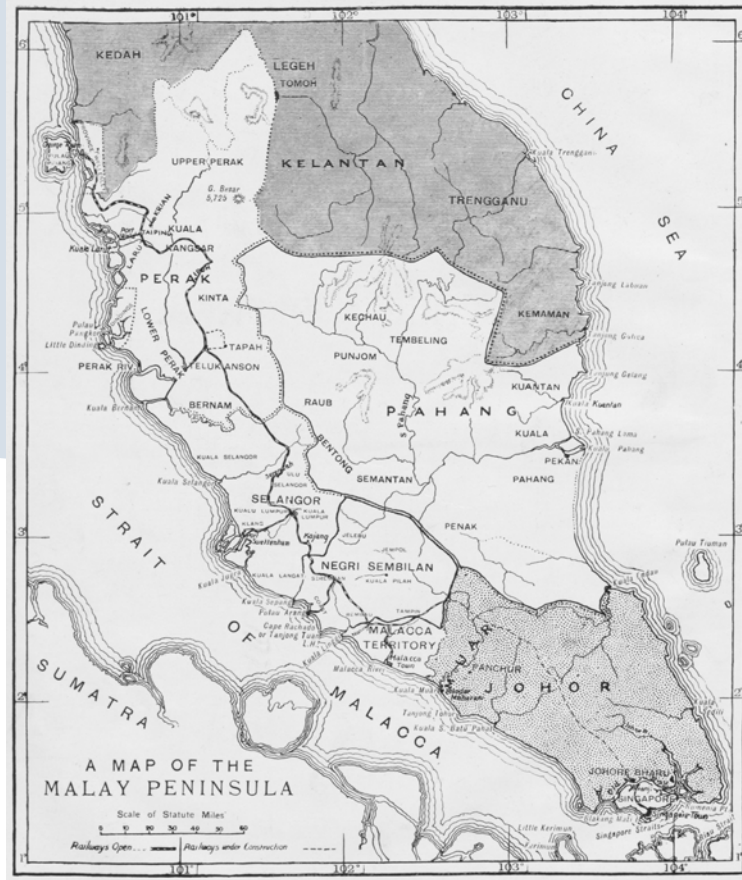
<sup>20</sup> See for instance the voluminous bibliography on tin published in 1912 by Frank Hess and Eva Hess, *Bibliography of the Geology and Mineralogy of Tin* (Washington D.C., 1912).

We have seen that environmental transit corridors provide an analytical lens for tracing processes of historical globalization. These highly connected zones are ideally suited for a detailed investigation of local-global relations and the transformation of global trade and commercial connectivity over time. The Strait of Malacca also offers a unique opportunity of including human and non-human factors and forces corresponding to the maritime passage. For global history, environmental transit corridors thus help illustrate questions about the dynamic shifts of global connectivity, depending on empire, nature, and the local environment. In the following, I will introduce an example that can serve to illustrate the potential of environmental transit corridors for the study of flowing and shifting connections. As the study of this example illuminates, conceptualizing the Strait of Malacca as an environmental transit corridor also enables historians to investigate contrary developments: The making of new and the transformation of old connections across the Strait also had regressive effects and initiated processes of marginalization in global networks.

## **II. Case Study: Following the Transport of Tin across the Strait of Malacca, c. 1850–1900**

My example examines the trade in a metal extracted from the oxide ore cassiterite ( $\text{SnO}_2$ ), which naturally occurs around the Strait of Malacca in shallower alluvial deposits, namely tin. I will discuss how the discovery of the world's largest

**Figure 2.** A map of the Strait of Malacca south of the Malay Peninsula in the early 1900s, including open and planned rail-way lines. The British Crown Colonies Penang, Malacca and Singapore formed the Strait Settlements. Together with the Federated Malay States (Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang) and the Unfederated Malay States (Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Trengganu), the peninsula constituted the territory of British Malaya. Source: Arnold Wright and H. A. Cartwright, eds., *Twentieth-Century Impressions of British Malaya: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources* (London, 1908), 2.



<sup>21</sup> For an overview on the history of tin, see Mats Ingulstad, *Tin and Global Capitalism: A History of the Devil's Metal, 1850-2000* (New York, 2014); Ernest Sydney Hedges, *Tin in Social and Economic History* (London, 1964).

tin deposits on the Malay Peninsula from the late 1840s onwards impacted both the imperial project of transporting tin – from the mining districts in the Malay hinterland via the strait’s ports to the global markets – and the global connectivity of the various transit ports along the Strait of Malacca’s coastlines.

Tin is one of the oldest metals known to humankind. While it was mainly used in alloy form in ancient times, it became an important element of industrial civilization in the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Mainly due to its use as rust protection by coating steel and iron sheets with molten tin, the metal developed into a key element in numerous industries, ranging from the military to electrical and mechanical engineering and the textile industry.

From the mid-1800s onwards, as the demand for tin dramatically increased on world markets, it played a key role

in European imperial expansion into the tropical world. On the one hand, the commercial extraction of tin in the colonies compensated for resource constraints in Europe. Since the European mines were largely exhausted at this time, the Europeans increasingly turned to distant raw materials to meet the enormous demand for tin of modern consumerism. On the other hand, industrially produced supplies such as the tin can influenced numerous other commodity flows connecting Europe with its colonies.<sup>22</sup> According to reports of Rudolf Martin, whom we already encountered at the beginning of this essay, the exploitation of tin had serious and lasting consequences for the tropical environment, especially in the Malacca Strait region: “The mining system has its great disadvantages for the land: the fertile humus is eroded over long distances, rendering it unusable for any cultivation for a long time to come. Moreover, the leaching process washes the fine sandy soil into the rivers, accelerating the already naturally existing silting process, which destroys the most important and cheapest routes over time.”<sup>23</sup> Thus Martin already indicated at the end of the nineteenth century what environmental historians nowadays frequently state: There is hardly any other commodity better suited than tin to illustrate the tense interplay between imperial power and colonized environments and between mass destruction and mass consumption.<sup>24</sup>

Since pre-modern times, Malay tin found its way to the world markets via the ports along the Strait of Malacca on the western coastlines of the Malay Peninsula. Ever since the Dutch took control of the peninsula in the seventeenth century, and well into the early nineteenth century, the fortress of Malacca was considered the natural outlet for Malay tin. In fact, Malacca, “the port at the end of the monsoons,” had many natural advantages as an entrepot for both the Malay traders and for the Dutch Empire:<sup>25</sup> Since the port was located in a strategically favorable position in the middle of the strait, the Dutch rulers had hoped to monopolize the output of tin

**22** The tin can truly had a pervasive influence in economics and industry all the way to everyday life. Its invention facilitated the preservation of food and its transportation over ever-increasing distances. See Corey Ross, “The Tin Frontier: Mining, Empire, and Environment in Southeast Asia, 1870s-1930s,” *Environmental History* 19, no. 3 (July 2014), 469.

**23** Martin, *Über eine Reise durch die Malayische Halbinsel*, 10.

**24** One could even say tin followed the classic pattern of ecological imperialism. See Corey Ross, “The Tin Frontier;” Corey Ross, *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire. Europe and the Transformation of the Tropical World* (Oxford, 2017), 136–63.

**25** Tomé Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, vol. 2 (London, 1944), 228.

**26** Lewis, "The Tin Trade in the Malay Peninsula," 56.

**27** Thomas John Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Strait of Malacca, viz. Pinang, Malacca, and Singapore*, vol. II (London, 1839). 23–4.

**28** For an overview of early works on the metal, see Hess and Hess, *Bibliography of the Geology and Mineralogy of Tin*.

**29** There is a sizeable literature on the economic, social and political dimension of the industry in Southeast Asia. See Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914 with Special Reference to the States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang* (Tucson, 1965); Yat Hoong Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, 1969); Francis Kok-Wah Loh, *Beyond the Tin Mines: Coolies, Squatters, and New Villagers in the Kinta Valley, Malaysia, c. 1880–1980* (Singapore, 1988); Amarjit Kaur and Frits Diehl, "Tin Miners and Tin Mining in Indonesia, 1850–1950," *Asian Studies Review* 20, no. 2 (1996): 95–120.

on the peninsula by excluding other purchasers.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the tin deposits discovered in the seventeenth century in Negri Sembilan, the immediate hinterland of Malacca, were ideally connected to the settlement's port by the Linggi and Selangor rivers just north of the city. For the Malaccan traders, it was much easier to reach the mines via these river routes than crossing the impenetrable jungle of the Malayan highlands. In order to keep the export of tin exclusively confined to Malacca, the Dutch even tried to consolidate their monopoly in a number of treaties with the local chiefs of Kedah, Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong. Even though this policy was not entirely successful, early modern Malacca quickly developed into the main outlet for tin exports in the Strait.<sup>27</sup>

Tin developed into a truly global resource in high demand from the 1850s onwards, which is reflected by the enormous increase of scientific literature on the metal in the same time period.<sup>28</sup> The Malacca Strait region was crucial for the nineteenth-century rise of the industry.<sup>29</sup> Previously described by the British as inconspicuous "No-Man's Land," it was only with the rise of the mining industry that the interior of the Malay Peninsula developed into "one of the most thriving and contented communities owing the British sway."<sup>30</sup> The unprecedented boom in tin-mining on the peninsula began in the 1840s and 1850s, following the discovery of the world's largest tin deposits in the hinterland of the Strait of Malacca.<sup>31</sup> The newly found tin fields were usually owned by Malay rulers; however, since the Malay chiefs often lacked funds to open new mining enterprises, they initially began to rely on Chinese merchants and Chinese labor. In

**30** Arnold Wright and Thomas H. Reid, *The Malay Peninsula. A Record of British Progress in the Middle East* (New York, 1912), 6.

**31** The origins of the tin trade in the Malay Peninsula, however, go well back to the pre-modern era. See, for instance, Dianne Lewis,

"The Tin Trade in the Malay Peninsula During the Eighteenth Century," *The New Zealand Journal of History* 3, no. 1 (1969): 52–69.

the already established seventeenth-century mining districts of Lukut, Kanching, and Ampang in Selangor, for example, Chinese enterprises opened new and much deeper mining fields. At the same time, the ancient Chinese mining district in Klang expanded significantly, turning the neighboring Kuala Lumpur into a center for the collection and distribution of the metal. Further south in Negri Sembilan, Chinese mining enterprises located in Malacca revived the eighteenth-century tin mines along the Linggi River. The greatest impact on the Malayan tin industry, however, came with the discovery of large tin deposits in Larut, Taiping and in the Kinta Valley in Perak in the late 1840s by the Malay Long Jafaar, son of a minor Malay chief. In the following years, Jafaar cooperated closely with Chinese financiers in Penang and Malacca to bring the Chinese to mine the rich tin deposits in Perak. Together with the fields in Selangor, the deposits in Perak were among the largest concentration of tin in the region.<sup>32</sup>

Accordingly, the mid-nineteenth-century rise of the mining industry in Malaya relied heavily on Chinese enterprises and the influx of Chinese workers in the region. In the words of environmental historian Corey Ross: While in the eighteenth century “the early Malay tin frontier was [. . .] largely limited to shallow deposits on the sides of the foothills that benefited from both good drainage and good access to water, [. . .] the arrival of Chinese *kongsis* (commercial syndicates fueled by ‘coolie’ labor) marked a significant expansion of this frontier, both outward but more importantly downward.”<sup>33</sup> In fact, the Kinta Valley, where the number of Chinese miners grew from 1,000 to over 100,000 in the second half of the nineteenth century, became not only the most populous and densely inhabited district in the Malay States, but also the world’s largest tin field.<sup>34</sup> From a geological perspective, the newly discovered reservoir formed the so-called “Western Tin Belt,” created by the weathering of tin-bearing granite beds. These deposits – until the late 1860s mainly extracted by Chinese miners from Malacca – extended along the western side of the Malay States

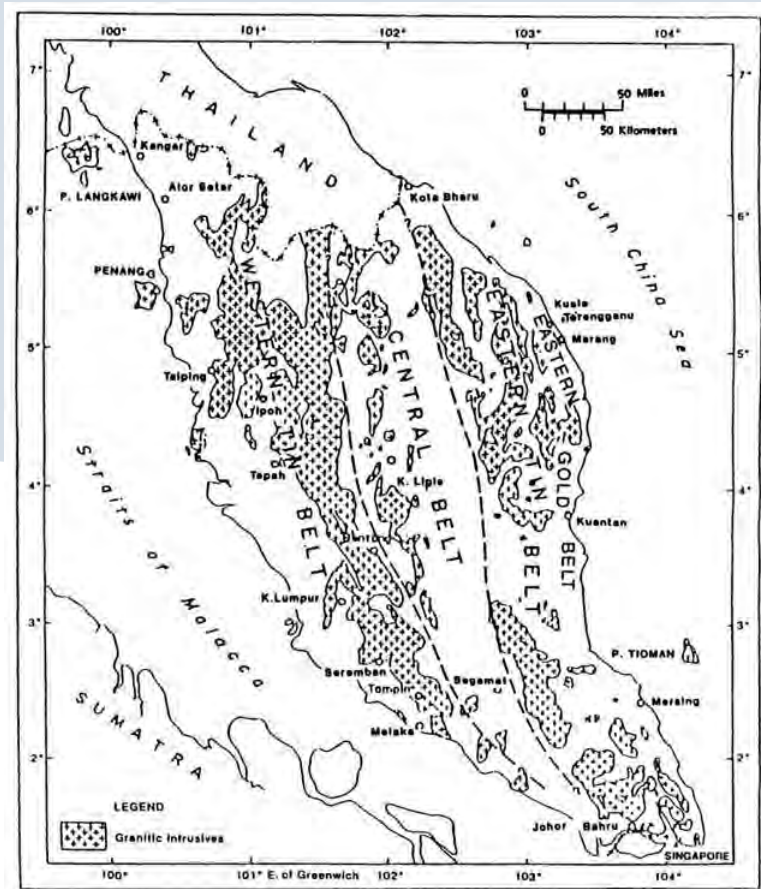
**32** Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 13–31. See also Khoo Kay Kim, “Taiping (Larut): The Early History of a Mining Settlement,” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 64, no. 1 (1991): 1–32.

**33** Ross, *Ecology and Power*, 141–42.

**34** Loh, *Beyond the Tin Mines*; Salma Nasution Khoo and Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, *Kinta Valley: Pioneering Malaysia’s Modern Development* (Perak, 2005).

**35** John B. Scrivenor, *The Geology of Malayan Ore-Deposits* (London, 1928), 4–5.

**Figure 3.** The geological western tin belt is separated from the less abundant eastern tin belt, on the shore of the South China Sea, by a deeper gold-bearing belt. Source: Thadshajini Suntharalingam, "Malaysia: Peninsular Malaysia," *Encyclopedia of European and Asian Regional Geology* (1997), 525–30.



<sup>36</sup> Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 30.

Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan down to the Riau Islands near Singapore.<sup>35</sup> (See Fig. 3)

Well into the nineteenth century, the rivers connecting the coastlines near Malacca and its hinterland continued to serve as the main transportation routes for tin on the Malay Peninsula. As late as 1844, still more than half of all tin from the Malay States was carried to Malacca for re-export.<sup>36</sup> Along with the discovery of new deposits, however, the transport of tin, from the Malay mines via the ports along the Strait of Malacca to the global markets, turned into a highly complex endeavor – with lasting impacts on the coastal settlement’s connectivity.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the largest part of tin exports moved from Malacca to the other Strait Settlements (Penang and Singapore), the British crown colonies





**Figure 4.** Open cast mine near Taiping, Perak, c. 1908. Source: Arnold Wright and H. A. Cartwright, eds., *Twentieth-Century Impressions of British Malaya: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources* (London, 1908), 506.

in British Malaya.<sup>37</sup> Although Chinese labor continued to be a key force, Western enterprises took over large parts of the mining and smelting industry of the peninsula in the 1870s. Simultaneously, the so-called “Strait Tin,” the commercial name given to tin imported from the Strait Settlements on the London Metal Exchange, flooded the European markets: While between 1844 and 1848 a total of around 5,000 tons of Strait Tin were imported to Europe, this number rose to almost 22,000 between 1869 and 1873, and to more than 169,000 in the period between 1900 and 1904.<sup>38</sup>

However, as the amount of tin discovered and extracted grew, so did the logistical challenge of commodity transport from the dense jungles in the Malay hinterland to the settlements along the Strait of Malacca: From the 1850s onwards, the largest tin deposits were no longer to be found in the hinterland of Malacca, but further north in Selangor and Perak, which were much more accessible via roads and railways from a range of hitherto industrially unimportant fishermen’s villages in Perak and Selangor than from the distant and ancient port city of Malacca. Given these changing conditions, the British colo-

**37** British Malaya included several British territories, mainly on the Malay Peninsula, from the late eighteenth century until the end of World War II. (See Fig. 2) It comprised the territories of the Strait Settlements, the Federated Malay States (FMS) and the Unfederated Malay States (UMS). The Strait Settlements was the official name given to the British Crown Colonies of Malacca, Penang, and Singapore on the northern shore of the Strait of Malacca between 1826 and 1946. The FMS covered the sultanates of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang. The semi-independent UMS included Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Trengganu. For a recent overview on the history of British Malaya, see Lynn Hollen Lees, *Planting Empire, Cultivating Subjects: British Malaya, 1786–1941* (Cambridge, 2017).

**38** This development corresponded closely with ever higher tin prices and an increase

in the industrial consumption of the metal in Europe. Wong

Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 12, 212.

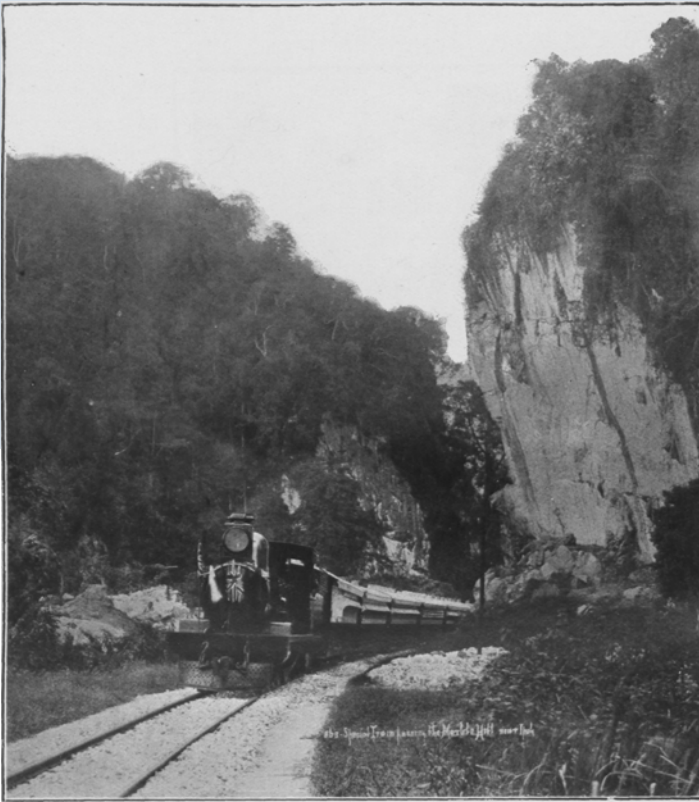
**39** Memorandum from F. Weld, Governor of the Strait Settlements to Earl of Derby, Colonial Office, 23. May 1883, The National Archives, Kew (hereinafter TNA) CO 273/120 No. 120.

**40** Amarjit Kaur, "The Impact of Railroads on The Malayan Economy, 1874-1941," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 39, no. 4 (1980): 695.

**41** Letter from Cecil Clementi Smith, Governor of the Strait Settlements, to Lord Knutsford, Colonial Office, March 2, 1889, TNA CO 273/159 No. 6-7.

nial administration gradually developed plans for a complex logistical transportation system, connecting the large mining districts in the northern Malayan hinterland with the Strait of Malacca's coastlines. Beginning in the early 1870s, the negotiations surrounding these logistical endeavors are increasingly reflected in the interaction between the Colonial Office in London, the Government House in the Strait Settlements, and the residents and resident engineers of the Malay States. These ventures included, among others, the planning of the railway lines across the Federated Malay States, connecting the mining districts in Perak and Selangor with the strait's ports.

According to an 1883 memorandum from the Governor General of the Strait Settlements, the immediate goal of this new transportation system in Malaya, consisting of roads and railways, was not only to establish transportation facilities between the mining districts and the Strait of Malacca's ports but more generally to open up the agricultural and mining regions throughout the entire peninsula.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, the late nineteenth-century "transformation of the economy" in Malaya was closely linked to the construction of railways.<sup>40</sup> After the establishment of the first railroad lines providing transportation infrastructure between the mining districts in Taiping and Kuala Lumpur with Port Weld and Port Klang in the early 1880s, accessing the large tin deposits in Larut and the Kinta Valley became the British Empire's major economic purpose on the peninsula. (See Fig. 5) As the Governor of the Strait Settlements submitted initial plans to the Colonial Office in London in March 1889 for the construction of a line connecting Teluk Anson, the port of Lower Perak, with the Kinta Valley, he urged that "the Railway is urgently needed for the development of the country." He continued: "The government has to face this position. Off the country, the natural resources [ . . . ] are left without being opened out by a Railway. There is every prospect owing to the navigation of the rivers becoming every year more and more difficult, that it will not only not progress but may go back into jungle."<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 5.** The Perak State Railway on Marble Hill, Ipoh, connecting the tin-mining districts in Kinta with the port in Teluk Anson. Source: Arnold Wright and H. A. Cartwright, eds., *Twentieth-Century Impressions of British Malaya: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources* (London, 1908), 308.

In order to allow access to the tin deposits in Kinta, the governor argued, the expensive and risky transportation, requiring several days of travel, from the port at Taluk Anson, “the point nearest to the country,” to the Kinta mines by boats, buffalo, bullock carts, and elephants – as developed by the Malays over centuries – needed to be replaced by the construction of a railroad.<sup>42</sup> While some of these projects, such as moving the trade routes in Perak to the deeper and more accessible Dinding Bays, were never fully realized, other locations were successfully integrated into the transportation system of tin across the coastlines.<sup>43</sup> These included the ports in Teluk Anson and Port Weld, providing transit and transportation facilities between the Strait and the Perak mines, as well as Port Swettenham and Port Dickson, serving the mining districts in Selangor.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> On plans to integrate the Dinding Bays into the trade network of tin across the Strait, see Letter from Cecil Clementi Smith, Governor of the Strait Settlements, to Lord Knutsford, Colonial Office, January 28, 1859, TNA CO 273/158 No. 16.

**44** The integration of Malacca into the Malay Railway network, for instance, did not take place until the early twentieth century. See Kaur, "The Impact of Railroads on The Malayan Economy, 1874-1941."

**45** *Strait Settlements Blue Books 1870-1884; Annual Trade Returns Strait Settlements 1885-1900.*

**46** Interestingly though, the amount of tin imported to Singapore from the Malay States remained quite small, imports from Penang and Malacca, however, increased strongly from the 1870s onwards. Therefore, most of the tin deposits in Selangor and Perak first made their way to Singapore via Penang and Malacca before being shipped around the world. The tin imported into Singapore from the Malay States came largely from Pahang, located in the peninsula's eastern tin belt. However, the Pahang supplies were much more limited and largely ignored by the Strait capitalists. Consequently, the amount of tin imported from the Malay States in Singapore stagnated after 1850. See Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 30-31.

Consequently, the physical availability of tin in Perak and Selangor led to an increase in the economic importance of the ports of Teluk Anson, Port Weld, Port Swettenham, and Port Dickson. Due to the smaller tin deposits in Negri Sembilan, the hinterland of Malacca, the ancient port city gradually lost its role as the main transit hub for tin.<sup>44</sup>

However, according to the Strait Settlements' annual trade returns,<sup>45</sup> global export rates of tin from the Strait Settlements did not increase at the Perak or Selangor ports, where the supply of tin was highest, but further eastwards in Singapore, located far away from the large tin reservoirs in the Malayan hinterland.<sup>46</sup> Economic historians usually explain this dynamic by referring to Singapore's low duty rates for commodities and the freedom of its port.<sup>47</sup> In the following, however, I propose to focus more on another dynamic, resulting from changing infrastructural requirements for global transit ports as the shipping volumes increased. This includes a reflection on the physical environment Singapore Island offered in a colonial world which was increasingly reaching natural limits to commercial and industrial growth. Empirically, this perspective allows for an inclusion of the accounts of naturalists and engineers who usually do not appear in Singapore's nineteenth-century economic history. And it directs our attention to several environmental advantages Singapore Island offered in the second half of the nineteenth century, including local idiosyncrasies and small-scale environmental conditions, that allowed the rise of the Malacca Strait as a global transit corridor to continue.

First and foremost, its geographical location made Singapore an unrivaled port of call both for native junks from the South-

**47** Chiang Hai Ding, *A History of Strait Settlements Foreign*

*Trade 1870-1915*, 6. Wong Lin Ken, "Singapore: Its Growth

as an Entrepot Port, 1819-1941," 75.

east Asian archipelago and for large ocean-going steamers.<sup>48</sup> In 1897, Rudolf Martin considered Singapore's location "outstandingly favorable from a strategic and commercial point of view" and saw this as the main reason for its unique rise as a "trading center of the very first rank."<sup>49</sup> In fact, located at the southernmost end of the Asian continent, Singapore Island was not only well positioned for the import and re-export of Malay tin, but served as the central transshipment hub for merchants and resources from the Dutch East Indies and the Southeast Asian mainland (including Cambodia and Indochina). Unlike Batavia (present-day Jakarta), Singapore was located on the direct route connecting the European and East Asian markets following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.<sup>50</sup> Ever since, Singapore benefited from an influx of enterprises and merchants who had been located in the Dutch East Indies before. Previously, a significant part of the East-West trade still ran via the Cape Route and the Sunda, Lombok and Makassar Strait (with stopovers in Batavia and Manila), bypassing the longer route via the Malacca Strait.

Second, unlike the Perak and Selangor ports or Malacca, Singapore had a natural harbor that provided deep and sheltered berth for large ocean-going vessels. As early as 1849, the surveys of the Strait of Singapore by the engineer and government inspector John Turnbull Thomson had indicated that the bay next to the Singapore River, the former New Harbour (later Keppel Harbour), offered a natural deep-water berth providing not only sufficient shelter for deep steamers but also the geomorphological infrastructure required for refueling and loading the ships.<sup>51</sup> In 1887, the Strait Trading Company opened a tin smelting facility on Pulau Brani, an island located in the middle of New Harbour. (See Fig. 6) Due to its close connection to New Harbour, the company's business flourished and quickly moved the tin smelting industry from the Malay States to Singapore Island.<sup>52</sup> Singapore not only offered excellent natural and geomorphological conditions for the transit and trade of tin, but even featured the specific

**48** Sir Stamford Raffles noted this already back in the 1810s when he opened the trading post on Singapore Island. However, the Bengal government only became aware of its true geostrategic importance in the 1830s and 1840s. See Hikayat Abdullah ben Abdul Kadir Moonsee, "Concerning Colonel Farquhars going to look for a place to establish a settlement," in J.R. Logan (ed.), *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and the Indian Ocean*, vol. 6 (Singapore, 1852), 585-604.

**49** Martin, *Über Eine Reise durch die Malayische Halbinsel*, 3; Martin, *Die Inlandstämme der Malayischen Halbinsel: Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse einer Reise durch die Vereinigten Malayischen Staaten* (Jena, 1905).

**50** Bogaars, "The Effect of the Opening of the Suez Canal."

**51** Boon, *Technology and Entrepot Colonialism in Singapore, 1819-1940*, 45.

**52** W. G. Huff, *The Economic Growth of Singapore: Trade and Development in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1997), 255.

**53** The term “Strait Produce” is used in the sources to refer to all products from the Malacca Strait region which were brought to Singapore and stored there for transshipment, such as pepper, gambia, gutta percha, tin, sugar and rubber. D.D. Daly, “The Metalliferous Formation of the Peninsula,” *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 2 (1878): 194–98. See also John H. Drabble, *An Economic History of Malaysia, c. 1800–1990. The Transition to Modern Economic Growth* (Basingstoke, 2000).

**54** On the commercial importance of the Singapore River for native trade, see Stephen Dobbs, *The Singapore River: A Social History 1819–2002* (Singapore, 2003).

**55** On the connection between regional trade on the riverbank and global trade in New Harbour see John Cameron, *Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India: Being a Descriptive Account of Singapore, Penang, Province Wellesley, and Malacca: Their Peoples, Products, Commerce, and Government* (Singapore, 1865), 56–57.

geographical and infrastructural logistics for transforming the raw material into its liquid and thus more easily transportable physical state.

Third, the mouth of the Singapore River, passing through the old city center, provided an ideal natural anchorage for the import and transit of “Strait Produce.”<sup>53</sup> While New Harbour attracted ocean-going vessels, smaller coastal ships and other crafts such as Malay prows and junks preferred to anchor near the river, where European merchants inspected and purchased the tropical goods for re-export.<sup>54</sup> By combining New Harbour and the mouth of the Singapore River, the island offered an excellent environment for traffic and transshipment between the archipelago’s local merchants and the global trading routes. Or, to put it differently: The outsourcing of long-distance trade to New Harbour turned the Singapore River into a hub connecting both regional and global markets. By now, products from the Malacca Strait region such as tin (and increasingly rubber from the 1900s onwards) were collected on the riverbank and transported to New Harbour for global export.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, by providing new docking facilities at New Harbour in the 1860s, and constructing a railroad connecting the port to the city center in the 1880s, the British supplemented these environmental conditions with the physical infrastructure required to increase the amount of moving goods between the Asian hinterlands and the world market.<sup>56</sup> Again, the making of new connections across the Malacca Strait might be considered a coproduction of human agents and labor on the one hand, and the physical environment on the other.

To sum up, from the early modern period until the first half of the nineteenth century, the amount of tin exported from the Malay Peninsula depended largely on the mining fields

**56** To accomplish these projects, colonial engineers and naturalists were sent to Singapore in large numbers from the

late 1860s onwards. Their main task was to examine and explore natural limits to economic growth and infrastructural

possibilities to expand global trade. See “Railway across the Island of Singapore,” April, 1889, TNA CO 273/159 No. 3.



**Figure 6.** Keppel Harbour from the eastern ridge of Mount Faber, c. early 1900s. The chimneys on Pulau Brani, an island in the middle of the natural deep-water berth of New Harbour, were part of the Strait Trading Company's tin smelter. Source: National Archives of Singapore, Image-No.: 19980007346 – 0024.

in the immediate hinterland of Malacca. At this time, the tin trade across the peninsula was largely dominated by the Malay indigenous communities, and the ancient city of Malacca became both the main export center for tin and the metal's main transit hub. Following the discovery of new mining fields further north in Perak and Selangor in the second half of the nineteenth century, however, Malacca was replaced by Singapore as the peninsula's principal export destination for tin. Simultaneously, the Malay's local transportation routes, based on indigenous knowledge about rivers, reefs, and tides, were gradually superseded. This development was the result of an imperial infrastructural policy of governing the transportation of tin via roads and railroads from the distant mines via the strait's coastlines to the natural deep-water berth at New Harbour on Singapore Island. In this process, the ports along the strait's coastlines (including Teluk Anson, Penang, Port Swettenham, and Port Weld) became regional feeder ports of Singapore. Moreover, one could even say that the Malay Peninsula turned into one major hinterland serving Singapore Island. Unlike these feeder ports, Singapore itself offered better environmental conditions to handle increasing shipping volumes. This transformation in transportation and trade leads to the conclusion that the degree of global connectivity of places across the Strait of Malacca's coastlines depended mostly on two main factors: first, on the connectivity of the coastal settlements to their own hinterlands, an indicator one could perhaps call "hinterland connectivity;" and second, on the

strait's physical environment and the behavior of colonists in response to these environmental conditions.

## **Conclusion**

In the post-globalizing twenty-first-century world, historical narratives of worldwide entanglements are increasingly based on a dialectical approach that accounts for both global connections and disconnections. In this article and my broader research project, I suggest that by exploring the history of environmental transit corridors, we gain valuable insights into the ambiguous aspects of connectivity and their ecological and spatial dimensions. Within corridors of transit, connections break, they are diverted and created, and they become comparable. The case of the Strait of Malacca is particularly useful to illustrate these considerations: It represents an environmental infrastructural corridor used for trade and commerce since pre-industrial times, which distinguishes the strait from the many artificial infrastructural projects of the age of imperialism and lets us analyze modern economic connections against the backdrop of long-term change. In the Strait of Malacca, a variety of connections become tangible. In addition to ties of global trade, this includes regional links into the strait's broader environment shaped by different non-human factors and forces – including the hinterland with its ecology – and human actors, such as imperial stakeholders in the ports, Chinese and local merchants, engineers and naturalists. The constant interplay of the global and the local, infrastructure and nature, and human agents and non-human factors and forces, also led to certain disconnections and processes of exclusion.

The transport of tin across the Strait of Malacca, highlighted in this article, illustrates such local-global dynamics. Newly found tin deposits in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula forced the British imperial actors to introduce new infrastructural policies and commercial transportation routes from the 1870s onwards. As a result, previous trade operations based



on indigenous knowledge and logistics became marginalized. While in the early nineteenth century the rivers near Malacca still served as the indigenous' main transport engines to the mining districts in Negri Sembilan, the hinterland of Malacca, the second half of the nineteenth century saw the British colonialists' extension of transportation routes in Perak and Selangor through roads and railways in order to access new mining deposits. Henceforth, Malacca, lacking any substantial tin deposits in its own hinterland, lost its role as the most important transit hub to other coastline settlements and became – compared to its previous position – disconnected.

Another dynamic resulted from the physical environment and the increase of tin shipped through the Strait of Malacca: The new regional transit ports provided neither the environmental conditions nor the physical infrastructure required to cope with larger shipping volumes. Instead, the former fishermen's village of Singapore turned into the region's largest transit hub for tin due to a number of environmental advantages. This underlines that connections in global transit corridors are by no means static, but dynamic and shifting phenomena. The tensions between local conditions, imperial infrastructures, and the natural environment may even lead to the marginalization of previously highly connected places. Foregrounding such cross-currents and disconnecting effects allows us to tell the history of worldwide entanglements in a way that incorporates not only human actors, but also non-human factors and natural forces, as well as local idiosyncrasies into narratives of global change.

**Lars Kury** is a Ph.D. candidate in Modern History at the University of Basel. His main research areas include global history, environmental history, and the history of global infrastructure (19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries). His Ph.D. project will demonstrate the analytical value of environmental transit corridors for the theoretical grounding of global history, using the nineteenth-century Strait of Malacca as an

empirical example. He currently works as an Assistant for European and Global History at the Institute for European Global Studies in Basel. Before starting his Ph.D. in early 2021, he finished his Master's degree at the University of Basel in History, Political Sciences, and Geography, and was a research assistant at the chair for Early Modern Global History at the Department of History in Basel.

# Live Cargo, Dead Ends: The German Wildlife Trade in Global Perspective

Charlotte Marlene Hoes

University of Göttingen

In 1960, Hermann Ruhe, former director of the German animal trade company Ruhe, looked back on more than a century of his company's history and was very pleased with its accomplishments.<sup>1</sup> What had started as a small-scale trade in canary birds developed into one of the world's largest wildlife traders<sup>2</sup> in the first half of the twentieth century. The main business model of L. Ruhe KG or Louis Ruhe Inc. was to capture animals in various regions and ship them safely mainly to Europe

<sup>1</sup> In his memoirs published in 1960, Ruhe details the company's development, consistently praising his grandfather and father as well as himself. He reflects on their work with pride, see Hermann Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus* (Munich, 1960), 16.

<sup>2</sup> The dichotomy of "humans" and "animals" has been rightfully criticized in Human-Animal Studies (see Chimaira-Arbeitskreis, "Eine Einführung in Gesellschaftliche Tier-Mensch-Verhältnisse und Human-Animal Studies," in *Human-Animal Studies: Über die Gesellschaftliche*

*Natur von Mensch-Tier-Verhältnissen*, ed. Chimaira-Arbeitskreis (Bielefeld, 2011), 7-42). For simplicity, I will use "humans" and "animals" in this text, though "non-human animals" would be more correct. Additionally, I am using the term "wild" to describe the animals Ruhe traded, though the term – just as much as

"undomesticated" – is blurry. Ruhe did not only deal in "wild" or "undomesticated" animals, he also traded in domesticated animals such as camels or cattle, or those who are considered neither wild nor domesticated, such as elephants. I refrain from using the term "exotic," mainly for its othering quality, but also because

Ruhe dealt with animals that were not perceived as "exotic" either. I chose to use mostly the term "wild" since the main idea the company traded on was that of animals that were closer to nature than domesticated ones and that could be tamed and integrated into cultivated places.

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**3** Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 306. For more on the logistics behind the transport, see Smithsonian Institution Archives (hereafter: SIA): RU 326, Box 80, "OAM: Dorcas Gazelle, June 1960." Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German sources are the author's.

**4** The Alfeld animal trade was a local memory space ("Erinnerungsraum"), producing many personal accounts, see for example Hugo Busch, *Von Tafelmachern und Vogelhändlern: Heimat und Elternhaus* (Alfeld, 1993); Stadtarchiv Alfeld (hereafter: STA): Alfred Glenwinkel, *Zoodirektor Alfred Glenwinkel erzählt* (unpublished manuscript); or the series "Reisen und Abenteuer mit Tieren" in *Alfelder Zeitung*, starting May 14, 1937 and running infrequently until August 3, 1937. These reminiscences persist until today, see also "Die Geschichte der Tierhandlung Ruhe," *alt-alfeld*, accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.alt-alfeld.de/gewerbebetriebe/s-z/tierhandlung-ruhe>.

**5** In many accounts they are actually emphasized, see (besides Ruhe's account) Julius Eduard Müller, "Reisen und Abenteuer mit Tieren," *Alfelder Zeitung*, July 13, 1927.

or North America in order to sell them to interested buyers such as zoological gardens and circuses. Ludwig Ruhe had established the enterprise in the small town of Alfeld in Northern Germany in the 1840s and passed it down to his sons and grandsons. Hermann Ruhe described the business as a story of continuous success that was achieved – and maintained even through times of hardship – through hard work and expertise. The crowning accolade, according to him, was the appointment by the Eisenhower administration to organize the transport of two gazelles that the U.S.-American president had received from the Tunisian government. Only a company that commanded "experienced staff, global relations, and collection as well as quarantine stations" could execute such a task.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, in his memoirs, accounts of his employees, and stories passed on to this day by citizens of Alfeld, Ruhe's development reads like the prime example of a successful enterprise.<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that episodes of struggle and setbacks are glossed over. Rather, they become an aspect of momentary chaos that is eventually controlled thanks to the stamina and skillfulness of the people involved in the trade.<sup>5</sup> Essentially, Ruhe's success is the epitome of a supposedly connected world that is so tightly webbed that even untamed, wild animals can be transported between far-flung places. In that respect, the Ruhe company serves as a prime object to investigate through the lens of new imperial history, for it combines two core concepts on which historiography has focused in recent years: mobility and networks.<sup>6</sup> It also seem-

**6** For works that trace the nature of networks and their interplay with empires, see for example Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London, 2001); Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation:*

*Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2010); Antoinette Burton and Tony Ballantyne, eds., *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (Urbana, 2009) and for a more-than-human approach:

James Beattie, Edward Melillo and Emily O'Gorman, "Rethinking the British Empire through Eco-Cultural Networks: Materialist-Cultural Environmental History, Relational Connections and Agency," *Environment and History* 20, no. 4 (2014): 561-575.

ingly portrays a case of connectivity that allowed for the trade to unfold. Taking the skepticism of this special issue towards these narratives of connectivity as a point of departure, I want to ask what other stories can be extracted from the activities surrounding the wildlife trade.

Approaching the history of Ruhe through key moments of rupture, I will zoom in on its business activities in the 1920s. I have chosen this period because it marks the height of the company's success. Having outposts in various locations around the globe, it was considered the biggest wildlife trader worldwide. Interestingly, this happened at a time when the German Empire had lost political control over its former colonies. Thus Ruhe is another example for a businesses' or individual's independence from political power, being able to draw on trans-imperial networks rather than national affiliation.<sup>7</sup> A closer look, however, reveals various uncertainties and disruptions that the company had to react to. Rough terrain had to be navigated, complicated bureaucratic paperwork administered, and the vulnerability of the animals to disease and death considered. After capture, one of the immediate problems was transport. Moving vastly different kinds of animals over a great distance by a variety of means, be it their own feet, trains, trucks or ships, offered all kinds of pitfalls. First, I will look at these challenges of movement. Since humans and animals had to make use of or cross spaces - some of which were only created in the context of the trade, such as specially designed ship decks or quarantine stations at seaports<sup>8</sup> - I will then examine what obstacles arose from the animals' crossing natural landscapes, national borders, or between companies. Lastly, I will argue that the biggest rupture was caused by the animals themselves. Their physical existence and needs posed the greatest challenges, affecting their movement as well as the overseas passage. It could potentially disrupt the entire flow. Excavating the fissures of the trade during a time when the company arguably was most successful will reveal the limits of its control and illustrate that the purported flow was not as steady as it may retrospectively seem.

<sup>7</sup> For the importance of trans-imperial networks, see Patricia Purtschert, Barbara Lüthi and Francesca Falk, eds., *Postkoloniale Schweiz: Formen und Folgen eines Kolonialismus ohne Kolonien* (Bielefeld, 2013); Ulrike Kirchberger, "Between Transimperial Networking and National Antagonism: German Scientists in the British Empire during the Long Nineteenth Century," in *Routledge Handbook of Science and Empire*, ed. Andrew Gross (Abingdon, 2021), 138-147.

<sup>8</sup> I understand space as a relational, not only geographical category, with discursive as well as material characteristics. Humans and animals often shared spaces that were created through their relations, which is why both, the relational character of the space and of the interaction between the species, needs to be examined, see André Krebber and Mieke Roscher, "Spuren suchen, Zeichen lesen, Fährten finden," in *Den Fährten folgen: Methoden Interdisziplinärer Tierforschung*, ed. Forschungsschwerpunkt Tier-Mensch-Gesellschaft (Bielefeld, 2016), 11-28, 18-20.

**9** The Harz region east of Alfeld possessed a vibrant canary breeding scene. The birds were closely linked to mine workers and their families, who most likely took their feathered companions with them when they moved to the Kingdom of Hannover to work in glass kilns, see Busch, *Von Tafelmachern und Vogelhändlern*, 107; Karl August Tolle, *Lage der Berg- und Hüttenarbeiter im Oberharze* (Berlin, 1892), 65.

**10** Busch, *Von Tafelmachern und Vogelhändlern*, 101-105.

**11** For the mentioning of this trip, see Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 14; Busch, *Von Tafelmachern und Vogelhändlern*, 289. Ludwig Ruhe's brother-in-law, Hermann Müller, died in Peru.

**12** Passenger lists show that Ludwig Ruhe reached New Orleans on March 31, 1869 (I received this information by email on September 09, 2021 from Mary Lou Eichhorn, archivist at Historic New Orleans Collections). The branch he consecutively established existed as late as 1909, when he still had a shop at 117 Chartres Street in New Orleans ("Loss in Chameleons: New York's Rigid Law Cut Off Demand Here", *Times Picayune*, July 18, 1909).

## I. From Trading Birds to "Human Zoos"

At first glance, it is easy to understand why the Ruhe business is swathed in a narrative of growth, connectivity and control. Originating from a small provincial town in Lower Saxony, it established branches in the United States as well as the United Kingdom and maintained farms and outposts in continental Europe, in east, west and southern Africa, India and Indonesia, and existed for nearly one hundred and fifty years until 1993, when the last Ruhe heir had to file for bankruptcy. Ludwig Ruhe, the company founder, first bred and traded canary birds,<sup>9</sup> a business he came to through marriage. His father-in-law, a worker at the local glass kiln, had been trading canaries to the east as far as Saint Petersburg.<sup>10</sup> The market proved lucrative enough that the family decided to venture further. In the 1850s, Ruhe and his brother-in-law took their German-bred canary birds and traveled to South America in order to offer them on the local markets in Peru and Brazil, most likely to profit from the growing mining industry.<sup>11</sup> Canaries had predominantly been used in mines as an early-warning system to detect carbon monoxide and other toxic gases before they became popular as pets. On his return journey, Ruhe disembarked in New Orleans, deeming the port city on the Gulf of Mexico a well-positioned location from where to enter the bird trade in the United States.<sup>12</sup> He established his first North American office in the Louisiana seaport, as New Orleans was supposed to serve as the gateway to transport the canaries inland to the mining communities in Alabama and Mississippi. The actual hub, however, was located on the East Coast in New York City, where German bird traders dominated the growing import of canaries.<sup>13</sup> Ruhe followed suit and set up a second office in Manhattan while maintaining the one in New Orleans.

**13** Katherine C. Grier, *Pets in America: A History* (Chapel Hill, 2006), 240. The most dominant bird dealers were the German

brothers Charles and Henry Reiche, who were well known to Ruhe. They, too, originated from Alfeld and started to market their

birds in the United States already in 1844, branching out to New York City and Boston, continuously growing their business.

Soon, Ruhe started to transport larger animals captured in the wild, although it is unclear when exactly he first dabbled in this trade. A chronicler of the municipal history of Alfeld reported that the idea was born out of the “unused” return trip. As the handlers who had accompanied the birds to the United States had to travel back “empty handed,” having them bring back animals on their return trip would make use of their time and the costs.<sup>14</sup> This theory disregards the fact that transporting this kind of cargo, especially larger animals, required particular logistical as well as financial efforts. Consequently, capturing and transporting wild animals demanded an investment several weeks before they could be “cashed in,” and it posed a considerable risk of losing money, since they often died on the way.<sup>15</sup> The wildlife trade was essentially a high-capital and high-risk undertaking that Ruhe could participate in thanks to his lucrative bird sales. Despite the risks, the trade promised gains that outweighed the inevitably occurring losses.<sup>16</sup> Ruhe had seen its profitability in his Alfeld rival Charles Reiche, another bird trader who had entered the wildlife trade. Reiche’s example rather than just an unused return route most likely motivated Ruhe to start trading in wild animals. The favored region for animal traders such as Reiche and Ruhe became Nubia, which encompassed parts of present-day Sudan and Egypt and offered zoological variety as well as existing local trading structures. The route had been established in the early 1860s by German animal trader Carl Hagenbeck and his Italian business partner and hunter Lorenzo Casanova.<sup>17</sup>

The German Empire became one of the hubs in the international wildlife trade, with Reiche, Hagenbeck, and Ruhe

**17** Lothar Dittrich and Annelore Rieke-Müller, *Löwe brüllt nebenan: Die Gründung Zoologischer Gärten im Deutschsprachigen*

*Raum 1833-1869* (Köln, 1998), 206. Reiche had been in Nubia as well, see STA: Fa. Reiche Verschiedenes, book-

let “Reiche’s Karawane aus Nubien.” Apparently the Ruhe family tied in with the trade in the region.

**14** Julius Eduard Müller, “Reisen und Abenteuer mit Tieren,” *Alfelder Zeitung*, May 19, 1927.

**15** Nigel Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo* (Baltimore, 2002), 55. Reports of animals arriving dead to the shores or dying in quarantine show the high numbers of loss on the way. As an example of the loss that was to expect, note the surprise shown by Frank Baker Jr. when reporting on the successful transport of an animal collection with only one animal lost (SIA: RU 74, Box 86, “Acquired Animals or Collected from Africa, December 1909”, Frank Baker Jr. to A.B. Duirs, December 21, 1909).

**16** The expansion of the wildlife trade makes a good case for applying Jonathan Saha’s approach to examine these activities through the lens of accumulation. Capital had to be invested in the hopes of increasing its value, while new spaces had to be continuously incorporated, and knowledge transferred, see Jonathan Saha, “On Accumulation and Empire,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 50, no. 3 (2022): 417-442, 420-21.

**18** A fourth wildlife trader, Julius Mohr, was also a well-known dealer at the turn of the century (Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter: BArch): R 1501/117765, Abschrift III B.1016, c. 1900).

**19** For the zoological gardens as major factor in the increase of the wildlife trade in Europe, see Dittrich and Rieke-Müller, *Löwe brüllt nebenan*, 207. For the American market, see Richard W. Flint, "American Showmen and European Dealers: Commerce in Wild Animals in Nineteenth-Century America," in *New Worlds, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. R.J. Hoage and William A. Deiss (Baltimore, 1996), 97-108. The rise of the wildlife trade coincided with an upsurge of animal products in general, see Julia Hauser, "Global History," in *Handbook of Historical Animal Studies*, ed. Mieke Roscher, André Krebber and Brett Mizelle (Berlin, 2021), 213-226, 219.

**20** Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts*, 52-54.

**21** Their contribution is seldomly acknowledged. While Ruhe mentions a variety of Alfeld employ-

ees by name, he only mentions one non-European employee, the Indian Mahut Sukla (see Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 197). Nevertheless, their work becomes visible in pictures in the municipal archive in Alfeld. For these types of knowledge transfer in general, see Sujit Sivasundaram, "Trading Knowledge: The East India Company's Elephants in India and Britain," *The Historical Journal* 48, no. 1 (2005): 27-63.

as dominant players.<sup>18</sup> Although non-European wildlife had been brought to Europe before by trading companies such as the Dutch East India Company or by individual seamen, these animals had not been systematically captured in order to be traded. Zoological gardens, first in Europe and then in North America, as well as rising demand from their regular customers (such as circuses and private collectors) spurred the rise of Ruhe and other wildlife traders.<sup>19</sup> With increasing frequency, the trade professionalized. Animal catchers began to travel into the regions of origin not only to get their hands on the animals that were offered on the local markets, but also to mount their own animal capture expeditions. As Nigel Rothfels has shown, they first worked with local traders, later tasking them to capture certain specimens, and finally began accompanying these expeditions, trying to capture the desired animals themselves.<sup>20</sup> This practice still relied heavily on the knowledge and physical support provided by a variety of non-European actors, whose assistance continued to play a vital role during the entire existence of the Ruhe company.<sup>21</sup>

Starting in North-East Africa, Ruhe expanded to other regions, among them Australia and Southeast Asia. By all accounts, the company continuously grew into the twentieth century, until its business was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>22</sup> Although trade was reduced, it did not cease entirely. Having an established branch in the United States proved to be a decisive factor in maintaining business flows. Even though

ees by name, he only mentions one non-European employee, the Indian Mahut Sukla (see Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 197). Nevertheless, their work becomes visible in pictures in the municipal archive in

Alfeld. For these types of knowledge transfer in general, see Sujit Sivasundaram, "Trading Knowledge: The East India Company's Elephants in India and Britain," *The Historical Journal* 48, no. 1 (2005): 27-63.

**22** So much so that they were able to buy the competing business of Charles Reiche in 1910, see Felixarchief Antwerpen (hereafter: FelixA): C 4.4.1, 1 # 2416, Letter of Charles Reiche to the zoological garden in Antwerp, June 21, 1910.



the company's assets in New York City were confiscated by the U.S. government, the business itself remained in the hands of Bernhard Ruhe, son of Ludwig Ruhe.<sup>23</sup> This allowed Hermann Ruhe in Germany to keep sending canaries to his brother, while wild animals would also arrive from Indonesia. Coincidentally, one of the Alfeld employees, an animal catcher called Karl Kreth, remained in Java during the war years, where he had been surprised by its outbreak. It allowed him to continue to collect animals that he would then send to New York City as late as 1917.<sup>24</sup> Due to the confiscation, the Alfeld and New York offices became officially separated, a factor that turned out to be an advantage after the end of the war. While the financial resources of German zoological gardens and circuses to acquire new animals were dwindling, the North American market recovered faster, filling the void for both Ruhe businesses. Already in early 1921, Ruhe shipped 2,700 wild animals in one cargo to the port of Long Island and more charges followed in quick succession the following years.<sup>25</sup>

The close ties with Louis Ruhe Inc. in the United States allowed the German company L. Ruhe KG to do business beyond the European market. Its comparatively fast recovery after the plunge during the First World War allowed the Ruhe family to surpass even their main adversary, Carl Hagenbeck, and to become the biggest wildlife trader in Germany – and by extension the world.<sup>26</sup> In effect, the interwar years were the heyday of the company. It grew in reach as well as trade volume. Besides the growth in the wildlife trade, the trade in canaries remained an important business and con-

other traders such as Hagenbeck did, see Wildlife Conservation Society Libraries & Archives, Collection 1012, Box 33, Letter of William Hornaday to Lorenz and Heinrich Hagenbeck, July 3, 1919.

**26** Their world market leader position is mainly purported by advertisements of the business itself, but also supported by testimonies of contemporaries. While it is hard to check the figures, Ruhe definitely was

one of the best-known animal dealers in Europe and North America, the two main markets (see e.g., SIA: RU 74, Box 101, Ned Hollister to Joseph A. Humphreys, December 17, 1920).

**23** BArch: R 87/8602, Letter by Ruhe October 30, 1942.

**24** Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 57. Two of the elephants caught in Sumatra most likely found their way to the Smithsonian National Zoo, see SIA: RU 365, Box 22, "Elephant, Notes and correspondences, 1891-1976, 1978, 1980-1982," Record card on the elephants acquired by Ruhe.

**25** Short note on a boat arrival in *San Pedro Daily News*, February 24, 1921, 7; "Modern Ark Brings Rare Animals," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 04, 1922. The Louis Ruhe Inc. had a firm standing on the U.S.-American market, even during the two World Wars. Having their own branch (and not only representatives) as well as being naturalized U.S.-American citizens were clear advantages over Carl Hagenbeck's business. (While correspondence and payments to Hagenbeck cease entirely during the war years, the ties with Ruhe continue, albeit in very limited fashion, see SIA: RU 74, Box 70 "Animals Acquired, General.") Moreover, the Ruhe business was not perceived as "German", meaning they did not face the exclusion from economic relations like

**27** "German Liner Brings 20,000 Canary Birds," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 19, 1925, 1. According to their own account, the sale of canaries still contributed 40 percent of revenue in the 1920s, see Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 164.

**28** Lothar Dittrich, *Hannovers Zoo und Seine Tiere* (Hannover, 1965), 14.

**29** Jan-Erik Steinkrüger, "Kultur im Zoo: Von Menschenzoos und Völkerschauen," *Tierstudien* 7 (2015): 45-53.

tinued to grow as well. In 1925, one single shipment of over 20,000 canary birds arrived in New York, from Hamburg, on the liner "Deutschland," all cargo of the Ruhe company.<sup>27</sup> The third generation of Ruhe men, who had gradually taken over the company since 1923, expanded the company's reach even further. By the end of the 1920s, the company quietly owned so-called *Sammellager* (collection depots) for animals in Calcutta, Dakar, Swakopmund and Palembang, and it also owned a farm in Dire Dawa in Ethiopia. It had thus extended its influence to important regions in East, South and West Africa as well as in Southeast Asia.

Having effectively installed the business on the North American market and established connections and presences in different regions, Ruhe was a stakeholder on the German market as well. In the upswing of the early 1920s, the company was heavily involved in the re-opening of the zoological garden in Hannover, which had closed in 1917 and been liquidated due to financial shortages five years later. Initiated by its soon-to-be director, Otto Müller, public and municipal donations raised sufficient funds for the zoo to reopen on April 1, 1924, under the ownership of the city of Hannover.<sup>28</sup> Ruhe was instrumental in supplying the animals and in building some of the zoo structures. He also aided the zoo in other business ventures. In 1925, Müller decided to generate attention for the newly re-opened zoo by arranging a so-called *Völkerschau* ("human zoo"), a common practice of European zoological gardens.<sup>29</sup> Since the 1870s, groups of humans, mostly from European colonies, were "exhibited" in order to be observed by an interested audience. These shows were a form of othering par excellence, where the alleged difference between the people "exhibited" and the ones "observing" was an assumed prerequisite. *Völkerschauen* oscillated between scientific claims, entertainment, and self-assertion of superiority. Highly staged, their organizers claimed to offer authenticity and to pursue educational purposes. They were an extremely popular spectacle that was not only displayed

in zoological gardens, but at fairs, festivities, and world exhibitions, too.<sup>30</sup> Most importantly, they promised a high profit for the organizers and the venue.<sup>31</sup> It is therefore not surprising that Müller decided to organize such a show as one of the zoo's first bigger promotions.

Ruhe was ready to assist Müller in achieving his goal. It was not the first time the company engaged in "exhibiting" people. A few years earlier, the artist Franz Dubbick had approached Ruhe and suggested organizing a show displaying a group of Sami from Northern Europe.<sup>32</sup> This apparently started Ruhe's involvement, and several more of these shows followed, among them the "Somali-Schau" that Müller requested.<sup>33</sup> It was to be first exhibited at the Hannover Zoological Garden and then to travel to other places in the German-speaking world. Organized jointly by John Hagenbeck, the nephew of Carl Hagenbeck, and Hermann Ruhe Junior, the grandson of Ludwig Ruhe and author of the above-mentioned memoir, they tasked Müller to find a suitable group of persons to display the "authentic" way of Somali life. The show's purported authenticity was to be reinforced by local animals: according to the leaflet advertising the show, no village of Somalis could be imagined without the animals they kept.<sup>34</sup> Thus, to realize the exhibition of a "Somali" village, a combination of animals as well as humans were to make their way from North-East Africa to Germany.

**30** Alexander Honold, "Ausstellung des Fremden: Menschen- und Völkerschau um 1900," in *Das Kaiserreich transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen, 2006), 170-190; Anne Dreesbach, *Gezähmte Wilde: Die Zurschaustellung „exotischer“ Menschen in Deutschland 1870-1940* (Frankfurt a. M., 2005). The shows had mainly lost their formerly purported scientific value in the 1920s, being deemed too "inauthentic" to allow any ethnographic knowledge.

**31** Dreesbach, *Gezähmte Wilde*, 13.

**32** Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 119; "Lappländer-Karawane im Lübecker Hafen," *Vaterstädtische Blätter*, March 25, 1925, 52.

**33** Staatsarchiv Basel (hereafter: StArchB): PA 1000a (1) R 5.2 17, L. Ruhe-John Hagenbeck-Schau, „Somali-Dorf aus Abessinien“, 1926. For an overview, see Claudia Andratschke and Lars Müller, "Menschen, Tiere und leblose Gegenstände: Die Alfelder Tierhändler Reiche und Ruhe als Ausstatter von

Völkerschauen," in *Völkerschau-Objekte*, ed. Lars Frühsorge, Michael Schütte and Sonja Riehn (Lübeck, 2021), 132-144. For Somalis involved in these types of exhibitions, see Bodhari Warsame, "A Brief History of Staging Somali Ethnographic Performing Troupes in Europe, 1885-1930," in *Staged Otherness: Ethnic*

*Shows in Central and Eastern Europe, 1850-1939*, ed. Dagnoslaw Demski and Dominika Czarnecka (Budapest, 2021), 77-100.

**34** StArchB: PA 1000a (1) R 5.2 17, L. Ruhe-John Hagenbeck-Schau, „Somali-Dorf aus Abessinien“, 14. For the strong connection between exhibiting

people from the colonies next to (though not always together with) the animals from the same region, see Dreesbach, *Gezähmte Wilde*, 46.

**35** In the German sources, the region is called “Abessinien” (Abyssinia), which consists of the northern highlands and the historical center considered part of Ethiopia. However, the country stretched beyond the Abyssinia region and Ruhe hunted animals in the southern parts of Ethiopia, too. Furthermore, contemporaries living within the territory called the region Ethiopia. See Wolbert Smidt, “Geschichte und Geschichtserzählung in Äthiopien,” *APuZ: Äthiopien* 70, no.18 (2020): 26-33. Thus, I will use “Ethiopia” here.

**36** SIA: RU 74, Box 85, “Animals Acquired or Collected from Abyssinia, 1903-1904.”

**37** Wolbert Smidt, *Photos as Historical Witnesses: The First Ethiopians in Germany and the First Germans in Ethiopia, the History of a Complex Relationship* (Münster, 2015), 61.

**38** Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (hereafter: PA AA): RZ 207-244282, Rolf Ohm to the Foreign Office, April 22, 1921; RZ 207-247036, Reichsminister für Wiederaufbau to the Foreign Office, April 24, 1920.

## II. The Infrastructure of the Wildlife Trade

It was no coincidence that Ruhe, Hagenbeck, and Müller decided to recruit people from Ethiopia<sup>35</sup>. The country had become one of the main regions for animal capture for the Ruhe company in the 1920s. When Nubia to the North had become inaccessible after the start of the Mahdist War in 1882, the company’s live supply was cut off, so it needed to find new areas to capture animals. The bordering regions offered a nearby solution for the wildlife traders as they promised a similar fauna. While Ethiopia had seen regional upheavals as well, its sovereign independence was recognized by Italy in 1896, and a German embassy was established in 1904. It is unclear when exactly Ruhe ventured into the region, but by the beginning of the twentieth century the company frequently imported Ethiopian animals.<sup>36</sup> After the First World War, Ethiopia became an even more sought-after export and import area for German businessmen, who were particularly interested in raw materials.<sup>37</sup> Since Egypt, Sudan and the former colony of Tanganyika had become temporarily inaccessible for German entrepreneurs, “neutral Abyssinia” held promise.<sup>38</sup> By 1922, the Ruhe animal dealership, too, chose Ethiopia as one of the main bases for its endeavors, and acquired a farm in Dire Dawa that they nicknamed “Alfeldia-Camp.”<sup>39</sup>

Apart from making use of a pre-existing building, the company also built on social structures by connecting to German communities that were already present in Ethiopia. Those ties helped to extend business ventures. The German Legation for Abyssinia (*Deutsche Gesandtschaft für Abessinien*) helped German traders to connect on site, supporting them when establishing offices in Ethiopia, when looking for suitable

**39** They made use of a pre-existing

structure built by another hunter, see

Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, see

business partners, or when tensions arose.<sup>40</sup> Besides the legation, Ruhe worked closely with Hall & Co, a well-established import-export business that was involved in the cattle trade, thus allowing for overlapping interests to be served. It was run by David Hall, a German-Ethiopian businessman with ties to the Ethiopian royal dynasty.<sup>41</sup> The support seems to have been extensive. When one of Ruhe's German employees died of typhus in 1924, Hall & Co. advanced money for the death certificate and assisted with the burial.<sup>42</sup> It is likely that they also aided in obtaining permits for weapons, a prerequisite to hunt animals. The commercial import of guns had been forbidden by the Ethiopian government and was allowed for personal use only with appropriate certificates.<sup>43</sup> These certificates required good ties to the royal house, which Ruhe could draw on thanks to Hall & Co.<sup>44</sup>

It was also at the instigation of Hall & Co that, on April 14, 1925, the North German Lloyd (NDL), one of the biggest German shipping companies, sent their steamer "Schlesien" to the port of Djibouti. It was the first German ship in 14 years to arrive at the most important entry point of access to the Ethiopian market. While the yield turned out to be meagre (only eighty units of deck cargo had been issued), the NDL was urged to establish regular service between German ports and Djibouti.<sup>45</sup> Maritime traffic was one of the foundations of successful business transactions – and for German businesses in Ethiopia, the service was lacking. Although the NDL started to call on Djibouti from April 1925 onwards, it did so unidirectionally and just once a month: only their East-Asian liners stopped in Djibouti on their return to Europe. For the

**44** As part of an expedition organized in 1928, employees of the company were invited to visit the Ethiopian stakeholders,

see BArch: B /115713, "Im Schatten des Goldenen Löwens" (film by JAM Borgstädt), 1934/35.

**45** PA AA: RAV 2/267, Letter to the NDL, April 24, 1925.

**40** When the wildlife trader Hagenbeck encountered difficulties because the Ethiopian government forbade the export of some animals, Hagenbeck approached the German Legation for help, see PA AA: RZ 207-244284, German Legation to the Field Office for Hamburg and Lübeck, March 16, 1931.

**41** Toby Berger Holtz, "The Hall Family and Ethiopia: A Century of Involvement," in *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, ed. Svein Ege, Harald Aspen, Birhanu Tefera and Shiferaw Bekele (Trondheim, 2009), 109-117, 113; Smidt, *Photos as Historical Witnesses*, 92.

**42** For the correspondence between Hall & Co., Hermann Windhorn Junior, and the German Legation concerning the death certificate for Hermann Windhorn Senior, see PA AA: RAV 2/402, e.g. Hall & Co. to the German Consulate, August 13, 1924.

**43** PA AA: RAV 2/128, "Waffenpässe, Jagdscheine, Inlandspässe, Einreiseerlaubnis," 1934-37.

**46** PA AA: RAV 2/267, Letter to the NDJ, April 24, 1925.

**47** PAAA: RZ 207-244282, German Legation to the Foreign Office, December 24, 1926.

**48** PAAA: RZ 207-244282, German Legation to the Foreign Office, March 06, 1926.

businessmen this frequency was too low, but the direct line to Germany was nevertheless a welcome starting point. It reduced the journey to approximately 28 days and was seen to open the market for more export.<sup>46</sup> To some extent, this hope was met. Two years after the NDJ had begun their service, the German shipping line HAPAG mirrored their competitor's approach and started calling on Djibouti on their return journey from Indian ports.<sup>47</sup>

To the dismay of the German business community, however, the NDJ and HAPAG steamers served the Ethiopian market only from an exporting standpoint. A direct access from the German Republic to Djibouti, and by extension Ethiopia, was still missing in the 1920s. This was a thorn in the side of the German businesses, for it hampered the potential growth of their sales so much that the German Legation appealed to the German Foreign Office to support the establishment of direct shipping lines from Hamburg or Bremen to Djibouti.<sup>48</sup> They expounded the disadvantages that German businesses had to face, especially compared to their European competitors: German goods had to be shipped via Antwerp, and transshipped in Marseilles or Port Said, thereby passing two or sometimes even three ports where the freight had to be reloaded. In contrast, French freight was directly shipped from Marseilles to Djibouti. The multiple transshipping points not only meant a delayed delivery but posed a threat of mishandling along the way. Therefore, direct lines were not only a necessity to save time, but they also reduced the points where the cargo would be inspected and exposed to potential damage.

This issue was important for animal traders especially. Both the duration of the journey and the transshipping points were crucial factors in their business. Loading live animals onto the ship deck was complicated and laborious, as can be seen in photographs depicting the process.

Technological tools and labor provided by several men were necessary to execute the task. All these services had to be



**Figure 1.** Several men and a crane were necessary to unload this zebra from a ship. Stadtarchiv Alfeld, Collection Ruhe, Photo Album "Red. Niemeyer" 34, photographer unknown, c. 1930.

available at the stopover, too, where the freight was to be loaded onto another ship. Moreover, the crates that contained the animals had to be handled with care, and failure to do so could mean the death of the animal – and therefore the loss of the entire charge. In addition, the animals had to be attended to and fed during shipment; since many animals were quite young, they were particularly vulnerable. Caretakers often did not know how to adequately care for them and experimented with nutrition.<sup>49</sup> While caring for wild animals was always a delicate issue, it was especially difficult during transport

<sup>49</sup> One of these examples is Carl Eiffert, see Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 128.

**50** As can be seen in the hasty requests for export papers, see e.g. PA AA: RAV 2/126, Steininger to the German Legation, April 28, 1932.

**51** PA AA: RAV 2/267, Answers to the AKOTECH Survey regarding seaports, c. 1925. Certainly, not all these animals were wild ones.

**52** PAAA: RZ 207-244282, German Legation to the Foreign Office, December 24, 1926.

**53** PA AA: RAV 1/126, Carl Steininger to the German Legation, March 23, 1932.

**54** PA AA: RAV 2/267, NDL to the German Legation, December 10, 1926.

(specifically while at sea). The longer the time on the ship, the longer they were exposed to the risk of harm. Direct lines shortened travel time, and faster journeys enhanced the likelihood of the animals' survival. The calculation for wildlife traders was easy: direct lines were highly favored as they minimized the factors that could endanger the life of the animals.

While the decision of HAPAG and NDL to stop at Djibouti on their way from Asia to Europe facilitated easier transport opportunities, the frequency was still limited. As the animals' well-being had to be considered when planning the transport, animals could not as easily be adjusted to shipping times and delays as other freight.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, shipping companies could not easily dismiss the demands of animal traders, because living animals were a frequent deck cargo on the way to Europe. Consequently, animal traders were important customers. Even before German liners serviced the region, approximately 6,800 animals had been transported by non-German shipping lines via Djibouti in 1924.<sup>51</sup> Aside from live animals, other animal material such as skins and fur were in great demand, too. The interests of animal traders were thus supporting the arguments made by the German Legation and Hall & Co, who saw frequent lines as a precondition to help increase the share of German businesses on the Ethiopian market.<sup>52</sup>

Ruhe had an interest in direct lines from German ports to Ethiopia, too. His "goods" only had to leave Ethiopia, but the people accompanying the animals did have to make their way back. One of them was Issa Moudé, an Oromo who worked on the farm in Dire Dawa. He had taken several trips to Europe, making sure that the animal cargo arrived safely at the European ports.<sup>53</sup> Obviously, he had to return to Ethiopia to tend to his work on the farm and to potentially care for another shipment. In much the same way, people who were part of the "Völkerschau" exhibitions had to travel back to the Horn of Africa. Indeed, the NDL had sent their liner "Pfalz" to "return a number of Somalis to Djibouti,"<sup>54</sup> and thus offered





**Figure 2.** Mahuts accompanied elephants to Germany and kept training them in Alfeld. Sammlung/ Archiv alt-alfeld, Ruhe Photo Collection „Elefanten,“ photographer and date unknown.

a direct connection this time. However, they decided against establishing a permanent direct route because the requested capacity had been too low, so they did not see a profit potential. These infrequent connections complicated the wildlife trade. Moudé or the group of the “Somali-Schau” were not the only ones who had to return to the hunting regions. As several contemporary photographs illustrate, non-European actors frequently traveled to the German Republic and cared for the animals while staying in Alfeld.<sup>55</sup>

They were instrumental in the delivery and survival of the animals. Together with the German employees, they had to return to the region of capture, for which a regular shipping line in both directions was necessary.

Evidently, the needs of the traders did not always resonate with the shipping companies. They did not increase the frequency, nor did they establish a permanent line from German ports to Djibouti. The pleas of the businessmen remained unanswered. In the early 1930s, David Hall made another attempt. He urged several shipping companies to increase the frequency of their journey to Djibouti, to no avail. Some could not identify a need to do so, others even reduced the service: passenger ships would now only service Djibouti in case of a pre-announced need, and a guaranteed minimal passenger revenue.<sup>56</sup> Instead of advancing the projects of the German communities in Ethiopia, the market had become even more disconnected.

**55** Several photographs in the collection of the municipal archive in Alfeld document the presence of these caretakers in Alfeld.

**56** PA AA: RAV 2/267, Woermann-Linie to Hans B. W. Bohnenberger, March 07, 1933; RAV 2/267, Transcript of the letter by NDL, May 04, 1933; RAV 2/267, Association of German Ship-owners to the Imperial Minister of Transport, August 07, 1934.

**57** While in 1844 the journey from Alfeld to Hamburg alone had taken the bird dealers twelve days by foot, by the turn of the century the entire journey from Alfeld to New York was covered within a fortnight. Before, the birds had to be carried to the port in so-called Reffs on the back of tradesmen and -women; a method that took several days and limited the number of birds that could be transported. For all these, see Charles Reiche's account cited in Busch, *Von Tafelmachern und Vogelhändlern*, 105.

**58** Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (hereafter: OeStA): AdR, HBbBuT, Schönbrunn 1Rep, Tieranbote 1932, Letter to Ruhe, November 17, 1932.

**59** OeStA: AdR, HBbBuT, Schönbrunn 1Rep, Tieranbote 1932, Letter to Ruhe, October 25, 1932.

**60** Dire Dawa was already connected to the port in Djibouti before (Smidt, *Photos as Historical Witnesses*, 30), but the railway line was completed in 1917, when it connected Addis Ababa to the port (via Dire Dawa) as well.

Sea transport was not the only challenge. Moving animals over land was just as important, with trains becoming one of the main means of transport. It had already been a significant factor in the early days of the canary trade. With the extension of the railway network in the Kingdom of Hanover, Ruhe was able to considerably shorten the journey to the ports in Hamburg or Bremen. This mode of transport was gentle enough on the fragile animal cargo, and combined with the increasing usage of steamships, transport time was significantly reduced.<sup>57</sup> Just like shipping lines, railway companies became important partners for wildlife traders. However, they also were additional variables that had the potential to cause disruption. As transnational transport of animals to zoological gardens in Europe became frequent, the Austrian railway service allowed for carriage paid transport of animals who were destined for the Tiergarten Schönbrunn in Vienna – provided a waybill was requested and attached at least a week beforehand.<sup>58</sup> Following proper procedure and adhering to the administrative requirements was a recurrent struggle for Ruhe. While saving costs was important, the shipping of animals often happened hastily, as space in holding pens was needed for new arrivals or the accompanying caretaker was only available in a certain time period, or the health of an animal seemed stable only in a certain time window. Much to the dismay of Schönbrunn's director, Ruhe often cabled that an animal was on the way without having requested a waybill beforehand.<sup>59</sup>

Railroad networks were equally important in the hunting regions and one of the reasons why Ruhe based their farm in the recently built town of Dire Dawa. Since 1917 a rail line connected the town with the port in Djibouti as well as with the capital Addis Ababa.<sup>60</sup> While these connections were important, they were not extensive enough to cover all movement. The Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway line certainly connected important points with sea transport, but the animals still had to be caught further inland in areas that were located

a multi-day trip away from the nearest railway station. Targeted hunting had additionally pushed the wildlife back into regions further south, requiring that Ruhe's animal catchers cover even larger distances.<sup>61</sup> As there was no available transport immediately after capture, the restrained animals had to be herded over long distances to the next hub. This mirrored nineteenth-century practice, where hunters and captured animals had to walk the entire distance to the port.<sup>62</sup> As I will detail below, the exhausting marches were one of the biggest threats to the business of wildlife traders.

### III. Border Crossings and Bureaucracy

In addition to the pre-existing farm structure and railway station, there was another advantage to establishing the company's base at Dire Dawa. The town was situated midway between two important points. To the east, the port of Djibouti was easy to reach, while the capital Addis Ababa lay a similar distance to the west. If it were only for the proximity to sea transport, a location closer to the port would have been more favorable. However, wildlife traders had to factor in that most of the paperwork (for example export permissions and hunting licenses) had to be approved in Addis Ababa, where many important business connections such as Hall & Co and the German Legation were located, too. The position of the farm underlines that not only transportation, but also permits were necessary to facilitate movement. Some of these requirements were set neither by the Ethiopian nor the German government since France controlled the port of Djibouti from 1896 on and was therefore one of the authorities that wildlife traders had to negotiate with as Ethiopia did not have its own sea access. Although Djibouti's port was not the only one in the area (others being Zeila in British Somaliland or Assab in the Italian colony of Eritrea), its direct connection to the railway made it the most convenient. Trying to maintain good business relations, the German community reassured

<sup>61</sup> Steven Kaplan, "Hunting," in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, 91. In the hunting expeditions that the company commissioned in 1927/28, they travelled as far as the Omo River (BArch: B /115713, "Im Schatten des Goldenen Löwens" (film by JAM Borgstädt)).

<sup>62</sup> „Hunting Beasts in Africa," *San Marco's Free Press*, October 26, 1878.

**63** PA AA: RZ 207/244282, German Legation to the German Foreign Office, March 6, 1926.

**64** PA AA: RAV 2/124, Copy of Letter to the Foreign Office, June 17, 1922.

**65** PA AA: RAV 2/124, Robert Hesse to the German Legation, October 31, 1928.

**66** Susanne Heyn, *Kolonial bewegte Jugend: Beziehungsgeschichten zwischen Deutschland und Südwestafrika zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik* (Bielefeld, 2018), 133.

**67** PA AA: RAV 2/126, Steininger to the German Legation, August 22, 1928; RAV 2/126, Answer of the German Legation, August 24, 1928.

**68** PA AA: RAV 2/126, Steininger to the German Legation, March 23, 1932.

**69** As for the answer of the German Legation, see PA AA: RAV 2/126, Transcription of telegram by Steininger. For the request to send the passport directly to Alfeld, see PA AA: RAV 2/126, Steininger to the German Legation, April 28, 1932.

interested businesses that they did not have to fear any disadvantages from the French authorities.<sup>63</sup>

Yet German businesses complained about delays in administrative processes and arbitrary treatment by French officials, which they saw as designed to potentially harm their prospects.<sup>64</sup> One German engineer wrote to the German Legation that he had to procure several documents, among them financial guarantees and health certificates, to access the port of Djibouti while his accompanying Ethiopian employee could enter without any papers.<sup>65</sup> This difference in treatment was considered an affront and interpreted as humiliation, intensified by the dependence on French goodwill. It may have especially hurt German colonialists, who felt that the seizure of Germany's former colonies after the First World War had been a deliberate move to expel the German Empire from the ranks of "civilized" nations and erode its power by excluding it from imperial projects.<sup>66</sup> Being treated disadvantageously compared to Ethiopians added insult to injury. Certainly, it did not simplify matters for German exporters.

The wildlife traders, too, had to deal with French authorities. Once obtained, a French visa was an asset, as it allowed repeated entry of the port without having to request new permissions, thus saving time. A new passport also required a renewal of the visa, meaning more time-consuming paperwork had to be dealt with.<sup>67</sup> When Issa Moudé was set to accompany a shipment of animals to Europe in 1932, Carl Steininger, who managed the Dire Dawa farm, requested a passport for Moudé at the German Legation in Addis Ababa.<sup>68</sup> He was in a hurry: the steamer that Moudé and Steininger wanted to catch was leaving in two weeks. And just as with the Austrian waybills, the company struggled to obtain the necessary documents in time. Steininger was admonished for having requested them too late, and the passport was not issued in time. Steininger and Moudé did not wait; the latter set off on the NDL steamer "Aller" towards Europe without a passport, and Steininger asked for it to be issued ex post.<sup>69</sup> In

this case, the regulations of the French government in Djibouti worked in their favor. Moudé was able to enter the French-controlled territory and board the ship without any passport, and he did not need a visa to enter the German Republic.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to entry permits for human caretakers, wildlife traders had to obtain the required documents for importing animals. Unlike other cargo, these were not limited to customs duties and quotas. They also had to be greenlighted by veterinary authorities. When the zoological garden in Hannover requested the import permits for the animals that were to be part of the aforementioned “Somali-Schau” in 1926, they had a rude awakening. Among the animals were zebus, a species of domestic cattle that had been collected in Ethiopia. Their entry was denied.<sup>71</sup> The Hannover city council, who supported the exhibition, was alarmed. If the zebus could not be displayed, “the effect of the show, which the director wants to present together with these animals, [would be] significantly impaired.”<sup>72</sup> On top of these concerns, their slaughter at the port would also have meant a devastating financial loss. Since Ruhe offered to give the zoological garden 5,000 Reichsmark from sales profits after the show, this was the minimum loss that the zoological garden had to face. Consequently, two senators travelled to Berlin to persuade the minister for agriculture to permit the import of the zebus, nevertheless. Their plea was unsuccessful. The representative of the minister explained that “it was quite impossible to grant permission, since pneumonic plague was raging among the cattle herds in Abyssinia, and the animals, even if found healthy on examination, were still carriers of the bacillus.”<sup>73</sup> The ministry worried that the zebus could transmit the disease as late as two years after import. Evidently, the fear of contagion was great. Authorities in both Europe and the African colonies certainly still remembered the devastation the Rinderpest disease had caused.<sup>74</sup>

Quarantine regulations were a consistent headache for importers of both wild and domestic animals. The animals

**70** I thank Wolbert Smidt (Mekelle University) for this information.

**71** Stadtarchiv Hannover (hereafter: SAH): 1. HR.10, Nr. 1540, Letter of the ministry for agriculture to the municipal authorities, March 3, 1926.

**72** SAH: 1. HR.10, Nr. 1540, Councilor Lindemann to the mayor Dr. Menge, March 17, 1926.

**73** SAH: 1. HR.10, Nr. 1540, Note for the file on April 1, 1926.

**74** See Amanda Key McVety, *The Rinderpest Campaigns: A Virus, Its Vaccines, and Global Development in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2018); Cornelia Knab, “Infectious Rats and Dangerous Cows: Transnational Perspectives on Animal Diseases in the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” *Contemporary European History* 20, no. 3 (2011): 281-306. For health regulations and empire, see also Diana K. Davis, “Brutes, Beasts and Empire: Veterinary Medicine and Environmental Policy in French North Africa and British India,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 34, no. 2 (April 2008): 242-267.

**75** PA AA: RZ 207/244283, *Courrier d'Éthiopie*, December 14, 1928.

**76** SIA: RU74, Box 97, "Importation Permits & Quarantine Procedure, 1904-1926".

**77** This exemption had already been granted at the turn of the century, see BArch: R 1501/117765, Abschrift III B.1016, c. 1900. In the United States, animals meant for zoological gardens could equally be exempted from the quarantine in ports, see SIA: RU74, Box 97, "Importation Permits & Quarantine Procedure, 1904-1926."

**78** BArch: R 86/1485, Abschrift III B.6835, c. 1905.

**79** SAH: 1. HR.10, Nr. 1540, Letter of the ministry for agriculture, March 3, 1926.

had to be subjected to an examination when leaving Ethiopia, and all animals – whether dead or alive – had to be issued an official certificate before export.<sup>75</sup> These documents were in turn requested at the incoming ports as well, where another examination was due. Animals that were supposed to travel onwards to North America underwent another period of quarantine.<sup>76</sup> In fact, the livestock trade was far more affected by rules of export and bans of import. As the zebus were categorized as cattle and thus as productive livestock, this case was no different. By contrast, animals that were destined for zoological gardens were not subject to confinement at the port.<sup>77</sup> When contained in crates and separated from all other animals, they could be moved straight to the zoological gardens or the premises of the wildlife traders, where they had to be quarantined. When this law was introduced, in addition to recognized zoological gardens, only four animal traders – Ruhe among them – were allowed to sidestep the quarantine at the ports.<sup>78</sup> This exemption gave them a competitive edge over other traders and the seal of expertise.

In 1926, Ruhe was still allowed to transport animals from the port straight to their destination, where they then had to be quarantined. Sheep and goats had travelled with the zebus from Djibouti to Hannover and were also meant to appear in the exhibition of "Somali life". Unlike their travel companions, their import was permitted, and they were allowed to enter German territory as long as it could be ensured that they did not come into contact with another cloven-hooved animal during train transport. Isolation had to be strictly observed. When unloaded in Hannover, they continued their journey by truck to the zoo, where they had to remain in quarantine for 14 days. After that, a veterinarian was to check them once more. If they proved to be without disease, any quarantine measures could be lifted.<sup>79</sup>

The crates the animals were confined in played an integral part in these transports and exemptions. At first glance, they



**Figure 3.** Animals fought against their capture, as can be seen by the damage done to this freight car, which was caused by an elephant. Stadarchiv Alfeld, Collection Ruhe, Photo Album "Darnedde," photographer presumably Carl Darnedde, c. 1925-1935.

seemed to serve mainly one function: to limit the ability of the animal to move. Additionally, they offered another measure of control: that of contagion by means of keeping them separated from their conspecifics. These crates were spaces created through the human-animal relation, and the animal trade in the first place. In the eyes of the ministerial regulators, they were an important tool to prevent the spread of diseases. For the wildlife traders they meant that the animals would reach their destination faster. Just like direct lines that avoided transshipping, the crates made it possible to eliminate another transfer point. Instead of spending weeks in the provisional quarantine stables at the port, the animals could be kept in the new environment they were supposed to get used to. Serving such an important function in the trade, the crates were valuable objects and it was usually requested that they be returned to sender. Especially in times of scarcity, communication over their ownership often ensued.<sup>80</sup> Having the crates and being able to reuse them not only reduced costs but enabled the exchange to take place at all. For the animals, however, the crates meant a crass restriction of movement. It blocked their ability to see their environment and confined them to a limited space, often for long stretches of time. In

<sup>80</sup> For an example, see the repeated reclaiming of crates used by the Zurich Zoological Garden (Stadarchiv Zürich: VII.599 Zoo Zürich 1.5.2.1. (1942-43), Letter L. Ruhe to Zoological Garden Zürich, October 21, 1942).

**81** SAH: 1. HR.10, Nr. 1540, Minutes by Lindemann, c. 1926.

**82** SAH: 1. HR.10, Nr. 1540, Letter of the ministry, June 5, 1926.

**83** StArchB: PA 1000a (1) R 5.2 17, L. Ruhe-John Hagenbeck-Schau, „Somali-Dorf aus Abessinien“, 1926, 14.

consequence, they fought against their confinement, which often resulted in damage to the crates.

As for the zebus, no crate was big enough to allow them to enter the German Republic. The ministry of agriculture decided that their journey was to end before arrival. According to the city councilors, the Ruhe company was informed about the import ban and would try to market them elsewhere.<sup>81</sup> Either this information never reached Ruhe, the councilors misunderstood, or Ruhe actively decided to ignore it. Ruhe imported the zebus despite lacking the required permit. Two months after the initial correspondence, the Hannover Zoo received another letter from the ministry of agriculture. It contained the information that the ministry, not very amused by the circumstances, nevertheless had decided to desist from culling the zebus that had been illegally imported. The ministry was confronted with a situation that it had tried to avoid, however, now that the animals were already in Hannover, it granted their survival. The zebus had to be closely observed for over eight weeks before a supervised contact between two German cows was arranged. The group then had to quarantine for another few weeks. If any of the imported or exposed individuals were to show symptoms of disease, they had to be put down. The costs of the entire procedure had to be borne by the zoological garden and, as the letter informs, legal proceedings against Ruhe were initiated in Karlsruhe.<sup>82</sup>

While it is unclear what came of the legal case, it is significant that Ruhe ignored the import ban. By violating health regulations, Ruhe created a reality that could potentially prove financially beneficial for him. If the zebus remained healthy, not only could they participate in the *Völkerschau*, but also be sold later. And indeed, they were. Just like the zoo's director, Müller, had envisioned, zebus, goats and sheep were exhibited together with a group of people, forming a (highly staged) image of "Somali" life.<sup>83</sup> At the same time that Ruhe benefited from the illegal import, the ministry tried to follow their own interests in an originally unwanted situation. As the cat-



tle were now in Hannover, they took the opportunity to create an experimental setting. Exposing German cows to the zebus and observing the group afterwards could potentially create further veterinary knowledge, while their exhibition at the Hannover Zoo and at other places in Germany served the interests of entertainment and education for the public.<sup>84</sup>

#### IV. Impasses and Ruptures in the Wildlife Trade

As the example of the zebus illustrates, health regulations were a hurdle, but, as in this case, they did not always stop the flow of trade. Yet, animals are not inorganic material commodities, but somatic creatures. Precisely their corporality presented a business risk to Ruhe, for example when their entry was denied by authorities due to their ability to carry diseases. Moreover, the above mentioned fight against capture, confinement, and transport document the agency that animals had in their interactions with humans, which also influenced practices and outcomes of the trade. Indeed, the embodied agency of the animals thwarted many attempts to turn them into commodities.<sup>85</sup> Their reactions had to be factored into the logistics of the trade and affected movement as well as regulations. If an animal eluded the control of the wildlife traders by breaking free, dying or behaving aggressively, the entire transfer came to an end. Keeping animals alive and well was the main as well as the most challenging task of the wildlife traders.

Great efforts were made to ensure their survival. The animals usually tried to escape capture by flight, and hunting them down sometimes raced them to death. Consequently, other methods had to be developed, in which they were outflanked or cornered.<sup>86</sup> Another serious problem were the long marches to the transport stations that were a strain on the captive animals. Even though a more comprehensive railway network connected important urban dwellings to the ports in the 1920s, it unsurprisingly did not connect to wildlife habi-

**84** For the experimental practices, see Joanna Swabe, *Animals, Disease and Human Society: Human-animal Relations and the Rise of Veterinary Medicine* (London, 2002); for the combination of education and entertainment of colonial-themed events, especially with regards to the interwar years in Germany, see Heyn, *Kolonialbewegte Jugend*, 101-108.

**85** For this understanding of „embodied agency,” see Gesine Krüger, Aline Steinbrecher and Clemens Wischermann, “Animate History: Zugänge und Konzepte einer Geschichte zwischen Menschen und Tieren,” in *Tiere und Geschichte: Konturen einer “Animate History”*, ed. Gesine Krüger, Aline Steinbrecher and Clemens Wischermann (Stuttgart, 2015), 31. Agency here does not entail intentionally motivated agency, but rather the ability to fulfil purposeful actions as well as to interact with humans and environments and thereby influence the outcomes of historical events.

**86** As described by Ruhe, for example: *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 128; and Julius Eduard Müller, “Reisen und Abenteuer mit Tieren,” *Alfelder Zeitung*, May 25, 1927.

**87** "Hunting Beasts in Africa."

**88** Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 86; Julius Eduard Müller, "Reisen und Abenteuer mit Tieren," *Alfelder Zeitung*, June 06, 1927.

**89** Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 128.

**90** Ruhe barely mentions them in his memoirs. If he does, they remain nameless except for Sukla, an Indian Mahut who worked for Ruhe and died in an elephant attack in the Hannover Zoo (Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 197). In Ethiopia, Müller needed the help of a translator and guide named Ahmed, who would bring him to the towns and villages where he tried to hire people for the *Völkerschau*, see Otto Müller, *Ringsum den Tschertscher: Wanderfahrten in Abessinien* (Hannover, 1926), 86.

tats. Thus, the expeditions had to venture inland in very much the same way as in earlier decades. In the nineteenth century, the captured animals were mainly young ones who often did not survive the journey to the port, dying of a combination of exhaustion, frequent mishandling, and malnutrition.<sup>87</sup> While Ruhe's animal catchers sometimes succeeded in capturing adult individuals, their main catches were still young ones, who continued to be prone to exhaustion due to the journey in often harsh weather conditions. Feeding the captured animals remained a rather experimental undertaking, too, with handlers trying to make use of what was available during the expedition as well as on the ships.<sup>88</sup> Regardless of the age of the caught animal, the risk of their health suffering due to the distances traversed was still real, and ideally, the marches were supposed to be kept to a minimum.

An episode in Southern Africa highlights the gravity of the problem. At the same time as Müller tried to find animals and humans that were to participate in the "Somali" show in Ethiopia, another Ruhe employee, Carl Eiffert, had caught an adult giraffe in Transvaal, today's Limpopo province. The location of capture lay a considerable distance away from the closest railway line. Instead of wrangling the giraffe there, she was confined in a crate which then was moved to the train tracks by rolling it over round-ground logs that were repeatedly placed in front. Over 120 people – who had previously participated in cornering her – were necessary for this endeavor, which took them over two weeks.<sup>89</sup> As this story strikingly illustrates, even more important than a speedy transport was minimizing the strain on the animal. To achieve this, major physical exertion was required – in this case by humans. This was carried out by workers who were employed on site. European employees, much lower in number, mainly reserved managing tasks for themselves or posed as hunters. Physically taxing work was carried out by African actors, who took part in the expeditions as guides, carriers, translators or hunters.<sup>90</sup> Their labor was also instrumental in loading the animals onto trains and ships.



While extreme efforts were made to ensure the wellbeing of some animals, the lives of others were not deemed valuable. On the contrary, most animals that the Ruhe expeditions encountered were likely to be killed. Since catchers only captured the youngest individuals of a group, they killed all the others to avoid parent animals interfering with the abduction of the juveniles. This could mean that while four offspring were taken alive, forty adult individuals were killed.<sup>91</sup> This practice was criticized by animal protection groups and media outlets at the turn of the century, and demands to save animals only increased in the twentieth century.<sup>92</sup> In 1926, Bernhard Ruhe, son of the founder and responsible for the branch in New York City, proclaimed that hunters “wait nearby [the dens] until the mother goes away in search of food. They then kidnap the little ones. [. . . The mothers] probably would [follow] if they could trace the kidnappers, but they never can.”<sup>93</sup> While it is highly unlikely that captures happened as Ruhe portrayed

**Figure 4.** Loading the fragile, live cargo onto ships and trains was a strenuous task and required the help of people recruited on site. Stadtarchiv Alfeld, Collection Ruhe, Photo Album “Darnedde,” photographer presumably Carl Darnedde, c. 1925-1935.

<sup>91</sup> Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts*, 67.

<sup>92</sup> For the awareness of the critique, see *ibid.* For the discussion on hunting restrictions for protection, and hunters who present themselves as the protectors, see Bernhard Gißibl, “Das Kolonisierte Tier: Zur Ökologie der Kontaktzonen des deutschen Kolonialismus,”

*Werkstattgeschichte* 56 (2010): 7-28.

<sup>93</sup> “How Wild Animals Are Sold,” *Brooklyn*

*Daily Eagle*, August 29, 1926.

**94** As can be seen on photographs, their animal capturing expeditions were accompanied by hunting practices (STA: Collection Ruhe, Photo albums, especially the one made by JAM Borgstädt, 1928; and the one titled "Tschad," 1930).

**95** BArch: B /115713, "Im Schatten des Goldenen Löwens" (film by JAM Borgstädt), 1934/35; STA: Collection Ruhe, Photo albums, the one made by JAM Borgstädt Ruhe, 1928.

**96** The love for animals is a frequent claim made by members of the Ruhe family, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, see for example "Die Firma Ruhe gab Alfeld das Gepräge," *Alfelder Zeitung*, June 4, 1960, 13.

**97** It seems likely that they were killed, though Ruhe claims they were released. However, this may not mean that they lived much longer since their exhaustion may very well have meant that they would not survive in the wild again.

**98** Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 275. This was true for animals that had already been imported and a greater number was available in Europe.

them, wildlife traders were careful to paint a picture of care and concern for the wellbeing of their catch.

Yet killing animals was a big part of their business. As pictures show, white European members of the expedition continued to engage in big game hunting.<sup>94</sup>

The lives of domestic animals were sacrificed as well. The wildlife hunters were accompanied by several animals that all had roles assigned to them. While donkeys or horses were used to carry humans or baggage, other animals such as sheep were taken along as future food supply for humans as well as for the captured animals.<sup>95</sup> Animal catchers made clear distinctions about which species were deemed worthy of saving and their value was calculated according to their usefulness for the trade. As much as Ruhe employees, and especially Ruhe family members, purported their love for animals, which ones were deserving of protection was highly subjective and depended on the use assigned to them.<sup>96</sup> For many of them, their survival was never intended. This holds true not only for the species that were never of interest for the European market, but even for the ones that were supposed to become commodities.

One of the functions of the farm in Dire Dawa and the other collection depots was to winnow the animals that were "unfit" for sale. As the capture and marches were extremely tiring for the animals, they often did not recover or showed signs that they would not survive further transport. It is unclear what exactly happened to them if they were deemed unsuitable for sale.<sup>97</sup> Their health or likelihood of survival during transport were not the only reasons for rejecting them. A surge in trade and the consequent growing supply of wild animals allowed zoological gardens to become ever more selective. Those species that were no longer scarce on the market had to be "immaculate" to generate a profit.<sup>98</sup> Their physical char-

For very rare specimens, e.g. Okapis, the state of the animal

became less important (FelixA: C 4.6, 1 # 3211, "Le second okapi

actuellement au Jardin Zoologique d'Anvers," c. 1954).



**Figure 5.** Though the main task of the wildlife traders was to keep animals alive, there was great variation as to which animals' lives were deemed valuable. Some animals were never intended to stay alive. Stadtarchiv Alfeld, Collection Ruhe, Photo Album "Tschad," photographer unknown, c. 1930.

acteristics could thus also become a reason that prevented them from being sold. Others would simply resist integration into their designated places. Elephants especially repeatedly proved troublesome to animal traders, violently attacking their handlers and sometimes even killing them. In most cases, the elephants themselves were then killed.<sup>99</sup>

All these examples show that the live animals that constituted the Ruhe company's trade also had the potential to bring this trade to an end. Their very corporality could be cause for the most dramatic disruptions. The individual animal was dispensable to Ruhe, since it was viewed as a trading good that had to meet the customer's expectations. As such, they were exchangeable, but as living individuals, they still affected the company's plans. The animals' action or death meant a very real disruption – the chain of practices ended with their physical end, and time and money invested were lost.<sup>100</sup> Finally, their ability to procreate affected the trade in an entirely new way, requiring it to restructure. The success of breeding programs necessitated less restocking. Animals no longer came from their habitat in colonial spaces but were moved from one zoological garden to another – and attempts were sometimes made for them to be resettled in the wild.<sup>101</sup> These changes emerged even before

<sup>99</sup> Ruhe, *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, 219.

<sup>100</sup> Dead animal bodies could be turned into taxidermy specimens, which sometimes allowed traders to profit even if the animal did not survive. Indeed, the number of deceased animals that found their way to museums is especially striking in the case of the Smithsonian's National Zoo (see SIA: RU74, Box 94, Acknowledgements of reception of specimen). Ruhe, too, sold dead animals to taxidermists, for example in Alfeld, where a collection of taxidermized non-European animals is exhibited in the town's municipal museum today.

<sup>101</sup> For one of these attempts, coordinated by Bernhard Grzimek, see Felix Schürmann, "Heimkehr ins Neuland: Die erste Auswilderung von Schimpansen und ihre Kontexte im postkolo-

nalen Tansania, 1965-1966," in *Vielfältig Verflochten: Interdisziplinäre Beiträge*

zur *Tier-Mensch-Relationalität*, ed. Forschungsschwerpunkt Tier-Mensch-

Gesellschaft (Bielefeld, 2017), 275-292.

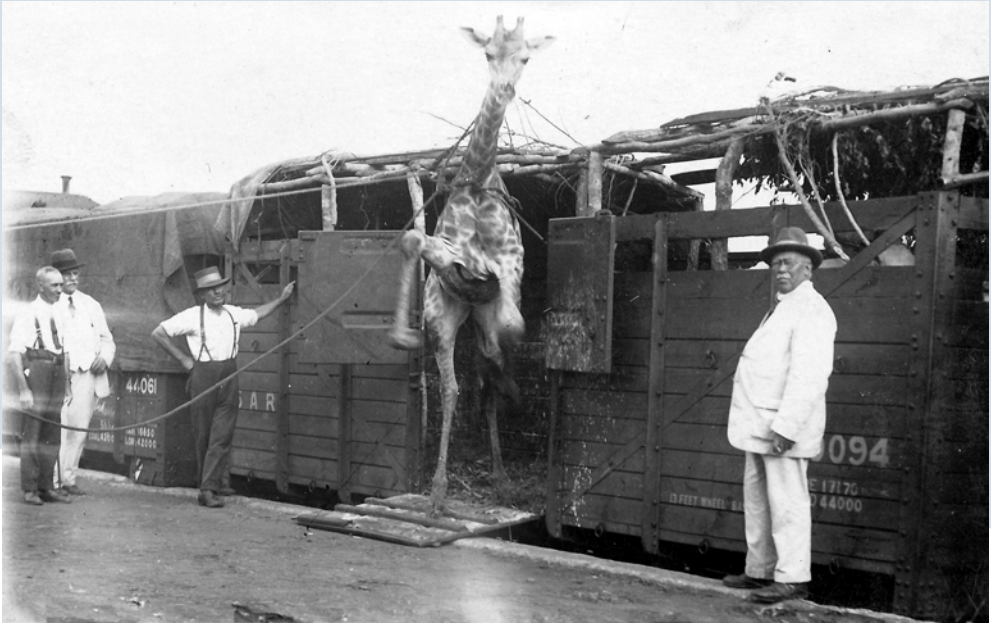
**102** Effectively, the international agreement CITES heavily restricted the trade in wildlife from the 1970s on. Animal dealers had to reorganize their businesses even before that. In Ruhe's case, the company increasingly became a transport and logistical partner, who also added touristic attractions such as safari tours to their portfolio.

international regimentation limited the trade and pressured wildlife traders to reorganize their businesses, offering administrative and logistical services rather than live animals.<sup>102</sup>

## Conclusion

Having traced all the obstacles, diversions, and disruptions that the Ruhe company had to deal with, it is remarkable that the business thrived despite these challenges. For the better part of the company's existence, its success outweighed the adversities it faced. The example of the zebus shows how Ruhe flouted the government's import ban and managed to shape the situation according to their advantage. Even though the ministry had strictly prohibited the import, port and veterinarian control measures were permeable enough for the cattle to pass. Although thousands of animals lost their lives in the trade, Ruhe was still able to sell enough to run their business successfully. The ruptures often appear to be obstacles that they could shift by creating new realities – for instance when the zebus arrived in Europe regardless of the import ban. While animals sometimes actively resisted their capture or died, a large number were transported and sold. In effect, the Ruhe company benefitted from the imperial structures, albeit porous, that allowed them to profit from the lives of thousands of animals that they permanently extracted.

At first glance, the Ruhe company might appear as the embodiment of a connected, tight-knit world that is increasingly growing together. Yet, its undeniable success did not mean that the trade ran without friction. Closely following Ruhe's business dealings during its heyday in the 1920s, the multifaceted factors that seriously interfered with their objectives become apparent. Growth and expansion were interrupted by momentary disconnections and the need to adapt. Available means of transportation were a major cause of disruption. Despite the pressure of global players such as Ruhe, shipping companies did not establish a permanent route from Ham-



burg to Djibouti. Railway networks never spanned the whole of Ethiopia, and areas that were crucial for the capture of animals remained cut off. Consequently, even in the 1920s wildlife traders had to walk the captured animals on long marches to the next transport hub, which in turn increased the strain on the animals and jeopardized profits. Administrative requirements continuously challenged wildlife traders, be they extra costs because of absent waybills, delays in departure due to missing passports or strict quarantine rules and requested examinations by veterinarians that interrupted the flow. Arguably, the latter weighed most heavily. All these regulations had to be met – or circumvented – but the veterinarian regulations were designed to contain disease-causing pathogens, themselves living organisms which were hard to control.

The animals as living organisms that brought their own agency were the biggest unpredictability. By either resisting their capture or refusing to settle into captive life, their actions could derail the company's plan to sell them.

Perhaps the biggest rupture occurred when animals fell sick or died, permanently thwarting any effort to turn them into commodities. Precisely for that reason, significant yet often uninformed efforts were made to ensure their health – often in vain. In the eyes of the traders, it was not the individual

**Figure 6.** Even after capture, animals such as this giraffe actively tried to resist their handling. Sammlung/Archiv alt-alfeld, Ruhe Photo Collection "Tierfänger Krüger," photographer unknown, c. 1900.

animal life that deserved protection, but rather their assigned sale and exchange value. Animals were always a means, never the end. They were of interest to the wildlife traders as long as they fulfilled the purpose compliant to the trade, that is either to carry burdens, yield their own body as food, or be sold. Yet these individuals brought in their own ability to act that often ran against the aims of the traders.

Examining the practices and relations of the global wildlife trade, it becomes clear that growing connections were simultaneously accompanied by disruptions, and the trade itself riddled with fractures and unpredictability. Thus the wildlife trade as a wide-ranging network is an excellent way to illustrate the complexity and multi-layered nature of globalization processes and to think about them as fragile and fractured pathways rather than linear trajectories.

**Charlotte Marlene Hoes** is a Research Fellow in the History Department of the Georg-August-University in Göttingen, working in a project funded by the German Lost Art Foundation. She completed her Master's degree in History and Philosophy of Knowledge at ETH Zurich, graduating at the chair of History of the Modern World. In 2022, she received a GHI short-term research fellowship, allowing her to consult archival material in the United States. Her research focuses on the global trade in live animals, examining human-animal relations as well as colonial continuities that are entangled with the wildlife trade.



# Rethinking Cross-border Connections: A Personal Account

Roland Wenzlhuemer

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

Andreas Greiner, Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş, and Mario Peters introduced this thematic *Forum on Rethinking Cross-border Connections* from an institutional perspective. They recounted how the German Historical Institute Washington – an established institution with a clearly defined research focus – started to embed its own transatlantic research interests within a broader framework of the history of global connectivity and exchange. They highlighted the historiographical insights that this new alignment brought and then showed how at some point the framework needed to be readjusted in order to allow for the study of ruptures, breakdowns, and disconnections as well. The institutional perspective is highly instructive as it echoes some of the larger transformations occurring in historical research in general at the time. And it reminds us how established research interests and practices can constantly be reflected and reframed without losing their core purpose; how they actually gain in topicality and helpfulness in the process. At the close of this issue, let me complement the institutional narrative from a personal, non-

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generalizable perspective with a little story that traces my own journey from researching global connectivity to emphasizing elements of disconnection.

As is often the case in our profession, it all started with an archive trip. Porthcurno is a small village at the western tip of Cornwall. Getting there requires a bit of effort. The train from London to Penzance takes at least five hours, if all goes well. From the Penzance railway station there are hourly buses to Porthcurno. The fifteen-kilometer ride takes another 45 minutes. Alternatively, one can hire a taxi. Bus and taxi alike go as far as a car park, from which it is a five-minute walk down the village main street to Porthcurno beach (a stunning place which in itself is already worth the effort of the journey). However, Porthcurno is not only remote in terms of transportation. Once you are there, you might find it difficult to pick up a cell phone signal. For a long time, the mobile reception in the village was notoriously weak. While this might have changed in the last years, it was certainly still the case when I was visiting in spring 2011. It was a popular joke among the locals that one must climb one of the surrounding hills for decent reception.

Though an old joke, it always worked and made people smile – because its legendary remoteness is only part of Porthcurno's story. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the village stood at the very center of the world's largest communication network. Due to its location and topographical qualities, Porthcurno became the landing site for an important telegraphic connection between Great Britain and British India. The cable link went online in 1870 and was immensely successful. Many other global cable connections out of Porthcurno followed, and this little place in western Cornwall soon developed into the world's most important cable station. At its peak, 14 telegraph cables with traffic from all over the globe landed at Porthcurno. For about half a century, it was the world's communications hub. This is why the old joke about the mobile reception still works.

And it is also why Porthcurno seems a fitting place to start a story about global disconnectivity. It was the reason why I visited Porthcurno in 2011. Though the village is no longer a global communications hub, it is the home of the Porthcurno Telegraph Museum which hosts the archive of the telegraph company once operating at Porthcurno. The archive is an inevitable port of call for anyone working on a book about the global telegraph network, as I was then. After a few days combing through the holdings, the head archivist pointed me to a particular file that he thought could be interesting for me. He was right. The file contained color copies of three lengthy letters written between March 1914 and January 1915 by an unnamed telegrapher stationed on Fanning Island in the Pacific and posted to a friend in Canada. These letters first got me interested in the relationship of global connection and disconnection.

<sup>1</sup> Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Doing Global History. An Introduction in Six Concepts* (London, 2020), Ch. 3.

Fanning Island is a small atoll situated around 1450 kilometers south of Hawai'i in the middle of the Pacific. From 1889 it was part of the British Empire. Beginning in 1902, the island came to be used as a relay station in the first trans-Pacific telegraph connection, effectively closing the last major gap in the global telegraph network at the dawn of the twentieth century. And yet, the unnamed telegrapher's letters do not really speak about global connectivity. On the contrary, they make the remoteness, the isolation from the rest of the world that the writer and his colleagues were experiencing on Fanning Island and in which the telegraphers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often performed their duties, palpable across generations.

The letters speak about dysfunctional postal connections, recurring food rationing or the experience of being trapped on the island after the outbreak of the First World War while an enemy German cruiser was fast approaching. I have presented and discussed these and other examples of global disconnection described in the letters elsewhere and will not go into detail here.<sup>1</sup> Back at the Porthcurno archives, however,

<sup>2</sup> Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World. The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge, 2013).

I could not immediately see the larger significance of these disconnections and their interplay with the central position that Fanning had in the global telegraph network of the early twentieth century. That Porthcurno itself had held a not entirely different position about which the locals were still joking seems particularly interesting in retrospect. Still, I think I was not prepared to acknowledge the role that disconnections play in processes of globalization. At the time, I was finalizing a book manuscript that was later published under the title *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World*.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, the letters from Fanning and their disconnection contents did not make it into the book.

*Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World* examined the emergence of a global telegraph network – an infrastructure that connected actors and institutions all over the globe in entirely new ways. While I tried to critically engage with the notion of connection and sought to relativize some of the bolder metaphors such as “the shrinking of the world” or the “annihilation of space and time,” it was and remains a book about global connectivity. As such it fit rather neatly into global history’s broader narrative at the time, a narrative fixated on the significance of global exchanges and entanglements. In the last decade, however, this has fundamentally changed. Reflecting the larger political, social and economic transformations that we have recently been witnessing, global historians have started to rethink the field’s key assumptions.

Princeton historian Jeremy Adelman was among the first to remind global historians to critically reflect their own positionality in the broader context of researching processes of globalization. Adelman made his argument under the impression of developments such as the 2016 presidential elections in the United States or the Brexit vote in Great Britain. He was concerned that due to the liberal, cosmopolitan background of most academics in the field, global history “favoured stories about curiosity towards distant neighbours,” might “over-

look nearby neighbourhoods dissolved by transnational supply chains,” and forget “the left behind, the ones who cannot move, and those who become immobilised because the light no longer shines on them.”<sup>3</sup>

While controversial at the time, Adelman’s claims seem almost tame from today’s perspective. Too much has happened in the past half-decade. The Trump administration left a trail of destruction across America’s democracy. Brexit has been done – with severe repercussions for Britain’s democracy, its supermarket shelves, and the European Union’s political stability. In early 2020, a global pandemic of hitherto unimaginable magnitude brought travel bans, supply chain disruptions, and mass lay-offs that are still crippling numerous sections of the economy. In February 2022, Russia invaded the Ukraine. Months of brutal warfare did not only bring death and suffering to countless people, but also stopped a good part of the global trade in wheat and fundamentally called into question the current global energy regime.

These developments brought a term to the fore that had been lurking in the background of academic writing for some time: deglobalization. Under the impression of the above-mentioned phenomena, many politicians, journalists, and researchers started to wonder whether we were in fact entering a phase of deglobalization, an era of first stopped and then reversed global integration in which the economic and social entanglements of the past were gradually undone. Currently, we are witnessing this question turning into an assertion. Contemporary observers are thereby reproducing an argument that some historians – often from the field of economic history – have for some time been making about the interwar period and the Great Depression, a time during which commercial integration and trade volumes were much lower than in the nineteenth century or in the postwar years.<sup>4</sup> Such interpretations assess globalization primarily in terms of global trade, the integration of global markets, and price convergence. In their view, periods of retrogressive integration or

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Adelman, “What Is Global History Now?” *Aeon* (blog). March 2, 2017. <https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment>.

<sup>4</sup> See Jeffrey G. Williamson, “Globalization, Convergence, and History.” *The Journal of Economic History* 56, no. 2 (2001): 277–306; Harold James, *The End of Globalization. Lessons from the Great Depression* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 2001); Maurice Obstfeld and Alan M. Taylor, “The Great Depression as a Watershed: International Capital Mobility over the Long Run,” in *The Defining Moment. The Great Depression and the American Economy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Michael D. Bordo, Claudia Goldin, and Eugene N. White (Chicago/London, 1998), 353–402.

**5** Stefan Link, "How Might 21st-Century De-Globalization Unfold? Some Historical Reflections." *New Global Studies* 12, no. 3 (2018): 343–65, here 344.

**6** Kiran K. Patel, *The New Deal. A Global History* (Princeton/Oxford, 2016).

**7** Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen Seit 1865. Eine Globalgeschichte Der Internationalen Ordnung* (Darmstadt, 2009); Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, eds., *Internationalisms. A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, 2017).

**8** Daniel Hedinger, *Die Achse. Berlin-Rom-Tokio 1919-1946* (München, 2021); Maria Framke, *Delhi-Rom-Berlin. Die Indische Wahrnehmung von Faschismus Und Nationalsozialismus 1922-1939* (Darmstadt, 2013).

**9** Zoltán Biedermann, "(Dis)Connected History and the Multiple Narratives of Global Early Modernity," *Modern Philology* 119, no. 1 (2021): 13–32, here 25. <https://doi.org/10.1086/714972>.

even deglobalization follow periods of intensive globalization like a pendulum.<sup>5</sup>

Both Adelman's 2017 piece and the increasing interest in a concept such as deglobalization point to the ongoing shift in focus occurring in the field of global history. Its understanding of global connectivity has already significantly broadened and disruptive phenomena increasingly come into focus. However, the field's general conception of globalization is still surprisingly simple and binary. For instance, when economic history points to halts and reversals in processes of global economic integration as proof of deglobalization, it builds on an overly narrow understanding of the history of the interwar years. The fact that the global economic crisis of the late 1920s and 30s propagated outward from the USA to soon grip the entire world is in itself a strong indication of the degree of global integration at the time. The global history of crisis management techniques,<sup>6</sup> the simultaneous proliferation of international organizations,<sup>7</sup> and the global dissemination of fascist thought are further examples.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, when Adelman warns that focusing attention on the connected simultaneously leaves the unconnected in the dark, he is reinforcing the very same dichotomy between connection and disconnection that we see in the relationship between globalization and deglobalization described above. Both point to an effectively binary conception of globalization.

In reality though, connective and disconnective processes are deeply interwoven and interreact intensively. The actors and places of globalization are themselves always embedded in connective and disconnective circumstances simultaneously,<sup>9</sup> and they must be studied in that state of tension. Connections and non-connections converge in particular places and in the lived experiences of historical actors, revealing their significance in their interrelations. Although I could not immediately see it back in Porthcurno, the letters from Fanning made this very clear to me over the last

years. They point to a rather pronounced confluence of global connectivity and disconnectivity. On the remote atoll of Fanning, British telegraphers were among the first to learn about world news and distributed them further. But when it came to communicating with their families or to any form of physical movement, they were confined to the island. The letters make it very clear how this interplay shaped the telegraphers' lifeworld, how the global telegraph network connected and disconnected at the same time.

There are other examples for the same phenomenon. The Suez Canal, an emblematic piece of global infrastructure in the nineteenth century, is another prominent case in point. When the canal opened in 1869, it greatly facilitated and shortened the journey between Europe and Asia. But it was also a place where connective and disconnective phenomena converged and collided in several ways. The canal did not merely connect the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, inaugurating a new sea route of global significance; it also bisected ancient caravan routes, requiring travelers and camels to wait for gaps in sea traffic so they could ferry across the canal.<sup>10</sup>

The global telegraph network and the Suez Canal provide just two examples of how global infrastructures that have generally been interpreted as connectors and facilitators of globalization actually occupy much more complicated roles in the fabric of globalization. Obviously, they connect and disconnect at the same time and shape processes of globalization based on this very interplay between connectivity and disconnectivity. This interplay is a complex and hitherto understudied dynamic. So far, we do not have enough studies that look at globalization in a way that visualizes both its connective and disconnective qualities. This is why the present volume is so important to get the ball rolling and propagate a much more illuminating perspective on cross-border connections and the processes of globalization that they carry.

<sup>10</sup> Valeska Huber, "Multiple Mobilities. Über Den Umgang mit verschiedenen Mobilitätsformen um 1900," *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 36, no. 2 (2010): 317–41, here 340; Valeska Huber, "Connecting Colonial Seas: The 'International Colonisation' of Port Said and the Suez Canal during and after the First World War," *European Review of History* 19, no. 1 (2012): 141–61.

**Roland Wenzlhuemer** is Professor of Modern History at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. He is the founding director of the Munich Centre for Global History and one of the directors of the Käthe Hamburger Kolleg “Dis:connectivity in processes of globalization” at LMU. His publications include *Doing Global History: An Introduction in Six Concepts* (Bloomsbury, 2019) and *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).



The background features abstract geometric shapes in shades of blue. A dark blue triangle points downwards from the top left. A light blue triangle points upwards from the bottom right. The remaining space is white.

# Conference Reports



## Antisemitism and Sexualities Reconsidered

Conference held on December 13-15, 2021, at the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin). Sponsored by the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI), Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung at TU Berlin. Conveners: Anna-Carolin Augustin (GHI Washington), Sebastian Bischoff (Paderborn University), Kristoff Kerl (University of Copenhagen) Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (TU Berlin). Participants: Nathan Abrams (Bangor University); Christine Achinger (The University of Warwick); Jens Elberfeld (MLU Halle-Wittenberg); Ruth Ennis (Leipzig University); Sander L. Gilman (Emory University); Hans-Joachim Hahn (University of Basel); Deborah Hertz (University of California, San Diego); Gal Hertz (Tel Aviv University); Dagmar Herzog (City University of New York); Elisabeth Janik-Freis (TU Berlin); Uffa Jensen (TU Berlin); Caroline Kahlenberg (University of Virginia); Martina Kessel (Bielefeld University); Nadja Klopprogge (University of Giessen); Dani Kranz (Ben Gurion University of the Negev); Margarita Lerman (Hebrew University of Jerusalem/Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow); Hannah Lotte Lund (TU Berlin); Elissa Mailänder (Sciences Po, Paris); Kerstin Mayerhofer (University of Vienna); Lisa Silverman (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee); Jan Süselbeck (NTNU Trondheim); Sören Urbansky (GHI Washington); Lukas Uwira (Viadrina European University); Vojin Saša Vukadinović (Freie Universität Berlin); Richard Wetzell (GHI Washington); Benedikt Wolf (Bielefeld University).

The premise of the Conference “Antisemitism and Sexualities Reconsidered” was to bring the differences in the role sexualities played in judeophobic discourses at different times and in different regions into view. To expand the tem-

poral and geographical focus of the debate beyond the era of modern antisemitism and beyond the bounds of “Western societies” was the ambitious approach reflected by the extensive range of papers submitted. The keynote was delivered by Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, with a commentary by Dagmar Herzog.

The first panel, “White Slavery Narratives around 1900,” was chaired by Elisabeth Janik-Freis and dealt with the entanglements of the so-called *Mädchenhandel* (trafficking of girls) by supposedly Jewish procurers and evolving antisemitic stereotypes once the legal term of “trafficking” was established. Ruth Ennis and Margarita Lerman expanded the ongoing debate among historians on how to classify the white slavery narratives which highlighted the relation between tropes of white slavery and antisemitism. Ennis and Lerman emphasized the interconnection between the development of new forms of policing migration across all European empires, including the Ottoman, and the adaption of antisemitic discourse to enforce these emerging practices. They suggested that the so-called *Mädchenhandel* shifted from carrying only minor or no punishment to being perceived as morally outrageous, while connecting a “certain Jewishness” to the problem. For Lerman, a 1892 trial at Lemberg in which 28 mostly Jewish defendants were accused of trafficking women works as a focal point for the modification of political and juridical practices at hand. Ennis, on the other hand, draws her assessment from the correspondence of European diplomats who were among the driving forces for new regulatory frameworks concerning trafficking in order to toughen migration laws in general.

Under the title “Sexuality and (Anti-) Zionism,” the second panel on day two began with Deborah Hertz’ rich remarks on Bertha Pappenheim and her opposition to the Youth Aliyah. Hertz focused on the very different identities Pappenheim took on. Pappenheim, an Austrian-Jewish feminist

and social worker, stood both with the radical feminists on issues such as the rights of single mothers and prostitutes, while also promoting nuclear family arrangements and other traditional gender norms – hence her strong critique of the kibbutzim. Pappenheim famously pointed out the antisemitic sentiments of the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* leadership. Hertz stressed the need to engage in a debate about the antisemitic legacy of German feminism. Caroline Kahrenberg's following talk gave insight into how Palestinian Arabs discussed Jewish women's bodies in the early twentieth century. According to Kahrenberg, the sex talk about Jewish women's bodies served as a platform for anxieties and to cope with the sudden social changes associated with modernity, such as colonial rule, Zionism and shifting gender roles. She concluded that over time, the female Jewish body became a tool for anti-colonial struggle. An impressive and diverse selection of literature, caricatures and press articles illustrates and underpins Kahrenberg's remarks about the alleged promiscuous and European Jewish woman in Palestinian Arab discourse. The panel was concluded by Vojin Saša Vukadinović, who analyzed the anti-Israeli and antisemitic sentiments of Alija Izetbegović, former president of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and his "Islamic Declaration." Vukadinović argued that Izetbegović should be understood as an early Jihadist ideologue, whose reception in the West remains rather positive.

The third panel titled "Antisemitism and Jewish Perversion," began with Gal Hertz and his examination of "Entrepreneurs of Vice. Jewish Sexuality in Viennese Courts," followed by Benedikt Wolf's remarks about the constellation of antisemitism and anti-homosexual animus (homophobia) exemplified by Otto Julius Bierbaum's novel *Prinz Kuckuck. Leben, Taten, Meinungen und Höllenfahrt eines Wollüstlings*. Wolf argued that the novel's reader was supposed to align with the antisemitic protagonist, Henry Felix, who does not know he is Jewish, and Karl, his stepbrother, who is homosexual.

According to Wolf, a link between antisemitism and anti-homosexual animus is established through the fantasy of anal intercourse which plays an integral yet non-explicit part in the novel. With reference to Postone, Wolf argued that the promiscuous Jew Henry functions as the personification of universal interchangeability, rootless and parasitical. Karl's homosexuality, on the other hand, echoes this interchangeability in regard to gender norms. Although Jewishness and homosexuality are assigned to two different characters, they are connected through the marker of modern social contingency. Lisa Silverman then gave an engaging glimpse into her forthcoming book *The Postwar Antisemite: Culture and Complicity after the Holocaust*. In reference to the trial of Veit Harlan, Silverman argued that his defense strategy should be considered a pivoting point concerning the definition of the postwar antisemite. Karen Niehoff's testimony in that very trial played a substantial role: She described Ludwig Metzger, original screenwriter of the antisemitic film *Jud Süß*, as a committed National Socialist though arguing he was not an antisemite. Harlan's strategy on the other hand was to portray Metzger as a typical antisemite, undermining Niehoff's testimony while absolving himself. To Silverman, the new type of defense strategy employed by Harlan becomes a powerful rhetorical tool: It grants the accused the moral authority to determine who the antisemite is or was while obscuring his or her own proven or well-known antisemitic involvement.

The fourth panel, "Jews, Sexuality, and the State," started with Lukas Uwira on the notion of "Jewish Polygamy and the Alleged Inability to Found a State." Uwira discussed the antisemitic impression popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that a nation state could only be founded upon monogamy – the only pillar of society which Jews are incapable of due to their alleged polygamy. In particular, Uwira drew a connection between the ideas of "Jews" as unable to build a state and, at the same time, as responsible for

the destruction of those states they currently reside in. Martina Kessel continued the panel with her talk on “The Threat of Democracy. Identity Politics, Sexual Tropes and the anti-Jewish Impulse in Modern Germany.” Drawing on material from the satirical weekly magazine *Simplicissimus*, founded in 1896, Kessel highlighted the application of antisemitic stereotypes in contemporary cultural artefacts such as caricatures and postcards. Sören Urbansky closed the panel with his presentation titled “‘White Slaves’ of Chinatown. Interracial Intimacy in Turn of the Century Singapore, Vladivostok, and San Francisco,” in which he investigated the existing sharp ethnic boundaries in imperial Russia in the context of prostitution.

The fifth panel, titled “Antisemitism, Gender, and Sexuality,” began with Kerstin Mayerhofer’s talk, “‘Quam mulieres menstruosi sunt’. Perceptions of the ‘Men-Struating’ Jew,” which focused on this lesser-known motif of antisemitic rhetoric. She pointed out that Jewish inferiority was substantiated by the Christian claim that Jewish men are menstruating. Menstruation was seen as a sign of weakness or, even worse, a sinner’s mark due to the refusal to accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah. A particular Jewish gender distortion was then developed and integrated into Christian doctrine from the twelfth century onward, which construed Jewish women’s sexuality as uncontrollable while Jewish men were feminized. Next, Jens Elberfeld talked about “Anti-Semitism and the History of Juvenile Sexuality in Early 20th-Century Germany”. Elberfeld drew attention to the antisemitic usurpation of a critical cultural discourse on abstinence that could be weaponized using the imagery of the Jew as the modern subject par excellence and its promiscuous desires. Nadja Klopprogge’s paper titled “Joel A. Roger’s ‘Sex & Race’. Exposing the Racist and Antisemitic Politics of History” appeared to be at the heart of the conference’s investigation into the link between sexuality and race, or respectively antisemitism. Driven by the purpose to deconstruct the myth of a racially pure

lineage, Rogers identified sexuality as the ultimate hub for racist and antisemitic structures of social order decades before Michel Foucault would write his seminal series on *The History of Sexuality*. Klopprogge highlighted Roger's approach to demystify racist concepts of white purity on the basis of a phenotypic analysis of important statesman and poets throughout history.

The final panel of the conference addressed "Contemporary Sexual Antisemitisms." In Nathan Abrams' paper, "Subverting the Race. Jews, Porn, and Antisemitism in Contemporary American Discourse," the author analyzed the discourse around his own person as a case study of how antisemitic narratives developed regarding his research on the entanglement of Jews and the porn industry. Illustrated with references to a collection of right-wing websites, Abrams showed how his research was misrepresented as proof that Jews try to destroy Gentile morals through porn. In a rather traditional antisemitic conspiracy narration, Abrams is identified as an agent of a greater "Jewish" plan associated with hidden forces. Afterwards, Dani Kranz introduced her ambitious research design examining the potential link between the image of ancient but still persistent exoticized Jewish sexuality and the "sexy Israeli" among Jewish/German and Israeli Jewish/German adults. Finally, Jan Süsselbeck and Hans-Joachim Hahn presented their paper entitled "Sexually Harassed by Jews? Contemporary Debates on Berthold Woltze's Genre Painting 'Der lästige Kavalier'." Both explored the recent memefication of a painting from the 1870s which kick-started a debate among critics and researchers on social media about its antisemitic insinuation and/or tropes. Although Woltze is known for stereotypical depictions in his other works, Süsselbeck and Hahn point out that the painting in question remains rather ambiguous regarding its antisemitic portrayal. Both emphasize that especially from a current perspective it is difficult to determine how the painting would have been perceived in the nineteenth century.



Nevertheless, Woltze's painting, implicitly or explicitly, is highly charged with antisemitic imagery.

Sander L. Gilman delivered concluding remarks. Coming from a Freudian perspective, Gilman discussed the potential origins of xenophobia. Whether it is considered a natural phenomenon or an aberration of human development, both assumptions tend to pathologize the concept. To Gilman, the more important aspect lies within the concrete social and historical manifestation of phobias such as antisemitism or racism, rather than in their underlying structures. In order to understand them, we should approach such phenomena antithetically: Instead of looking for deviant behavior, we should ask how "normality" is delimited? Eventually, such an undertaking might be able to filter out the symbolic registers of difference that define the political in reference to Georg Simmel. The core message of the conference, Gilman argued, was that the stereotypes of deviant human sexuality and the image of the Jew as their exemplary embodiment in the world have neither vanished nor improved – an argument bolstered by the extraordinary papers presented at this conference.

**Laszlo Strzoda**  
(TU Berlin)

# Laboratories of the Social: Utopian Settlements and Reform Movements in the Long Nineteenth Century

Workshop held online, January 27-28, 2022. Conveners: Anne Kwaschik (University of Konstanz) and Claudia Roesch (GHI Washington). Participants: Bartłomiej Błesznowski (Institute of Applied Social Science, University of Warsaw); Johannes Bosch (University of Heidelberg); Isabel Heinemann (University of Münster); Ana Keilson (Harvard University); Robert Kramm (Ludwig Maximilians University, München); Anne Kraume (University of Konstanz); Piotr Kuligowski (Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History Polish Academy of Sciences); Michel Lallement (CNAM Paris); Pamela Pilbeam (Royal Holloway, University of London); Julia Ramírez-Blanco (University of Barcelona); Anne-Sophie Reichert (University of Chicago); Stefan Rindlisbacher (University of Fribourg); Andrea Westermann (University of Konstanz); Richard Wetzell (GHI Washington); Alexander van Wickeren (University of Köln).

The term *utopia* is ancient Greek for “no place.” Thomas More first coined the term in 1516 to describe an ideal society governed by new social, religious and economic relations. Modern writers have tended to use the term as an abstract idea that can only later be applied to the real world. Friedrich Engels followed this thought when he described early socialist thinkers Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Henri de Saint-Simon as “drifting off into pure phantasies.” There was a defined separation between so-called scientific and practical socialist knowledge and that of utopian fantasies of the early nineteenth century.

In their workshop, Claudia Roesch and Anne Kwaschik aimed to unsettle Friedrich Engels’ description of “utopian social-

ism” by turning seriously to so-called “utopian” models as experiments of community building and social organization. The two-day workshop investigated intentional settlements with a praxeological approach to the history of knowledge. Asking not whether these nineteenth-century social experiments were utopian or not, presenters instead conceptualized settlements as productive sites of social knowledge and took the embeddedness in contemporary scientific discourse seriously. The organizers suggested viewing these attempts as experiments and testing grounds for imagining a new society. Therefore, the conference approached intentional settlements and life reform projects with a history of knowledge perspective asking how these sites produced knowledge through practices such as observation or experimentation. This approach demonstrated how new forms of social relations, economic and political ideals traveled within and out of these settlements.

Roesch and Kwaschik emphasized that reformist thinkers like Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier provided a new form of knowledge production about native and colonial societies. The workshop utilized the term “laboratories” to examine the space made within these new communities. This is a term that relates to both theory and practice; an arena that refines subjectivity and interacts with political, social, and cultural contexts. For this reason, nineteenth-century reform movements, including the utopian settlements, should be seen as creative and pragmatic sites of social knowledge production.

The first panel, “Early Socialism and Colonialism,” chaired by Isabel Heinemann charted out the knowledge systems and transfers that happened among early nineteenth-century reformers in the unique space offered by the colonies. For those seeking to establish intentional settlements, colonies provided infrastructures and an arena to test out new theories of social organization. Anne Kwaschik’s contribution

provided an interesting discussion on this case. Kwaschik explored laboratory discourses and Fourier-inspired settlements in Algeria during the 1840s and 1850s. She showed how Fourier's associative principle was tested and put into practice in Saint-Denis-Du-Sig. The community, established in 1846, demonstrated a compelling space to examine new knowledge systems set between the colonial environment and utopian thinkers as well as relations between Europeans and Arabs. By looking at Saint-Denis-Du-Sig, the early settler colonialism in Algeria was dependent on experiments in the formation of new social science ideas.

Claudia Roesch followed this discussion with a presentation on a pamphlet written by John A. Etzler, titled *Paradise Within the Reach of All Men*, that highlighted the ways socialist settlements were laboratories of modernity. Etzler, a German-American engineer, dedicated his work to thinking about the intersections of labor and engineering in order to uplift humanity. Etzler's project for technological advancement in the service of overtaking nature was deeply embedded in colonialism. He traveled across communities in the Americas in the hopes of establishing his plans for technological advancement and saw in these arenas a space to implement new forms of labor organization outside of traditional social forces.

Piotr Kuligowski examined the unique space of the colonies for Polish reformers to test out how a new independent Polish nation state could function. Polish elites and intellectuals saw colonial spaces as areas to create ideal settlements based on the models set by Étienne Cabet and Saint-Simon. For Polish reformers and intellectuals such as Jan Czyński, and Ludwik Królikowski, the models set by French utopians provided a way to rethink social formation in Poland. He thus traced a global knowledge transfer and practice that occurred within these communities.

In her comment, Pamela Pilbeam highlighted the connection between Saint-Simonians and the Fourierists in projects in both Poland and in Algeria. In all papers, there was an important aspect of knowledge sharing among utopian thinkers and projects. The colonies provided a space to enact and practice new ideas of social relations and organization. For many of the reformist thinkers, the colonies were seen as an opportunity to test out communal forms of labor relations and housing as alternatives to the boom and bust of early industrialism.

In his keynote lecture titled “Living in Utopia,” Michel Lallement focused on the sociological make up of intentional communes, with the Oneida community in New York State and the Guise *Familistère* in France as case studies. In both, community members took up the issues of marriage, slavery, and labor. Interestingly, however, it seems that existing social differences were not overcome. In many cases, particularly within marriages, new forms of gender imbalances and power structures developed. Lallement further highlighted the differences between French and American communes. In the U.S., communities had diverse origins along political, social, or religious lines. Religious communes, it seems, were able to maintain a longer life than others. In this regard, patterns of colonial settlement seem like a good starting point to examine why certain communes were able to exist longer than others. There is a long tradition of religious communities identifying the United States as an ideal space to create a new society. This tradition provided networks and models for secular communitarians to follow in their footsteps.

The workshop’s second panel, “Naturist Discourses and Alternative Forms of Living,” chaired by Andrea Westermann examined the “return to nature” projects utilized by various reformer groups. The panel moved away from intentional settlements and discussed reform projects that centered on colonial frontiers, the body, and food. Johannes Bosch

focused on the French naturist milieu during the 1920s and 1930s to examine how two very different political views could share communication and knowledge about food and regenerating the body. The conservative doctor Paul Carton and the anarchist group of Bascon both embraced vegetarianism as a form of altering society. Carton used vegetarianism as a way to discipline the body away from the excesses of modern life, elicit pleasure, and other “poisons.” For Carton, vegetarianism was a form of controlling “the passions.” The anarchist group of Bascon defined vegetarianism as a way to combat capitalism and forms of domination. Bosch charted out how Carton and the anarchists were able to share approaches and knowledge even while adhering to different political worldviews.

Alexander van Wickeren similarly saw important knowledge transfers within the Christian vegetarian movement in South Africa, particular the U.S.-based Seventh-Day Adventists. Van Wickeren approached the Seventh-Day Adventists as a space to examine the connection among global knowledge transfers pertaining to food movements and anti-vice advocacy. Traditional studies, van Wickeren stated, had focused on the criticism of meat eating particularly within Western spaces. A look at South Africa, by contrast, shows how the knowledge and discussion of Christian vegetarianism was entangled with the colonial frontier, trans-imperiality, and color line constructions. There is a more widespread transfer that moves beyond the criticism of meat that speaks to ideas of perfection, race, exclusion, and forms of identity.

Stefan Rindlisbacher examined life reform movements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Rindlisbacher noticed that many of the early reform movements did not seek to destroy capitalism or overthrow the class system, but rather make a more efficient system. Life reform settlements, as well, were defined by their relationship to urban cities. They were accessible by train and visitors would move

between the settlements. The settlements in the colonies, by contrast, were defined by the goal of creating a more efficient civilizing mission that benefited both settler and indigenous communities. Settlers were to learn from indigenous communities about certain forms of cultivation which would then be commercialized and sold to Europe creating new forms of commercialization and exoticization.

In his comment, Robert Kramm pointed to how these discussions sought to “sanitize” communities, particularly the body and sex within imperial spaces. All panelists turned to an idealized form of nature that supposedly had healing powers and capabilities. Activists utilized nature that was entrenched within imperial spaces to contrast with European metropolises. These relationships, however, were multilayered with meaning and various forms of knowledge transfers that moved across political, religious, and social lines.

The last panel, “Arts, Sciences and Experimentation,” chaired by Richard Wetzell investigated experiments in knowledge creation that went beyond the traditional laboratory. Anne-Sophie Reichert explored how reformers turned to dance to alleviate the excesses of modernity. Focusing her discussion on Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and Rudolf Laban, she highlighted how the dance studio was a pedagogical site and laboratory that sought to alter both bodies and society. Her work forces us to unpack what we understand as laboratories and science. Pedagogues and thinkers such as Laban and Jacques-Dalcroze utilized approaches developed by other reformers and applied them to physical movement and dance. Their approach to the social question should not be disqualified.

The work on bodies and lived experiences was echoed again in Bartłomiej Blesznowski’s contribution. He discussed Edward Abramowski’s “experimental metaphysics” as an attempt to cross disciplinary borders between scientific

knowledge and praxis. During the late nineteenth century Abramowski utilized laboratories to examine the construction of modern subjectivity and how a more scientific, efficient form of socialism could be implemented that included an understanding of the workings of the individual. Cooperativism for Abramowski needed to include whole aspects of the individual.

Julia Ramírez-Blanco highlighted the important space of the workshop in attempts to reform the excesses of modernity and industrialization in Victorian Britain. She focused on Charles Robert Ashbee, a disciple of William Morris and John Ruskin of the British Arts and Crafts Movement. Her discussion on Ashbee revealed a complex network of approaches to modernity that included returning to the traditional guild model. This return to the guild was not simply a return to the past. It was entangled with the British movement for the legalization of homosexuality, social democracy, and regenerating social and economic relations under new forms of friendship and community.

Ana Keilson's comment pointed to two themes occurring throughout the discussion: the generative and creative against the unchangeable. These laboratories were both specific spaces but also embodied in the actions and movements of people and communities. In one way, the laboratory was internalized as a reflective space. Through these three papers we saw creative impulses and analyses of new forms of knowledge that focused on notions of friendship, the urge to create new subjectivities, and emotions. This points to the need to move beyond the traditional analysis of utopia and the social question to include new forms of bonds, guilds, and the dance studio.

The workshop thoroughly highlighted the various forms of knowledge production that spread beyond the intentional settlement. Reformers engaged with existing institutions, the



state, as well as imperial spaces. Settlement projects therefore must be seen as both attempts to solve current social questions and ideas deeply imbedded in the political and cultural contexts. The workshop concluded with some important points on new approaches to take when studying intentional settlements. Two major themes emerged throughout the discussion. First, the entanglements between the knowledge discussions formed in intentional settlements and colonialism. Social reformers saw opportunities in the colonies that equally worked towards spreading some form of civilizing mission. This indirectly benefited state and colonial officials who gained new knowledge about local societies and environments. Second, the need to expand our understanding of the spread of alternative forms of knowledge production. The dance studio, experimental metaphysics, and the guild for example were entangled sites that combined various approaches to not only create a new society but a new humanity. Experimental forms of co-habitation, though utopian in their outlook, in the end provided the opposite of utopias – practical attempts of bringing the new world order to life. Life reform and settlement experiments therefore must be approached as having powerful legacies that informed approaches to thinking about the organization of society, technology and the shaping of the colonial world since the early nineteenth century.

**Nisrine Rahal**  
(GHI Washington)

## Knowledge on the Move: Information Networks During and After the Holocaust

Workshop at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, April 3-5, 2022. Cosponsored by the Pacific Office of the German Historical Institute Washington and USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research. Conveners: Robin Buller (GHI Washington, Pacific Office Berkeley), Wolf Gruner (USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research), Anne-Christin Klotz (GHI Washington, Pacific Office Berkeley). Participants: Barnabas Balint (Oxford University), Felix Berge (Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Munich), Paula Chan (Georgetown University), Sarah Ernst (University of Southern California), Ella Falldorf (University of Jena), Tamara Gleason Freidberg (University College London), Laura Hilton (Muskingum University), Heléna Huhák (Institute of History of the Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest), Jan Láníček (University of New South Wales, Sydney), Jonathan Lanz (Indiana University Bloomington), Paul Lerner (University of Southern California), Caroline Mezger (Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Munich), Anindita Mukherjee (Ashoka University), Alexia Orenco Green (University of Southern California), Izabela Paszko (Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Munich), Katarzyna Person (Jewish Historical Institute Warsaw), Christine Schmidt (The Wiener Holocaust Library, London), Dan Stone (Royal Holloway University of London), András Szécsényi (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, Budapest), Sören Urbansky (GHI Washington, Pacific Office Berkeley), Laurien Vastenhout (NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam).

This workshop was conceived with an interest in exploring migrant knowledge as a lens with which to understand the

Holocaust. While victims of the Holocaust are not migrants in a traditional sense, they were often in transit, displaced, and crossing boundaries of various forms, be they physical, territorial, or related to power structures. Knowledge was exceedingly important to the Holocaust's unfolding. The pathways by which perpetrators were able to inflict violence, the choices that bystanders made when deciding whether and how to act, and the options that victims had (or did not have) for survival often hinged on the sharing and application of knowledge. Further, the history of the Holocaust is inherently transnational, transregional, and transcultural. Thus, it becomes increasingly tenable to think of Holocaust history as one of knowledge being exchanged across boundaries — of knowledge on the move.

Employing knowledge movement as a lens through which we can better understand the mechanisms of the Holocaust falls in line with current research trends. It encourages an examination of history from below and directs the historian toward the experiences of subaltern groups who may not have left behind traditional forms of documentation, or who may not have had access to readily available communication methods. This conceptualization allows for a broad and creative exploration of what constitutes "knowledge": a rumor, a song, a passport, or a memory object may all be important and exchangeable forms of knowledge in the history of the Holocaust. Further, this approach promotes an understanding of subaltern and victim pluralism and heterogeneity, as knowledge was exchanged in distinct ways by and among members of different groups. It also encourages the exploration of human interconnectedness through information networks in local, regional, and transnational settings, and supports the study of victims', bystanders', and perpetrators' day-to-day experiences of producing and exchanging knowledge. These critical new methodological and theoretical approaches were seen in the six panels and sixteen papers that were presented throughout the two-day workshop.

The first panel, chaired by Sören Urbansky, focused on how Jews transmitted knowledge to fellow Jews during and after the Holocaust. Christine Schmidt and Dan Stone shared their research on Holocaust-era letters found in the collections of London's Wiener Holocaust Library, which explored how letters were used not only to transmit but also to produce knowledge about the Holocaust, and introduced to the workshop a helpful discussion of "information" versus "knowledge" — a conceptual debate that remained a common thread throughout the workshop's six panels. Laurien Vastenhout presented research on the transnational exchange of knowledge between Jewish councils in occupied Western Europe. She focused on the *Association des Juifs en Belgique's* role as an interlocutor that transmitted information about Belgian Jews to concerned family members and friends abroad, provided aid to arrested individuals, and acquired knowledge about the fate of Jews deported to Eastern Europe. Laura Hilton explored the liminal space between true and false knowledge and its deliberate or unintended transmission in her paper on Jews and rumor culture in postwar Germany. She showed how conspiracy theories involving Jews continued to figure into rumors spread by non-Jewish Germans — primarily by individuals hoping to distance themselves from, or implicate Jews in, the atrocities of the Second World War — in the years immediately following the Shoah.

The second panel, chaired by Sarah Ernst, looked at different cases of informal knowledge distribution. Felix Berge shared his research on how Holocaust knowledge was passed via informal communication methods among members of German majority society during the Second World War. Helena Huhak and Andras Szecsenyi presented on the exchange of knowledge in Bergen Belsen's Hungarian Camp among the "exchange Jews" of the Kasztner action (a Hungarian Zionist rescue operation that involved negotiations with the SS) and how it impacted the mood, activities, and narratives shared by those involved. Jan Lanicek's paper moved beyond

traditional understandings of Holocaust geographies to show how knowledge was transmitted through family networks between Australia and Europe. Despite the Australian government's ban on correspondence with individuals in enemy territories, informal family networks, as well as formal aid networks, made it possible for individuals in Australia to receive important information about loved ones and the realities of the war in Europe.

Chaired by Alexia Orengo Green, the third panel focused on the transnational exchange of knowledge during and after the Holocaust. Katarzyna Person presented her research on the search for retribution among Polish Jews in the post-war period and showed that survivors often relied on trans-territorial and transnational information networks to seek out and enact revenge on perpetrators. Examining Sephardi immigrants in wartime France, Robin Buller's paper conceptualized passports and citizenship as forms of knowledge. These knowledge documents could, in different ways and at different stages of the war, be used by perpetrators to target victims or by victims to evade arrest through consular intervention and cross-border escape.

Wolf Gruner moderated the fourth panel, which discussed art as one form of knowledge production and communication. By introducing various musical pieces composed by prisoners from different concentration camps, Anintida Mukherjee explored how music helped camp prisoners persevere and how a musicological examination of the Holocaust can reveal to historians new details about prisoners' responses, interpretations, and experiences. She showed how studying musical compositions can lead to a better understanding of the function music played as a form of knowledge, especially in reconstructing emotional memories after the Shoah. Ella Falldorf focused on the circulation of visual knowledge by examining various artist-inmates and artist-survivors of Buchenwald. By exploring the creative efforts of different

artists and attempts to control the visual imagery of concentration camps during and after the war, she centered Buchenwald as a place of wartime and postwar agency for artist victims of the Nazis.

The fifth panel, chaired by Paul Lerner, explored various forms of knowledge production from below. Paula Chan presented her research on Soviet Jewish survivors' interactions with the Extraordinary State Commission — an agency dedicated to investigating Nazi crimes on Soviet soil — showing how Jewish engagement shaped the nature and scope of the Commission's work. Pointing to the overlapping interests of Holocaust survivors and Stalin's government, she argued that this relationship enabled the Soviet state to reestablish and retain control for another four decades, until long after the fragile alliance between survivors and the state disintegrated. Izabela Paszko spoke about informal knowledge circulation concerning mass killings and the fate of deported Jews and Poles in occupied Poland. Focusing on the example of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, she brought new perspectives to our understanding of the social aspects of the Holocaust by highlighting the propagandistic potentials of rumors as well as questioning the extent to which victims believed rumors about atrocities. Caroline Mezger presented her research on forced migrants as agents of Holocaust knowledge during the Second World War through a comparative analysis of three local case studies in South Tyrol, Vienna, and Yugoslavia. By analyzing subversive material from the forced migrants as well as state agents, she showed how different groups of displaced people employed similar informal communicative strategies to negotiate their displacement.

The sixth and final panel examined knowledge as a form of agency. Centered around survivor and refugee networks during and after the Shoah, it was chaired by Barnabas Balint. Jonathan Lanz examined how individual survivors of the Theresienstadt Family Camp, a subsection of the Auschwitz

II-Birkenau complex, were able to write the history of their experiences through the maintenance of a postwar global survivor network. The role and function of transnational *landsmanshaftn* (Jewish hometown associations) networks during and after the Shoah was discussed by Anne-Christin Klotz. She pointed to the crucial role of connections between people from the same places to surviving wartime and post-war environments. Tamara Gleason Freidberg analyzed the role antifascist Yiddish speakers played in disseminating news about the Shoah in Spanish by integrating into various antifascist groups in Mexico City. She showed how they were part of broader non-Jewish antifascist groups as well as local Yiddish organizations, and functioned as translators and transmitters of subversive information.

In a final roundtable discussion, led by Wolf Gruner, participants reflected on the themes and trends that were brought to light by the workshop's focus on knowledge movement during the Holocaust. The presented research clarified that the definition of knowledge depends heavily on historical contexts, and that knowledge can take on various forms and fulfill multiple functions in different settings. Thus, knowledge can be built, constructed, transmitted, narrated, documented, and imagined but it can also be resituated and perceived. Furthermore, it can show up as art, a form of resistance, or a rumor. Knowledge can also empower, limit, or harm an individual. As this workshop showed, the methodological approaches to migrant history and the history of knowledge help open up new research questions and methods in Holocaust Studies.

Having a conference on information networks during World War II in Los Angeles during a time of war and mass displacement in Eastern Europe felt strangely removed from contemporary realities. However, it also underscored that the workshop's topics are now more relevant than ever. Indeed, it became clear that many of the issues that plague society

and that threaten global peace at this moment were echoed in the historical subjects presented, such as fake news, information exchange between authorities and civil society, the role of migrants and refugees in making knowledge, knowledge accessibility, and the potency of knowledge networks.

**Robin Buller and Anne-Christin Klotz**  
(GHI Washington, Pacific Office Berkeley)



## Not Mere Objects: Uncovering Children's Subjectivities in Migration

Virtual Conference, held May 16–17, 2022. Co-sponsored by the GHI Washington, the Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies, Dresden, the German Research Foundation (DFG), and the Free State of Saxony. Conveners: Sheer Ganor (University of Minnesota), Bettina Hitzer (Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies, Dresden), Friederike Kind-Kovács (Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies, Dresden), Swen Steinberg (GHI Washington). Participants: Mehrunnisa Ali (Ryerson University), Kimberly Cheng (New York University), Olga Gnydiuk (Central European University, Vienna), Simone Laqua-O'Donnell (University of Birmingham), Rich Lee (University of Minnesota), Magali Michelet (University of Neuchâtel), Chelsea Shields (University of California, Irvine), Kay Tisdall (University of Edinburgh), John Wall (Rutgers University).

Children's subjectivities in migration were the topic of the third workshop of the international standing working group "In search of the Migrant Child." Organized by Sheer Ganor, Bettina Hitzer, Friederike Kind-Kovács and Swen Steinberg, the workshop discussed different methodological approaches to and historical case studies of children's subjectivities. As the organizers stated, this focus was neglected for a long time, as administrative processes of migration have envisaged child migrants as governed objects and shaped the sources of historical research in that regard.

In his opening remarks Swen Steinberg highlighted that the aim of the organizers was to make the agency of young migrants the focus of discussion, to learn more about dif-

ferent (interdisciplinary) definitions of subjectivity and how children's voices are represented in different historical sources. The workshop began with a roundtable discussion that offered a wide range of interdisciplinary perspectives on children's subjectivities. Mehrunnisa Ali, Early Childhood Studies specialist, presented a documentary film project with migrant and refugee children from Syria in Canada. Listening to these children created new knowledge about migrant families by focusing on children's perspectives on family situations and family roles as well as school and society instead of reducing them to "traumatized beings." Ali emphasized the importance to reach out and actively integrate migrant children into societies due to underlying societal power structures. Psychologist Rich Lee gave insights into his long-term psychological research on adoptive families and pro adoptive narratives regarding Korean adoptees, whose voices have long been neglected in research. With a more critical lens, Lee pointed to the changing perspectives of individuals in long term studies from children to youth, adults, and becoming or being parents. Addressing new and more critical topics like racism, cultural issues and feelings of loss discussed by the adoptees in his research, he came to the conclusion that parents and adopted children tend to avoid speaking about negative aspects of adoption, as well as negative feelings regarding the meaning of names, sexualization and objectification of birth families. This emphasizes the importance of including adoptee perspectives in research for a more balanced view on adoption.

Kay Tisdall built on this point from a social and political science perspective when speaking about her applied research in childhood studies and on children's human rights. She encouraged researchers to see children as social actors instead of focusing on their socially constructed immaturity. Because children are socially constructed as ideally being in their family or in schools, children out of this context, for example in the context of migration, are something

policy and institutions tend to struggle with. Therefore, Tisdall pleaded for the active participation of children in such contexts and the recognition of their rights as essential to understand children as social actors. Subsequently, the political ethicist John Wall introduced the concept of “childism,” similar to feminism, which grew out of Childhood Studies to study children’s agency and subjective experience. As he explained, the lens of childism enables the deconstruction of adulthood, that often covers children’s experiences. This helps to make such individual experiences and children’s perspectives visible. By using the example of court decisions on migration, Wall explained that the concept of “best interest” is often interpreted from the adult’s point of view, which can lead to false protectionism. Wall suggested that courts should listen actively to children and learn from their expertise as well as reflect their own norms and views. The implementation of childism could help to rearrange borders and power structures between children and adults.

In the discussion that followed the roundtable presentations, chaired by Sheer Ganor, several challenges were emphasized for scholars trying to access migrant children’s subjectivities. In general, it is difficult to approach children (which often leads to small samples), and the focus on adult approval and affirmation influences their behavior. Particularly in legal systems, children are silenced and frequently aware of what they should or shouldn’t talk about. Therefore, research should not only be focused on agency and voices alone, but also on silences – to gain a more comprehensive view. Further, the potential of (critical) theory in the field of childhood and adoption studies as well as different approaches to uncover children’s subjectivities and their entanglement as beings in the context of their social and cultural environment have been discussed. Overall, the interdisciplinary roundtable discussion demonstrated how similar the approaches as well as challenges in researching children’s subjectivities are

across a range of fields and disciplines. This underlines the importance and potential of interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration in the field of childhood and migration studies from a historical perspective.

The workshop's first regular panel, moderated by Bettina Hitzer, mirrored these manifold perspectives on children and their subjectivities. Following the concept of the first and second workshop of the "In Search of the Migrant Child" series, the speakers focused on individual primary sources. Simone Laqua-O'Donnell presented about missionary children and the construction of childhood, represented in a letter by a thirteen-year-old girl to her parents who were missionaries for the Basel Mission in India. Because missionary children were sent to boarding schools for education, correspondence was their only contact to family members for years. Although shaped by epistolary conventions as well as the social and cultural expectations of her missionary background, short passages can be identified where changes in words, tone and narratives suggest glimpses on personal reflections, as Laqua-O'Donnell suggested. The subsequent presentation by Chelsea Shields analyzed a questionnaire from social science research about youth and futurity in the Caribbean. This source is an example for many similar studies about the "new man" and society in the Caribbean in the 1960s, where children were imagined as actors in a decolonized future. Quite unusually, the participating children were asked about their own autobiography of the future. The results revealed their values, their material and romantic desires, family ideas and (changing) family structures, but also how they had been shaped by patriotic and social narratives of personal fulfillment or nationalist ideas in private life. However, Shields critically questioned the tensions between the presented subjectivities and the overall frame of the survey, constructed by adults and influenced by *zeitgeist*. The overarching questions what such letters or questionnaires reveal about the children and how a comparison with sim-

ilar sources can help to trace down personal perspectives was discussed after the two presentations as well as ways to extract their voices and interpret their silences to identify different forms of subjectivities.

Bettina Hitzer opened the second workshop day with introductory remarks that called attention to three points. First, focusing on children's subjectivities draws attention to children as vulnerable beings. Nevertheless, they possess knowledge and should be heard like adults, thus bringing together conflicting ideas and notions. As Ali highlighted in the opening roundtable, children are constantly looking for adults' approval, which calls into question whether they are as independent as we would like them to be. Second, Hitzer called for a distinction between children's subjectivities and their voices because subjectivities can be superimposed by conventions, norms, and practices of the distinct document genre, situation, and the relationship of the person addressed. Therefore, attention should be paid to these influences, and the relationality of documents, for example in comparison with other sources of the same child or other children at the time. Third, children are often firmly linked to the future. In addition to their reactions to the expectations of adults, we can also ask for their dreams, fantasies, and desires. This led to the question whether there are differences in children's and adults' voices in sources and what impact this has on our understanding of them as social beings influenced by their environment.

In the workshop's second panel, chaired by Sheer Ganor, Friederike Kind-Kovács presented a short autobiography of a Hungarian girl and her narrative of migration during the First World War. The text originated from a collection of 50 children's autobiographies to accompany postwar fundraising campaigns. Guided by the question of how war and migration affected this child's life, the source contains reflections on childhood, essentializes impressions of the

past, and presents the concerns, norms, and challenges of her life. Drawing on the phenomena of growing up too fast in migration, the division between the notions of an idealized childhood and life in migration afterwards emerges in this source. Kind-Kovács cautioned that children were asked by adults to write for a purpose, and that the text went through editing, translation, and selection processes. From a different perspective, Olga Gnydiuk presented reflections on refugee children's subjectivity in humanitarian relief and rehabilitation processes after the Second World War. Her source, a letter from a search and tracing officer of the International Refugee Organization that was part of a case file, reports on a child but doesn't provide access to the child's voice itself. However, Gnydiuk argued, the girl's actions as outlined in the document could point to her subjectivity: the refugee girl refused to accept the organization's plans for her future and presented her own perspective. The discussion of this panel was focused on the impact of translation and layers of editing for the identification of children's voices in migration contexts. This led to an insightful debate about fundamental methodological questions: if and how did (and do) children's voices differ from adults? How can children's subjectivities be traced, even if their voices are not passed down? And to which extent did migration (and war) influence the reflections on and narrations of childhood?

In the third and final panel, chaired by Swen Steinberg, Magali Michelet offered insights into oral history interviews with so-called "Wardrobe Children" – migrant children hidden in apartments – from migrant families in Switzerland and the reconstruction of their experiences through sensory experiences. Michelet used the description of atmosphere and children's capacities of observation to learn more about the daily life of (illegal) migrant children and their families. The visual and auditory memories make it possible to detect family and migration history other than the "success

stories”; such memories uncover the repercussions of immigrant policies and discrimination migrant parents often tried to hide from children. Kimberly Cheng presented a different approach to oral history interviews by the example of Jewish refugees in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps as part of her study on the relationship between Jewish refugees and their Chinese neighbors in Shanghai during the 1930s and 40s. As the city had been divided by foreign forces, its semi-colonial nature shaped the experience of Jewish refugees, who often came there as children or teenagers fleeing from Europe. With two former refugees recollecting their perspectives on the paramilitary organization, the sources provided insights into the knowledge of young people about social institutions as well as the awareness of race, hierarchies, and segregation policies in the interactions between European and Chinese people. The questions of how to conceptualize teenagers and the impact of age in general were the focus of discussion following the panel. The use of sensory experiences in analysis was another widely debated point. Even if historians may find it challenging at times to make sense of a childhood sensory memory, it should be viewed as a perspective on how children experience and memorize a situation differently than adults – and differently than an adult would expect it.

In her concluding remarks, Friederike Kind-Kovács underlined the fundamental effects of migration on children and the different forms of subjectivities researchers need to be aware of. The workshop demonstrated this complexity of children’s subjectivities and how they are shaped by social environments. This emphasizes the necessity of including power structures and the influence of adult norms when researching children as actors and uncovering their voices and expressions. In the final discussion, the usefulness of the concept of children’s subjectivities for further research was unanimously agreed on. Nevertheless, more work on definitions is needed, especially regarding its relation to voice, agency

and identity, and how to identify and analyze silences. This discussion was continued at the conference “Entangled Histories of Childhood Across Borders,” convened at the Pacific Office of the German Historical Institute Washington at UC Berkeley on September 19–21, 2022.

**Julia Reus**  
(Ruhr-University Bochum)



# Datafication in the Historical Humanities: Reconsidering Traditional Understandings of Sources and Data

International Conference and Workshop at the German Historical Institute Washington, June 2-4, 2022, co-sponsored by the GHI, the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C<sup>2</sup>DH), the Chair of Digital History at Humboldt University of Berlin (HUB), the Consortium Initiative NFDI4Memory, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM), and Stanford University, Department of History. Made possible by grants from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and the Friends of the GHI. Conveners: Daniel Burckhardt (GHI Washington), Andreas Fickers (C<sup>2</sup>DH), Zephyr Frank (Stanford University), Torsten Hiltmann (HUB), Jana Keck (GHI Washington), Mills Kelly (RRCHNM), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), and Atiba Pertilla (GHI Washington). Participants: Cécile Armand (Aix-Marseille University); Jeremy Auguste (Aix-Marseille University); Francesco Beretta (Université de Lyon); Laura Brannan (George Mason University); Heiko Brendel (University of Passau); Megan Brett (George Mason University); Peter Bushell (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa); Kim Dresel (Arolsen Archives); Georg Fertig (University of Halle-Wittenberg); Meghan Ferriter (Library of Congress Labs); Catherine Foley (Michigan State University); Thora Hagen (University of Würzburg); Vanessa Hanneschlaeger (German Literature Archive Marbach); Walter Hawthorne (Michigan State University); Sarah Hendriks (Trinity College Dublin, The National Archives Kew); Christian Henriot (Aix-Marseille University); Katharina Hering (GHI Washington); Jörg Hörnschemeyer (GHI Rome); Dan Howlett (George Mason University); Pim Huijnen (Utrecht University); Nina Janz (Luxem-

bourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C<sup>2</sup>DH)); Helena Jaskov (University of Luxemburg); Patrick Jentsch (University of Bielefeld); David Knecht (KleioLab GmbH); Emily Kuehbauch (GHI Washington); Jeremy Land (University of Helsinki); Darren Layne (The Jacobite Database of 1745); Zoe LeBlanc (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign); Benjamin Lee (University of Washington); Sharon Leon (Michigan State University); Yunxin Li (Stanford University); Katherine McDonough (The Alan Turing Institute); Katharina Menschick (Arolsen Archives); Katrin Moeller (University of Halle-Wittenberg); Laura Niewöhner (University of Bielefeld); Jessica Otis (George Mason University); Clemente Penna (Mecila - Maria Sibylla Merian Center Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America); Eva Pfanzelter (University of Innsbruck); Kristina Poznan (Michigan State University); Martin Schmitt (Technical University Darmstadt); Philipp Schneider (Humboldt-University of Berlin); Valentin Schneider (National Hellenic Research Foundation Athens Greece); Jennifer Serventi (National Endowment for Humanities); Alice Sheill (Michigan State University); Abigail Shell (Library of Congress Labs); Daniil Skorinkin (University of Potsdam); Daniel Stracke (University of Münster); Greta Swain (George Mason University); Alina Volynskaya (EPFL); Joëlle Weis (University of Trier); Daryle Williams (University of California, Riverside); Andreas Witt (University of Cologne & IDS Mannheim).

After a COVID-related delay, the Fifth Annual GHI Conference on Digital Humanities and Digital History took place in a new hybrid format which for the first time combined in-person sessions at the institute with keynotes, workshops, and a poster session opened up to remote participants and presenters.

After Simone Lässig's welcoming remarks, the conference started with Zoe LeBlanc's keynote presentation "Table for One: Anecdotes on the Cultures and Challenges of Data

(-fication) for Historians.” Inspired by her 2017 viral tweet, which asked if you can do Digital History as an individual, she shed light on what datafication can look like for an individual scholar. Revisiting her initial question, LeBlanc stated that collaboration is often seen as a crucial factor for datafication, but it is unequally distributed and restricted to those lacking the necessary resources. She therefore emphasized that datasets for data-driven research need a new set of scholarly practices and interpretative frameworks in order to enable individual researchers without such means to do meaningful work.

Following a block of two parallel hands-on workshops, the first panel on “Merging Datasets from Different Archives” underlined the broad range of building and analyzing digital archives featuring both highly collaborative endeavors as well as work carried out by one or two researchers only. Andreas Witt presented the highly collaborative “Encyc-Net” which unites 22 German reference works from the early eighteenth to the early twentieth century. The goal is to use machine learning techniques in order to build a knowledge graph on this corpus. By extracting, matching and disambiguating the entries among the different works, it should be possible to analyze reflections of conventional knowledge both over time as well as between general and more specialized encyclopedias. Yunxin Li used both dynastic histories as well as the Database of Han Officials to investigate elite social networks and geographic mobility. “Network analysis tells us something old and something new”: while earlier research recognized that groupings of influential scholars existed, network analysis now makes it possible to determine which scholars were influential. But she also cautioned that statistical observations more often reflect the structure of sources than an actual historical change. Jeremy Land presented his initial reflections and a roadmap on how to use the so-called “Bill of Ladings” to reconstruct, together with Werner Scheltjens, eighteenth-century colonial American

merchant networks from scratch. Since every bill was issued in three copies (merchant, captain, receiver), they were spread all over the globe and we find them already digitized in numerous archives. All three presentations underscored the potential of the digital to break through the traditional boundaries of a single book or archive. Aggregated corpora and collections are essential for identifying connections and trends that would otherwise be missed.

The first conference day concluded with the second panel on “How to Deal with Biased or Incomplete Data(sets)?” guided by Meghan Ferriter. It discussed how to write history on the basis of fragmented sources. Based on different text corpora, Martin Schmitt combined geographic, climatic, and soil data to follow the dispersal of seeds throughout the nineteenth century and discussed various data-driven possibilities to reconnect forestry practices long believed to be mostly self-contained. Philipp Schneider showed the potential of representing graphical sources like murals explicitly through data models on the basis of the Open World Assumption. The discussion also illustrated the potential and constraints of modeling gaps in datasets. Making the vague state of source material explicit is a first step in avoiding wrong conclusions, for example in social network analysis, and provides a starting point to the question how to make such gaps productive.

The next morning started with the second keynote, “What’s in a Footnote? Datafication and the Consequences for Quality Control in Historical Scholarship,” by Pim Huijnen. In the last couple of years, the debate on replicability, initiated in psychology and medicine a decade ago, reached publications in the Digital Humanities and led to questions about the validity of the statistical (and computational) methods used to promote far-reaching conclusions. By tracing the history of a “fact” from Dutch energy history through multiple citations, Huijnen showed that traditional humanities

scholarship is prone to become a victim of a game of Chinese Whispers, no matter how many footnotes are placed. Despite such weaknesses, he sees little sense in pushing humanities scholarship towards formulating clear hypotheses based on quantitative data, which can then be tested. Instead, there is a need to conceptualize “reproducibility” in the context of historical research, where questions on how things changed are as important as a provable hypothesis on why they changed. Rather than searching for mistakes (“maximal reproducibility”), we should focus on making the implicit more explicit (“minimal reproducibility”).

Panel III presented “Case Studies for Research Data Management in the Historical Humanities.” Francesco Beretta underlined the importance of improving the reuse of research data in the historical sciences, which he characterizes as good quality information with reliable provenance. To make this information truly interoperable, it needs to be linked against an authority file and modeled according to an ontology, a shared conceptualization across a certain domain of interest. David Knecht presented Geovistory, a browser-based research environment that enables users unfamiliar with the at times daunting concepts of the Semantic Web to create, enhance, and share properly structured research data. Darren Scott Layne illustrated such conceptual steps through “The Jacobite Database of 1745,” which provides high quality prosopographical entries sourced from archival records. Valentin Schneider presented the scope and challenges of the German Occupation Database. In addition to properly datifying the historical records, the project aims to display the dynamics of war operations in space and time and finding adequate representations of military and paramilitary units’ cruel impact on the daily life of the local population in Greece between 1941-1944/45. Working with predefined ontologies and off the shelf software promise to greatly simplify data management and reuse. But they won’t provide an easy bridge across different conceptualizations, such as an

actor-centered approach versus one making heavy use of a historical geographic information system.

Panel IV, entitled “Turning Analog Into Digital Data,” touched upon opportunities for transregional research. In his talk, Daniil Skorinkin pointed out that the largest prosopographical databases for twentieth-century Russia centered on the First and Second World Wars and the Stalin era repressions. They provide important overlaps (e.g. in people mentioned) for which record linkage is missing. In his project, a heterogeneous team of researchers aims to create a single data pool out of the different databases aligning as well as unifying personal data fields. Among others, the following discussion addressed the challenges of these tasks, such as the different spellings of cities and villages in the datasets. Clemente Penna and Eva Pfanzelter presented different transregional approaches. Penna introduced a database of Brazilian bills of exchange and stated, since the Brazilian bills were not much different from those in other commercial centers, the database could later incorporate legal and notarial records from other regions, such as England, the United States, Africa, and Latin America. Pfanzelter reflected on the workflow of “ReMigra”, a project that studies the return migration in South Tyrol after the Second World War. An interdisciplinary team elaborated a reusable datafication workflow, which starts with digitization and organization and is characterized by the focus on data as well as on process orientation as well as critical reflections. The discussion that followed focused largely on the difference between the political and economic reasons for remigration. While this aspect of migration is still understudied, digital history shows great potential to fill this gap.

The fifth panel on “Research with the Public: Crowdsourced Datafication” chaired by Atiba Pertilla challenged potentials and limits of crowdsourced datafication, deliberating the impact on mechanisms of agency along three papers. Katrin Moeller and Georg Fertig analyzed the situation of

female employment-based datasets created by individual citizen scientists. They demonstrated an approach that allows re-use of data in a way that is different from its original context as written sources. By this, new methods of statistical data analysis reshape questions of emancipation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in phases of social crisis. Kim Dresel and Katharina Menschick linked the principal questions of the panel to the work of online archives cooperating directly with volunteers. At Arolsen archives, crowd-sourcing methods are implemented in order to index documents of the Shoah and minorities who had suffered Nazi persecution. Having new participants exploring sources also raised a range of ethical questions on how and by whom the metadata should be generated. The panel concluded with Abby Shelton's presentation, who gave insights into the institutional proceedings at the Library of Congress mobilizing volunteers to contribute to digital collections. This broadened the ethical discussion to the triangular relation of historians, sources and volunteers, asking which role the latter in their role as participants should take within the negotiations on the definition of meaningful content.

The third day started with the presentation and discussion of the posters, available at <https://datafication.hypotheses.org/poster>. The break-out rooms on Zoom provided a great environment for in-depth discussion on a one-on-one basis or within small groups. It was followed by a second session of three workshops, which again could be attended on-site or remotely.

After the lunch break, Daniel Stracke, Sharon Leon, and Peter Bushell introduced their projects, all of which represent different "Methodologies of Datafication" in panel VI. The aim of the "European Historic Towns Atlases," a long term project presented by Stracke, is an edition of cartographic and iconographic sources for the reconstruction of the historical topography of pre-modern urban spaces. Like

other presenters, Stracke pointed out the project's need to look for future ways to improve the workflow as well as the goal to set new standards. Leon talked about the project "On These Grounds: Slavery and the University" and her interdisciplinary team's work realizing an event-based ontology. The following discussion covered the ongoing debate on the reparation for descendants of enslaved people by Georgetown University and the future incorporation of the data into *enslaved.org*, the linked open data platform presented above. Her talk was followed by Bushell's presentation on the "War Crimes Documentation Initiative" about World War II-era war crimes committed by the Japanese in the Asia-Pacific region. He highlighted the issue of making data accessible to people who are not very familiar with datafication.

Elizabeth Murice Alexander chaired the final panel on "How to Create Sustainable Digital Projects." Vanessa Hanneschläger began by exemplifying the complications of retaining data that was formerly collected in a self-made database and not even modeled according to standardized data formats. The discussion faced the problems of evolving data standards and research methods and tried to shape concrete steps for a conversion of a rich data collection into a new digital edition. An honest insight into the pitfalls of developing and realizing data projects was provided by Joëlle Weis, who opened the floor to a discussion about how to handle discrepancy in the final stage of digital projects and how to make these experiences useful in regard to future projects. Helena Jaskov closed the panel with a demonstration of the data orchestration engine *Kiara*, an environment for supporting users in re-using tried and tested data as well as helping them to manage their own research data and its ongoing expansion with newly added metadata. Despite the prominent position of the "experimental" in the discourse on the Digital Humanities, talking publically about dead ends and failure is still a rare exception, which was greatly appreciated.



The three intensive conference and workshop days were summarized by Andreas Fickers in his final remarks. Datafication is a complex process that is deeply affecting our discipline. Datafication is about re- and co-constructing epistemic objects, and the models and technologies used to construct them intervene directly with our research. While this is still very much work in progress, we can clearly identify the research data thus created as a boundary object, interpreted in very different ways, for example, in library science, information technology or in the humanities.

Datafication means transformations, formatting, and these forms matter. Datafication, despite the rise of machine learning, is, at least in the historical humanities, still a mostly manual, laborious, often frustrating task prone to failure. But it is mostly collaborative work, which moves us away from “lonely research” and points to new ways of doing history, which is co-designed and co-produced. Labor always has a socio-economic component and leads to questions, such as specifying the return on investment and the riskiness of such endeavors. Epistemic virtues like trust, carefulness but also courage, willingness and honesty are important aspects to our digital knowledge co-production and will therefore stand at the center of the next Digital History conference planned for the spring of 2024, for the first time not at the GHI but in Luxembourg.

**Daniel Burckhardt,**  
(GHI Washington)

**Tim Feind**  
(Universität Wien)

**Lara Raabe**  
(Universität Heidelberg)

## **27th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century German History**

Seminar held at the GHI and at Georgetown University, June 14–17, 2022. Co-organized by the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI) and the BMW Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University. Conveners: Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University), Richard F. Wetzell (GHI). Faculty mentors: Martin Geyer (Ludwig Maximilians-University of Munich), Karrin Hanshew (Michigan State University), Hedwig Richter (Bundeswehr University Munich), Paul Steege (Villanova University). Participants: Pauli Aro (European University Institute in Florence); Malte Beeker (Humboldt University of Berlin); Verena Bunkus (University of Erfurt); Arnab Dutta (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen); Marlene Friedrich (University of Bochum); Rory Hanna (University of Sheffield); Clemens Huemerlehner (University of Freiburg); Axel-Wolfgang Kahl (University of Potsdam); Elena Kiesel (University of Erfurt); David Korsuize (University of Cologne); Carolin Liebisch-Gümuş (GHI Washington); Lea Münch (Université de Strasbourg); Colton Ochsner (University of Missouri); Talitta Reitz (Ludwig Maximilians-University of Munich); Yanara Schmacks (City University of New York); Paul Schacher (University of Leipzig); Ben van Zee (University of Chicago).

The 27th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar in German History was held in person at the GHI and at Georgetown University from June 14 – June 17, 2022. This year it included doctoral students from universities in the United States, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, France, and Italy.

The seminar's first panel, chaired by Richard Wetzell, commenced with comments by Axel-Wolfgang Kahl and Lea Münch. The papers submitted by Paul Schacher and Ben van Zee both dealt with German history in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century. Schacher's dissertation examined the manifold ways in which the concept of "order" structured ways of organizing social life in the Kaiserreich—from policing to family and socialist politics. Van Zee's work compared German and Polish "emigrant colonialism" from the 1880s to the 1940s — a type of emigration, he argued, that was intimately linked to ideas and practices of colonial expansion, including in the period after 1918. The chapter he presented focused on German immigrants in Brazil who helped to expand the realm of what was considered "colonial space." The discussion focused on questions of German peculiarity and the nuances of writing the social history of the Kaiserreich.

The second panel, which was chaired by Anna von der Goltz and whose papers were introduced by Paul Schacher and Pauli Aro, dealt with the history of universities, student activism, and historical research in the first two decades of the Federal Republic. Rory Hanna's paper looked at West German student protests against Nazi filmmaker Veit Harlan in the early 1950s. These protests, Hanna argued, were carried by students from across the political spectrum who advanced a powerful critique of continuities between the Third Reich and the new West German state. The paper challenged former activists' assertions of an essential distinction between their "rational" activism and the emotional spontaneity of "1968." Marlene Friedrich shared a chapter from her larger dissertation project on the career of prominent postwar historian Hans Mommsen. The chapter honed in on Mommsen's years at the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich in the early 1960s to shed light on his academic socialization and to tease out how his engagement with the history of National Socialism took shape. The lively discussion centered

on how to deal with (generational) narratives advanced by the protagonists of contemporary history, the importance of gender and masculinity in shaping discourses and behaviors, and the role of emotions in the democratization of Germany after 1945.

The papers of the third panel, which was chaired by Carolin Liebisch Gümüs, were introduced by Elena Kiesel and Colton Ochsner. Arnab Dutta and Pauli Aro approached the history of German nationalism from two unusual and fresh perspectives. Dutta's paper, an extract from his broader dissertation on the transnational reception of the ideas of Germandom in British Bengal, analyzed *Kultur* as a key category in German-Bengali entanglements in the interwar years. He showed how certain racial and ethno-linguistic parameters attached to an essentially German debate around *Kultur*-versus-civilization redefined Bengali political understandings of caste, nation and culture. Aro's paper offered a reinterpretation of the so-called *Landsmannschaften* that are more commonly associated with expellee politics in the years after 1945. Shifting the focus away from expellee claims in the postwar decades, Aro focused on the welfare activism of interwar *Landsmannschaften* in Vienna. Banat Swabian activists in the Austrian capital exemplified nationalist hopes to create increased compatriot consciousness and solidify the community on the inside. The discussion revolved around the project of "provincializing" European history and the intricacies of the nationalist project in the interwar period.

The first panel of the Thursday, which took place at Georgetown University in a conference room overlooking the Potomac River and was chaired by Hedwig Richter, was introduced by Clemens Huemerlehner and Yanara Schnacks. The papers by Talitta Reitz and Colton Ochsner were both interdisciplinary and each dealt with the modernity of the

late Kaiserreich and interwar Weimar Republic. Reitz's larger study in the environmental humanities compared the emerging cycling cultures in Portland, Oregon, and Munich from the second half of the nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth century. Research in the social sciences suggests that cycling cultures matter more than infrastructure for getting people to use bikes — a major present-day environmental policy goal in many cities. However, cycling cultures do not emerge overnight; they have a history — a subject that Reitz tackles in her dissertation with a clear eye toward informing present-day debates and practices. Ochsner's paper took participants on a deep dive into Weimar-era Expressionist films. He argued that Expressionist cinema — including famous films such as Fritz Lang's *Das Testament des Dr Marbuse* — followed a hitherto overlooked "occult blueprint" that shaped its visual language and narrative structure. The discussion focused on the promises and perils of doing interdisciplinary work, the relationship between films and their audiences, and the social history of early bicycle use in the United States and Germany.

Thursday's second panel, chaired by Paul Steege and expertly introduced and contextualized by Marlene Friedrich and Rory Hanna, turned the participants' focus to the lives of Nazi victims and perpetrators. Lea Münch, a trained physician and historian, studied thousands of psychiatric patient files from Straßburg in the early 1940s to write a history of Nazi medicine "from below." Her dissertation, from which she introduced a chapter that focused on the story of one particular individual, examines the broader experiential history of psychiatric patients under Nazi rule. Malte Beeker's paper also zoomed in on one specific case to examine the history of Nazi perpetrators and what often amounted to their rehabilitation after 1945. The chapter under discussion examined the 1960s' legal proceedings against one Rudolf Jänisch, who had been a key official in the Reich Security Main Office. Beeker shed light on why Jänisch was merely

treated as a “technical aide” and not prosecuted as the key player in the administration of the Holocaust that he was. The lively discussion centered around the multidirectional linkages between legal proceedings and trajectories of historical research as well as the relationship between individual cases and broader social histories.

Friday’s first panel, on which Talitta Reitz and Malte Beeker served as commentators and which Anna von der Goltz chaired, took participants back into the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Verena Bunkus examined the power of maps not just to *reflect* spatial realities but to *create* new allegiances and perceptions. Zooming in on one particularly important and popular map by Paul Langhans that depicted the province of Posen and Western Prussia, she showed how ethnographic knowledge was made, developed, and visualized between the 1890s and the end of the First World War. David Korsuize’s essay examined the diplomatic activities of Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse-Darmstadt during the Wilhelmine Period. He argued that, despite the public prominence and personal regiment of Wilhelm II, members of the German nobility continued to play a vital role in German diplomatic culture after 1870/1. The commentators urged both paper writers — and indeed TDS participants on the whole — to be even bolder and clearer about advancing their arguments and historiographical contributions.

The seminar’s penultimate panel, introduced by Ben van Zee and Verena Bunkus and chaired by Karrin Hanshew, focused on German-German history in the 1970s and 1980s. Elena Kiesel examined the phenomenon of “voluntarism” under the conditions of a dictatorship. Her paper took a close look at the East German *Neuerer* movement, which was modelled on the Soviet Stakhanovites. The movement was revived under Erich Honecker in an attempt to create new enthusiasm for the construction of socialism and to forge the new socialist person. Her research demonstrated, however, that

the movement could not escape the internal contradictions of the regime. Yanara Schmacks's work traced the changing conceptions of maternalism and motherhood in the West German women's movement of the 1970s and 1980s. From the mid-1970s onward, motherhood became sensualized, eroticized, and increasingly sexualized. After the Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986, a growing ecofeminist strand of the movement also began to reimagine and essentialize motherhood as tightly bound to nature and "life." The discussion revolved around the trajectories of this reinvented maternalism, "black-green" convergence from the 1980s onward, the agency of ordinary people under socialism, and the new comparative histories of dictatorship and democracy.

The papers of the seminar's final panel, with comments by Arnab Dutta and David Korsuize and chaired by Martin Geyer, dealt with economic, political, and social transformation in German history after 1945 and 1989/90. Clemens Huemerlehner charted the rise of oil as an energy resource in the Federal Republic. Prior to the 1940s, coal dominated the German energy sector and the shift toward oil was by no means predetermined. The Marshall Plan and its administrators played a key role in facilitating this shift, Huemerlehner showed. Axel-Wolfgang Kahl examined the transformation of East German academia after 1990, with a focus on the disciplines of law, economics, and the social sciences. Kahl compared the experiences of the universities in Leipzig and Potsdam to understand why East German academics were subjected to what essentially amounted to a West German takeover — despite notable administrative and procedural differences between the two places. During the final discussion, which wrapped up the three-day seminar, participants reflected on the joys of meeting and engaging in person after years of very limited possibilities for such encounters.

**Anna von der Goltz**  
(Georgetown University)

## The Pursuit of Science in Conservative Religious Settings since 1945

Workshop held in Cologne, Germany, July 21-22, 2022. Co-organized by the German Historical Institute Washington, the a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne, Justus-Liebig University Gießen, and the Gerda Henkel Foundation, as part of the research project “Religion and Modernity in the U.S.” Conveners: Stefanie Coché (University of Gießen), Sophia Egbert (a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne), and Axel Jansen (GHI Washington). Participants: Joel Barnes (University of Queensland), Almuth Ebke (University of Mannheim), Greg Eghigian (Penn State University), Manuel Franzmann (University of Kiel), Jana Kristin Hoffmann (University of Bielefeld), Zilola Khalilova (Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan), Adam Laats (State University of New York), David Mislin (Temple University), Rachel S. A. Pear (University of Haifa), Laura Popa (International Graduate Center for the Study of Culture, Gießen), Martin Riexinger (University of Aarhus), M. Alper Yalcinkaya (Ohio Wesleyan University).

While scholars agree that “there has never been systemic warfare between science and religion” (Hardin/Numbers/Binzley 2018), the history of religious approaches to science in the twentieth century remains understudied. Considering their prominent political role in many secular societies, this workshop focused on the support and advancement of science and the humanities by conservative religious groups since 1945. In her introduction to the conference, co-convener Stefanie Coché pointed out that conservative religious institutions of higher education have made contributions to supposedly secular disciplines even if, from within these dis-



ciplines, they have been accused of being anti-intellectual. Coché suggested that conservative religious institutions and their perhaps peculiar research culture represent an important subject for historical research. What was the role and the influence of religious institutions on secular research?

For the reasons laid out by Coché on behalf of the conveners, the conference focused on the development of higher education and research in conservative religious institutions since World War II. It provided an opportunity to focus on historical case studies in various countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In precirculated papers, presenters homed in on educational traditions and research interests of religious groups and religious scholarship, the perception and implementation of conservative agendas of higher education, and on their role and position within an increasingly global research structure.

The first panel, chaired by Almuth Ebke, featured David Mislin's case study of Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia. Mislin introduced this conservative Catholic institution by analyzing its relationship between science and religion. He did so by focusing on the journal *Faith & Reason* published by Christendom College and a school textbook co-authored by one of the school's philosophy professors. While Mislin refrained from defining "conservative Catholic science," he pointed out that the school proudly considered itself to be ultra-conservative. Mislin showed that Christendom professors who discussed (and criticized) evolution had to be careful not to appear to be too conservative because the Vatican, from the 1950s, had assumed a moderate position on evolutionary theory. Mislin made the point that this seemingly conciliatory approach obscured the school's deeply traditionalist approach to science. He also wondered whether religious institutions could be "too conservative." Mislin concluded by sketching the significant impact of Christendom's ultraconservative ideas on the college and

the town. In discussing Mislin's paper, Axel Jansen picked up on the school's peculiar setting in northern Virginia and inquired about its local role and influence. Adam Laats proposed that the appeal of Christendom College derived from its conservatism rather than from its christianity. He added that the 1980s saw the rise of a cross-religious conservatism for which Christendom College may be a poster child.

In his paper, Axel Jansen focused on the role of the Vatican in debates about, and in research on, human stem cells during the late 2000s and early 2010s. Jansen charted how the Pontifical Council for Culture (which coordinated the Vatican's efforts to engage with cultural developments) came to cooperate with a U.S. biotech company so as to counter the perception that the church, through its opposition to research using human embryonic stem cells, helped block the development of life-saving medical cures. By endorsing the company's research on adult stem cells, the church sought to signal that it endorsed promising "ethical alternatives" to human embryonic stem cell research. The Vatican retained its partnership with the U.S. company even after prominent stem cell researchers published studies to show that the particular type of adult stem cells endorsed by the company likely didn't exist. In her comments, Stefanie Coché stressed the importance of the Vatican's intervention in the stem cell wars. She inquired about the different ways in which the Vatican (or different actors representing the Vatican) responded to scientific developments, and university-based researchers in the U.S. dealt with the Vatican's public involvement in their field.

Rachel Pear presented the final paper of the first workshop day to offer a case study of the Yeshiva, a private Orthodox Jewish liberal arts and science college and university in New York City. While Yeshiva University's roots lie in Jewish migration in the 1880s and date back to traditional rabbinical schools on Manhattan's Lower East Side, the university

has defined itself as an institution for modern Orthodox Jews. Pear illustrated the establishment and maintenance of traditional Jewish religion in American higher education by considering *Torah U-Madda* (Torah and Science), a school of thought and the university's motto, as a particular perspective on the relationship between science and theology in the late twentieth century. For her paper, Rachel Pear analyzed essays by Orthodox Jewish scholars and researchers, who discussed the societal and religious context for research and the university. Even if no common perspective emerged from the essays Pear focused on, she showed how the school's (and the religion's) relationship with science was the subject of an intense debate. In his comments, Greg Eghigian wondered how Pear's paper could be complemented by considering the way in which science was taught and pursued at Yeshiva.

In his keynote lecture on "Institutionalizing Dissenting Science: American Creationism and Conservative Colleges," Adam Laats emphasized the need for making sense of American creationism by understanding conservative American institutions. Highlighting three different examples from the evangelical movement, Laats laid out how evangelical colleges' stands on evolutionary theory and their acceptance within the wider evangelical community were deeply intertwined. In the 1950s, Wheaton College, a flagship school for evangelicals, tolerated the incorporation of some evolutionary concepts into its biology curriculum. As a result, evangelical institutions that were more conservative than Wheaton began to question Wheaton's evangelical credibility. Wheaton quickly brought its biological department back in line. Claiming to protect students and staff from secular influence, the evangelical cultural framework increasingly became relevant for the entire institution and its position in American society.

The second day of the workshop started with Joel Barnes' paper on colleges affiliated with religious denominations (Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglican) that have

been part of Australia's public research institutions since 1945: the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne, and the University of Queensland. In his presentation, Barnes presented his analysis of journals published by these colleges with an emphasis on essays that discuss scientific developments including those related to the field of biology. Student authors of these essays, Barnes noted, at their respective universities were all taught in secular fields of study. Barnes pointed out that while some essays discuss issues related to evolution, they did not do so from a fundamentalist religious perspective. Instead, authors usually aligned with contemporary societal perspectives at large when, for example, they criticized the dehumanizing effects of technology on society. The colleges, in other words, despite their religious affiliations, retained a science-oriented perspective. The colleges' religious backdrop, the discussion of Barnes' papers suggested, provided students who lived there with a community and stewardship, at least into the 1970s. In her comment, Jana Kristin Hoffmann raised the question to what extent denominational colleges should be understood as conservative and whether their religious affiliation was sufficient to qualify them as such.

In the panel that followed, Sophia Egbert discussed her research on the historical context of the emergence of Christian psychology through Fuller Theological Seminary, the first evangelical institution accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA). Egbert discussed the school's graduate program in psychology, which sought to mobilize for students an "orthopractical" Christian tradition of deducing practical guidance from theology. Egbert emphasized that the introduction of the degree program, aside from institutional challenges, required the evangelical community's endorsement. The college considered its new program a response to a perceived need for psychotherapists due to a lack of expertise in pastoral counseling. In his commentary, Greg Eghigian pointed to the peculiar time and place

of Fuller Theological Seminary in California in the 1960s, a hotspot of religious and spiritual movements. In response, Egbert emphasized the school's national mission and its efforts to advertise in widely circulated publications such as the *Christian Herald*. Focusing on a question about the individual focus of psychological therapy, Egbert and the audience then discussed whether the practice of counselling retained a religious character by sticking to certain preconceptions (such as rejecting divorce) or if religious counseling tacitly advanced secularizing tendencies by focusing on individuals' problems and options, even if it retained such guardrails.

In her paper, Zilola Khalilova focused on the perspective of Soviet madrasah students in Uzbekistan on the secular sciences. With the onset of Soviet rule in 1918, Uzbek madrasahs, or religious schools of higher education, were closed but they were allowed to reopen in 1945. Based on interviews with former madrasah students, Khalilova in her paper charted the role and development of such schools as tokens of the Soviet state's relationship with Muslim religion. In doing so, she highlighted the school's financial independence since they were supported by voluntary private donations. The schools' curricula, however, were shaped by Soviet prerogatives and the state's desire to educate Soviets rather than Muslims. In discussing Khalilova's paper, Almuth Ebke and Stefanie Coché observed that while madrasahs could perhaps be considered "total institutions," some changes to the schools' curricula seem to have been welcomed by their students.

Completing the workshop, M. Alper Yalcinkaya discussed the Cold War context for debates about science and religion among Turkish intellectuals in the 1950s. Yalcinkaya focused on the cultural role assigned to discussions about science and religion by analyzing essays published in conservative journals. Pointing to the contemporary United States, where President Dwight D. Eisenhower endorsed science and religion together, Turkish authors emphasized the need for

religion in democracies. Postwar intellectuals, in other words, abandoned the view of Turkish intellectuals who had grown up in the Ottoman Empire. This older group had rejected the idea of religion, and they had instead favored atheistic materialism. Yalcinkaya suggested that university students' endorsement of religion was an expression of their national affiliation and of their disassociation from Marxism. In his comments, Martin Riexinger highlighted the influence of the Ottoman tradition and its development of materialism, which conflicted with endorsements of democracy through Cold War rhetoric in response to the communist threat. After the 1960 coup d'état, Turkish intellectuals sought to put distance between themselves and the United States. They now argued that Western societies were turning science into a religion, and that these societies were embracing materialism.

Overall, the workshop brought together case studies for how conservative Christians, Jews, and Muslims conceived of, and practiced, modern science. Taken together, the papers showed that in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, religious conservative groups did not always consider themselves opponents of science. But they could hardly ignore science, which had become a powerful source for technological, cultural, and political authority since the Second World War. The papers laid out different ways in which conservative religious institutions dealt with modern scientific research. Moreover, they revealed how conservative religious institutions sought to endorse and develop science on their own terms – by implementing degree programs or by endorsing a particular, “ethically sound” strand of scientific research. In all these ways, religious institutions sought to balance a dedication to their religious communities and a concomitant theological perspective with a commitment to change and transformation represented by modern science.

**Annika van der Hoek**  
(Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen)

## Roads to Exclusion: Socio-Spatial Dynamics of Mobility Infrastructures since 1800

Conference at the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI), September 8-10, 2022. Co-sponsored by the GHI Washington and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg global dis:connect Munich. Conveners: Andreas Greiner (GHI Washington), Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş (GHI Washington), Mario Peters (GHI Washington), Roland Wenzlhuemer (University of Munich). Participants: Maria Adamopoulou (European University Institute), Adesoji Adedipe (University of KwaZulu-Natal Durban), Friedrich Ammermann (European University Institute), Paul Blickle (University of Munich), Andrew Denning (University of Kansas), Charles Bégué Fawell (University of Chicago), Agnes Gehbald (University of Bern), Jennifer Hart (Wayne State University), Martin Kalb (Bridgewater College), Jana Keck (GHI Washington), Lars Kury (University of Basel), Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Barbara Lüthi (University of Leipzig), Megan Maruschke (University of Duisburg-Essen/University of Leipzig), Khanyile Mlotshwa (University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg), Aparajita Mukhopadhyay (University of Kent), Peter Norton (University of Virginia), Anke Ortlepp (University of Cologne), David Pretel (Universidad Pompeu Fabra Barcelona), Avishek Ray (National Institute of Technology Silchar), Claudia Roesch (GHI Washington), Peter Soppelsa (University of Oklahoma), Cristiana Strava (Leiden University), Olusegun Stephen Titus (Obafemi Awolowo University), Heidi Tworek (University of British Columbia Vancouver), Desiree Valadares (University of British Columbia Vancouver), William Walters (Carleton University).

In public discourse, mobility infrastructure – such as railroads, steamships, highways, or airplanes – are often described as

facilitators of cultural and regional integration, economic globalization, and global unity. Yet despite the promise of connecting people and places, constructing and operating such transport networks also left certain places and people out and unconnected – often on purpose. The conference, jointly organized by the GHI Washington and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg global dis:connect Munich, brought together researchers from around the world to explore the intended or unintended dynamics of inclusion and exclusion entailed in mobility infrastructures, ranging from the nineteenth century to the present. The conveners and participants of the conference understood exclusion in both a social and spatial sense. They see exclusion and inclusion not as mutually exclusive modes, but as shifting and dynamic: The participants debated the exclusionary effects in infrastructure planning and practice, its effects on marginalized groups as well as the resilience and resistance of these groups and strategies of access.

Charles Bégué Fawell opened the conference's first panel, titled "Oceanic Dis/Connections," by studying the French ocean liners of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as spaces of segregation. The real experience of month-long voyages subverted the promise of reinforcing imperial hierarchies pertaining to class and race. By highlighting contacts between passengers and workers in the engine room or on deck, he emphasized the fragility and permeability of boundaries. Paul Blickle analyzed the infrastructure of ship's ballast in the nineteenth century by focusing on two cases, Hamburg and Brake, ports that have not been successful in achieving their goal to establish a monopoly on ballasting. Examining the tin trade across the Malacca Straits, Lars Kury outlined the region's dialectic development regarding aspects of connection and disconnection: At first benefiting from tin deposits in its hinterlands, Malacca then became disconnected from the global tin market in the second half of the nineteenth century, while Singapore rose to an exclusive center due to what he described as its "natural infrastructures." In his comment,



Roland Wenzlhuemer recapitulated that the presented papers elaborated on global shipping from different perspectives. Its history is often told as a narrative of “connection” and therefore integration through technical progress in the form of steam- and faster ships. But as the panelists demonstrated and as Wenzlhuemer summed up, one person’s connections can be another person’s disconnection.

The second panel, titled “Making Space, Materializing Inequality,” explored the ways in which land-based infrastructure expanded and focused on the inequality resulting from it. The first panelist, David Pretel, examined the history of infrastructure in the Yucatan Peninsula, arguing that the indigenous Mayan communities were not simply passive victims of railway expansion on their territory, but rather proactive individuals who both resisted and appropriated the new train connection. The second presentation by Adesoji Adedipe focused on the post-colonial legacies of colonial transportation in Africa. Adedipe concluded that the insufficient public transport system in Lagos and Durban cements the inequality within urban areas established by colonialism. Finally, Cristiana Strava, in her online presentation, examined transport inequality in Morocco’s railway system, comparing the country’s “two speeds”: the dangerous and slow trains on which commuters rely versus the more expensive high-speed trains that connect economic centers and passengers that can afford them. The panel closed with discussant Heidi Tworek noting that all three panelists addressed the ramifications of colonialism and resistance by marginalized communities. She also steered the discussion toward environmental factors, with all participants agreeing that they deserve a central role in historical research on infrastructure given the current climate crisis and debates about mobility and sustainability.

Examining cultural testimony in the form of articles, songs and movies, Maria Adamopoulou, the first contributor of the

third panel, "Transit Gateways as Border Spaces," depicted train stations in West Germany as both real and imaginary spaces for Greek "guest workers" (*Gastarbeiter*) in the years from 1960 to 1989. Train stations became symbols and places of remembrance for their journeys as well as for their experiences of alienation, discrimination, and (im)mobility. Khanyile Mlotshwa presented a paper on the differing treatment of contemporary border crossers entering South Africa by land or by air. Arriving by airplane, he argued, confers the status of legality, acceptability and desirability whereas people who cross borders in cars or mini buses are considered to be suspect by the border authorities. Researching the significance of international boundaries, mobility control, and refugees during the Age of Revolutions, Megan Maruschke focused on local practices of exclusion and control of migrants and travelers in Philadelphia. Building on these three papers, commentator Anke Ortlepp underlined the need to analyze practices of exclusion from an intersectional perspective and to reach beyond the categories of class, race, and gender to also include the role of personal status and age.

The fourth panel, titled "The Power of Infrastructure: Dreams and Realities," opened with Andrew Denning, whose research focuses on France uprooting pre-colonial West Africa to serve its needs. Denning stated that the French used violence and coercion to colonize Africans and their environment through road construction. Next, Desiree Valadares presented her research which used a single highway route, the scenic Hope-Princeton Highway in British Columbia in Canada, to show the historical erasure of certain communities being forced to construct it, in particular Japanese detainees during the Second World War. Rounding out the presentations was Martin Kalb, who applied Emmanuel Kreike's concept of "environmental infrastructure" to analyze the Mole pier in Swakopmund, German South West Africa. Utilizing this framework, Kalb concluded that both human and non-human elements shape infrastructure, identifying

German planning, African labor, as well as the influence of a woodworm as defining elements of the Mole pier's trajectories. Commentator Jennifer Hart emphasized the centrality of humans, both builders and users, for infrastructure, as well as their connection to the environment. The presenters also discussed the role failure plays in infrastructure and how it ties back into the colonial narrative of progress.

The second conference day ended at the Goethe Institute Washington with a film screening of the documentary "Driving While Black: Race, Space and Mobility in America" (PBS, 2020), which traces the opportunities and freedom offered to African Americans through the advent of automobility while also painfully exposing the discrimination, fear, and violence connected to the experience of driving while Black in the United States.

Opening the fifth panel, titled "Contested Politics of Mobility," Avishek Ray reflected on reverse migration by migrant workers from the cities to the Indian countryside during the nation-wide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In his paper he pointed to the subversive potential of migrant workers walking on the highway and out of the cities. In contrast to most studies concerning European migration during the "age of mass migration" (1815-1939), Agnes Gehbald studied political and legal government measures to prevent return migration by European migrants in the Americas around 1900. Considering that up to 50 per cent of those migrants wanted to return home, she highlighted, the states of North and South America saw the need to make the migrants stay as they were dependent on agricultural and manufacturing laborers. The last contribution of the fifth panel concentrated on deportation infrastructure and resistance in Switzerland. By looking at a number of police raids and deportations in 1985, called "Aktion Schwarzer Herbst" (Operation Black Autumn), Barbara Lüthi and William Walters showed how focusing on deportation infrastructure delivers

new insights into the concrete practice of expulsion and its connection to racism and colonial legacies, while also highlighting how the “vulnerability” of air travel enabled refugees to resist and sabotage their deportation through physical violence and disturbance. In his comment, Peter Norton identified what he called “back-stories” as a unifying aspect of the three papers. He suggested reflecting on four terms – “return,” “visibility,” “pretense,” and “resourcefulness” – and their possible connection to the papers as a starting point for the discussion.

The sixth and final panel of the conference, titled “Access from Below: Exclusion, Appropriation, Subversion,” highlighted the ways in which individuals have been excluded through infrastructure, and the ways they were able to reclaim access. Olusegun Stephen Titus began with his presentation, which focused on how contemporary Nigerian pop songs portray mobility in Lagos. He showed how songs, and the cultural representation of traffic and transportation can be used to create awareness about the socioeconomic inequality connected to urban infrastructure. Next, Peter Soppelsa gave insight into bourgeois and working-class protests regarding the construction of a Paris tramway in 1897. Dubbed the “barbarian tramway” by the privileged inhabitants of Paris, the tramway resisted attempts of social exclusion and became an instrument of social protest by working-class commuters. Finally, Friedrich Ammermann focused on Indian and African passengers on railways in Bechuanaland as well as Northern and Southern Rhodesia between 1947 and 1964. He showcased how train operators used the division of coaches into first, second, and third class to maintain race segregation in anything but name, and he shed light on the complaints of passengers who demanded the right to travel first (or second) class and questioned the equation of class and race. Commentator Aparajita Mukhopadhyay picked up on the topic of socioeconomic inequality that linked all three papers, and the panelists discussed the

various reasons different social groups utilized transport for, and how the lower classes' lack of access to transportation negatively affected their general means and opportunities.

At the end of three days of lively discussions, Roland Wenzlhuemer opened the concluding Roundtable – which was composed of the commentators of almost all the preceding panels – by summarizing that the conference made aspects visible that do not fit into the usual narratives about mobility and infrastructure. Exclusion as well as social, racial, and gendered segregation are persistent throughout the history of transport infrastructures. Therefore, not only should historians strengthen their efforts to write the history of transportation infrastructures “from below.” They should also, the four panelists agreed, critically engage with the connotations of the term “infrastructure” which always implies the claim for a practical solution to social challenges. Scrutinizing the intellectual history of the term can help historians reveal the manifold attempts to gain political, economic, and cultural power that came with the planning and usage of mobility infrastructures. Focusing on the tasks of historians, the panelists also discussed the need to make the study of infrastructure appealing and accessible to students by highlighting its immanence in their daily lives as well as the need to “engage people beyond campus.” How can we go beyond the writing of history by translating our findings to practitioners who conceptualize, plan, and manage mobility in the present and future? And what insights can historians offer them? These are open questions. As a first step, the panelists suggested, historians need training in communication – and a stronger belief in their own “power to shift the trajectory” of future developments through historicizing and de-normalizing current issues of mobility infrastructure.

**Charlotte Lenger and Sarah Zapola**  
(GHI Washington)



The background features abstract geometric shapes. A dark blue triangle points downwards from the top left. A light blue triangle points upwards from the bottom left. A grey triangle points downwards from the top right. The text 'GHI News' is centered in the white space between these shapes.

# **GHI News**





## 35+5 – GHI Washington and Its Pacific Office Celebrate Anniversaries

Thirty-five years ago, in the fall of 1987, the German Historical Institute opened its doors in Washington. Five years ago, in the Fall of 2017, the GHI's Pacific Office was established at the University of Berkeley.

“We have a lot to celebrate this year,” director Simone Lässig explains. “Over decades, our institute has developed into a hub for research in and about the transatlantic world, Europe and the Americas. It opened up to global history and most recently to the transpacific region. At the same time, it has witnessed and reflected milestones of global history.”

The GHI Washington, including its Pacific Office, now has 35 research fellows and employees, awards prizes for outstanding research, and publishes several book series as well as its own journal – the *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*. All of these publications are published in open access or will become open access in the near future. Simone Lässig: “Since 2011 we have enabled over 500 researchers to visit the GHI and other institutions and archives in the U.S. or Canada. Many of them have continued their career successfully, and thus underline the value of our programs, which have focused on research topics such as migration and mobility, Jewish history or transregional studies. It is an honor for us to make this kind of scholarly exchange possible and to benefit from it – an international exchange that is still necessary, nowadays probably more than ever before.”

Over the last few years, the GHI Washington has developed into a major transatlantic hub for Digital History through an annual international conference and transnational digital projects that address research, teaching, and citizen scholars. “Projects such as *German History Intersections* or *Migrant Connections* are of considerable value for many people, just as *German History in Documents and Images* has been since

2003. And they show the importance of institutional continuity in transnational research organizations: many topics and even contacts that we are focused on today date back to the beginning of our GHI – 35 years ago in Washington, and five years ago in Berkeley,” Lässig underlines. “We are thankful for all the support the GHI has had in these 35+5 years – from our friends and partners, our employees and fellows, our academic advisory board, the Max Weber Foundation, its funders and from all the other associates.”

## German Minister of Education and Research Visits GHI Washington

On June 8, 2022, the German Minister of Education and Research, Bettina Stark-Watzinger, visited the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI) for a panel discussion followed by a reception. “This was a great honor for our institute and the German humanities abroad,” Director Simone Lässig commented.

This honor derives not least from the fact that the GHI, as a center for advanced historical research, with its Pacific Office at UC Berkeley and as a part of the Max Weber Stiftung, is funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research. “With our research topics as well as with our conferences and programs for young scholars, our publications, our digital initiatives, and our public outreach programs, we – like all the Max Weber Institutes around the globe – serve as a unique bridge builder,” Simone Lässig mentioned in her introduction. “We build bridges between Europe and North America, and even within the Americas, as well as between the Pacific and the Atlantic worlds. We build bridges between different disciplines, between scholarship and society, including politics, and between tradition and innovation.”

Director Lässig also moderated the panel discussion *Transatlantic Relationships in Science and Technology*, which included the minister, Robert D. Atkinson (President of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation), Jeff



**Figure 1.** German Minister of Education and Research Bettina Stark-Watzinger (left) and GHI director Simone Lässig (right).

Rathke (President of the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies), Constanze Stelzenmüller (Brookings Institution), Charles Wessner (Georgetown University), and Mercedes García Pérez (Head of the Global Issues and Innovation section of the Delegation of the European Union to the United States). The panelists addressed is-

sues like the role of knowledge transfer and research infrastructures, the freedom of value-based research, and the limitations of international cooperation. Reflecting on the successful evening, Prof. Lässig was pleased about the great interest the minister had shown in the research of GHI fellows: “Her visit provided an outstanding opportunity for them to discuss their projects with experts from different fields.”

## **Time for a Conclusion: GHI director Simone Lässig reflects on the “Wissen entgrenzen” initiative of the Max Weber Foundation**

GHI Director Simone Lässig discussed the “Wissen entgrenzen” initiative in a new podcast produced by the Max Weber Stiftung.

GHI Washington director Simone Lässig looked back on the “Wissen entgrenzen” initiative of the Max Weber Foundation, focusing on its accomplishments and further perspectives along with Birgit Schäbler (Director, Orient Institute Beirut), Sandra Dahlke (Director, GHI Moscow), and Franz Waldenberger (Director, German Institute for Japanese Studies) in a recent podcast. You can listen to the episode (in German) at: <https://wissen.hypotheses.org/3489>.

For the last three years, the GHI Washington “Wissen entgrenzen” project “Interaction and Knowledge in the Pacific Region: Entanglements and Disentanglements” was based at the Pacific Office at UC Berkeley, where it included researchers Albert Manke, Sören Urbansky, Sarah Beringer, and Simone Lässig.

## **GHI Launches New Edition of Award-Winning Website *German History in Documents and Images* (GHDI)**

The GHI is pleased to announce the relaunch of its website *German History in Documents and Images* (GHDI), a collection of primary sources and supplementary essays presenting the history of Germany and the German-speaking lands from the early modern era to the present day offered in both German and English.

Since its original launch, twenty years ago, the site has been widely adopted for teaching and research use in the United States, Germany, and beyond while receiving accolades from the American Historical Association and other organizations for its breadth, variety, and academic rigor. With funding from the DFG (German Research Foundation) program for Scientific Library Services and Information Systems, the site's underlying infrastructure has been adapted to fit modern technological requirements, including a responsive, accessible, and mobile-friendly design. The new *German History in Documents and Images* now has the capacity to present audiovisual sources and includes a wider variety of image-presentation options for classroom use as well as custom-designed maps. In addition, the site's editorial board has expanded its topical coverage, specifically including more sources related to environmental history, global history, and the history of migration, while the background essays which accompany the primary sources have been revised and expanded to encompass the new research published since the site's original debut.

The relaunched *German History in Documents and Images* continues the original site's format of ten period-based volumes. Two volumes of the new edition—*From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815–1866*, and *Two Germanies, 1961–1989*—are now available on GHDI's new website, [GHI NEWS](http://germanhis-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

torydocs.org. The remaining eight volumes, spanning from the early sixteenth century to the 2010s, will be published to the new site over the coming months. During this transition period the original GHDI site will continue to be available at its current URL ([www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org](http://www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org)); once the relaunch is complete the original site will be preserved in a web-archive format and remain accessible.

## 2022 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize

The 2022 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which is awarded annually by the Friends of the German Historical Institute for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university, was awarded to Tamar Menashe (University of Pennsylvania). The award ceremony took place at the 30th Annual Symposium of the Friends of the German Historical Institute on May 13, 2022. The selection committee was composed of: Daniel Riches (Chair), Barnet Hartston, and Philipp Nielsen. The prize winner will contribute an article presenting her dissertation research to the next issue of the Bulletin.

The committee's prize citation for Tamar Menashe's dissertation, "The Imperial Supreme Court and Jews in Cross-Confessional Legal Cultures, 1495-1690" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2022, advised by Elisheva Carlebach), reads:

Tamar Menashe's dissertation, "The Imperial Supreme Court and Jews in Cross-Confessional Legal Cultures, 1495-1690," is a work of breathtaking erudition and scope. Grounded in meticulous research spanning over thirty archives in six countries and six languages, Dr. Menashe has produced a work of scholarship that is both innovative and profound, with findings that are as significant and surprising as they are historiographically iconoclastic. She has brought to our field not only things we did not know, but rather things we did not believe possible.

The key here is Dr. Menashe's creative recovery of a strong Jewish voice and effective Jewish agency in the early modern Holy Roman Empire. The paucity of surviving source material produced by early modern Jewish Germans – and parallel paucity of scholars with the historiographical and linguistic range to combine high-level understanding of the Empire's Byzantine structures and practices with the ability to use Hebrew and Yiddish sources – have led to the widespread assumption that a deep study of the early modern Jewish experience in the Empire from a Jewish perspective was simply not possible, and that any Jewish voice that could be found would surely be one of defensive retreat from uniformly intolerant surroundings. Dr. Menashe's dissertation explodes these assumptions by turning to the records of the Empire's notoriously decentralized legal system, examining thousands of court documents spread across dozens of collections to reveal a remarkable world of active and successful Jewish legal activity in the Empire's courts, whose files are shown to contain a surprising number of documents written by early modern Jewish Germans themselves that previous scholars have overlooked.

This discovery in itself would have been an accomplishment of major proportions. What takes Dr. Menashe's dissertation to another level, however, is her penetrating analysis of the ends to which early modern Jews used their activity in the Empire's courts. Dr. Menashe deftly teases out the ways in which Jewish residents of the Empire made conscious use of their special legal status as directly subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the emperor regardless of their territory of residence or activity to initiate lawsuits directly at the level of the *Reichskammergericht* (one of the Empire's two supreme courts that usually functioned as an appellate court) while at the same time manipulating the rhetorics of universality embedded in the Roman Law tradition that German jurists were at that moment in the process of implementing in the Empire to persuade imperial judges to incorporate Jewish law into court proceedings regarding Jewish litigants. We see here a kind of utterly unexpected intersectionality between a minority group's special legal status and a legal system's universalizing rhetorical space that was seized upon

actively, assertively, and perhaps most remarkably, successfully, by the Empire's Jews in what Dr. Menashe refers to as an "imperial endorsement of Jewish jurisdictional power." Dr. Menashe's dissertation shows us, then, that contrary to the prevailing literature the Empire's early modern Jews were not a passively fading group that was acted upon by structures of power without themselves being active, but rather that Jews increasingly used litigation as a path to legitimate their place in German society, or better said were successful at writing themselves into German political community through litigation.

Only a scholar with Dr. Menashe's impressive linguistic and paleographic range to engage German, Hebrew, Yiddish, Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin sources in their handwritten, early modern variants, could have produced such powerful, and unexpected, conclusions.

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to our field, the prize committee is pleased to award – enthusiastically and unanimously – this year's Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize to Dr. Tamar Menashe.

## GHI Publications

### 1. Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge University Press)

Moritz Föllmer and Pamela E. Swett, eds. *Reshaping Capitalism in Weimar and Nazi Germany*

### 2. Studies in German History (Berghahn Books)

Andrew Kloiber. *Brewing Socialism: Coffee, East Germans, and Twentieth-Century Globalization.*

Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk. *End Game: The 1989 Revolution in East Germany.*



### **3. Transatlantische Historische Studien (Steiner Verlag)**

Patrick Gaul. *Ideale und Interessen: Die mitteleuropäische Wirtschaft im Amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg.*

### **4. Worlds of Consumption (Palgrave Macmillan)**

Paul Lerner, Uwe Spiekermann, Anne Schenderlein, eds. *Jewish Consumer Cultures in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Europe and North America.*

## **Staff Changes**

Virginia Klotz-Thompson joined the GHI in October 2022 as administrative assistant after a career in the medical field.

Tugba Mack joined the GHI in August 2022 as assistant to the director. Prior to joining the GHI, she worked for the Outreach Liaison of the United Nations Development Program in New York City and conducted journalistic work for RTL Television Network in Germany and CNN Istanbul/Turkey.

Rebekka Sherman-Loeffler, assistant to the director since July 2020, left the GHI in order to pursue a new opportunity.

Melanie Smaney, administrative assistant since January 2016, left the GHI in May 2022 in order to take up a position with the Hanns-Seidel Foundation.

## **GHI Fellowships and Internships: Call for Applications**

### **Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships**

The GHI awards short-term fellowships to European and North American doctoral students as well as postdoctoral scholars to pursue research projects that draw upon pri-

mary sources located in the United States. We are particularly interested in research projects that fit into the following fields: German and European history, the history of German-American relations, the role of Germany and the USA in international relations, and American history (European doctoral and postdoctoral scholars only). The proposed research projects should make use of historical methods and engage with the relevant historiography. We especially invite applications from doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars who currently have no funding from their home institutions. The fellowships are usually granted for periods of one to five months.

The GHI also offers a number of other long-term doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships with more specific profiles to strengthen key research interests at the institute, including: the history of knowledge, the history of race and ethnicity, the history of religion and religiosity, the history of family and kinship, the history of migration, and North American history. In addition to these opportunities, the GHI also offers the following fellowships: The Binational Tandem Research Program for “The History of Knowledge” and “Global and Trans-regional History,” and the Gerda Henkel Postdoctoral Fellowship for Digital History.

For further information about these programs and current application deadlines, please check our website at [www.ghi-dc.org/fellowships](http://www.ghi-dc.org/fellowships).

### **GHI Internships**

The GHI Internship Program gives German and American students of history, political science, and library studies an opportunity to gain experience at a scholarly research institute. Interns assist individual research projects, work for the library, take part in the preparation and hosting of conferences, and help with our publications. They receive a small stipend. The program is very flexible in the sense that the GHI tries to accommodate the interns’ interests, abilities, and goals. A two-month minimum stay is required; a three-month stay is preferred. There is a rolling review of applications. For further information, please check our website at [www.ghi-dc.org/internships](http://www.ghi-dc.org/internships).

# GHI Fellowship Recipients for 2022

## Long-term Visiting Fellowships

Amelia Bonea (Universität Heidelberg)

Archives of the Earth: Fossil Histories and the Global Entanglements of Indian Paleosciences, 1920s-1970s

Kimberly Cheng (New York University)

Chinese Foreign Nationals in Nazi and Postwar Germany, 1933-1949

Kamil Karczewski (European University Institute)

Transnationally Queer: Four Central European Men Between Nations and Sexualities, 1935-1956

Erica Lansberg (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

Encounters in the Rubble: American Interactions with German Children in Postwar Germany

Christoph Nitschke (Universität Stuttgart)

Capital and Civilization: Transimperial Finance and the United States between Civil War and World War, 1857-1917

## Gerda Henkel Fellowship for Digital History

Alexandra Krebs (Universität Paderborn)

History in Digital Spaces: Historical Learning inside the 'App in die Geschichte' (App into History)

## Tandem Fellowships in the History of Migration at the German Historical Institute Washington's Pacific Office in Berkeley

Vitalij Fastovskij (Universität Münster)

Humanitarian Aid in the Cold War Era: The Tolstoy Foundation's Support of Displaced Persons and Refugees (1949-1989)

**Joshua Donovan (Columbia University)**

Imagining Antioch: Sectarianism, Nationalism, and Migration in the Greek Orthodox Levant

### **Short-term Doctoral Research Fellowships**

**Viviana del Carmen Acuña Azuaje (Universität zu Köln)**

“Don’t Stop Me Now!”: The Perseverance of Women of Color in NASA during the 1980s through the 90s

**Veronica Barry (Maynooth University)**

An Examination of Nazi Propaganda Directed at Women of Key Neutral States from 1933 to 1945

**Lisa Katharina Gabriel (Goethe Universität Frankfurt)**

Gegen die Missachtung und Rechtlosigkeit: Vielfalt und Ideengeschichte radikaler Perspektiven auf das Problem der sexuellen Gewalt im Kontext der sozialen Bewegungen in den USA, c. 1940-1975

**Pia Herzan (Universität Erfurt)**

Governed by Voluntariness: Voluntary Civic Engagement & Political Practices during the Yellow Fever Crises in Philadelphia’s Early Republic

**Darja Jesse (Technische Universität Berlin)**

“A Potential Threat to the World”: Sammlungs- und Wahrnehmungsgeschichte der German War Art Collection

**Ulrike Koppermann (Justus Liebig Universität Gießen)**

Eindeutig mehrdeutig – Funktionen von Fotografien in Ausstellungen zur Shoah

**Anna Kozlova (Carleton University)**

Ancestral Homelands and Onward Migration: Oral History Narratives of Post-Soviet German and Jewish Migrants in Canada

**Aimée Plukker (Cornell University)**

Europe Calling: The Marshall Plan, U.S. Tourism to Europe, and the Making of “the West”

Sydney Ramirez (Universität Kassel)

Queer Youth Organizations and the Circulation of Knowledge in the U.S. since the 1960s

Hans-Georg Ripken (Universität Mannheim)

NATO-Osterweiterung in den 1990er Jahren: Eine qualitative und datenbasierte Analyse der öffentlichen Debatte in Deutschland, den USA, Polen und Russland

### **Short-term Postdoctoral Research Fellowships**

Nicola Camilleri (German Historical Institute Warsaw)

German Emigrant, Armed Sociability, and the Making of Legal Regimes (1850s -1920s)

Rachele Delucchi (ETH Zürich)

Vakuum: Geschichte der produktiven Leere (1930-1980)

Lukas Held (Universität Zürich)

Governing a Fractured World: A History of the Commons-Paradigm and the Transformation of the Public Spirit, 1960s-2000s

Cathy McAteer (University of Exeter)

Cold War Women: Translators and Cultural Mediators of Russian and Soviet Literature in the Twentieth Century

Kristin Meißner (Leibniz-Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam)

Im Wandel: Urbanität, Globalisierung und demokratische Kultur im Vergleich der Städte Berlin und New York City 1980-2000

### **Horner Library Fellowships**

Brandon Kinney (Temple University)

Partners in Reconciliation: West German-American Cultural Diplomacy, 1945-1965

# RESEARCH SEMINAR AND COLLOQUIUM, SPRING 2022

- March 10**      **Axel Jansen (GHI Washington)**  
The Politicization of American Science: Embryonic Stem Cells, Cloning, and the 2004 California Ballot Initiative
- March 24**      **Julie Kerestzes (Boston University)**  
The Old Fighter: Heinrich Hoffmann and the Early NSDAP, 1920-1925
- Verena Lehmbruck (Universität Erfurt)**  
“Freedom is to be with oneself in another”: A Cross-Bloc Friendship in the Cold War Social Sciences
- April 7**            **Verena Kick (Georgetown University)**  
Stop Reading! Look! Then Look Again! Functional Montages and Counter Publics in Photobooks of Weimar Germany
- April 28**        **Lisa Patt (Universität Erfurt)**  
“Let’s Make America Great Again” – A History of Nostalgia as a United States Identity Ideology in the 1980s
- Pia Beumer (Universität Erfurt)**  
Spaces of Fear: White Male Violence as Self-Defense in 1980s Urban America
- May 5**            **Isabella Löhr (Centre Marc Bloch Berlin)**  
Protestant Student Internationalism, Humanitarianism, and Educational Mobility in the 1920s

**June 16**

**Aleksandra Pomiecko (University of Manitoba)**

Bandits, Outlaws, and Robin Hoods in Postwar Europe, 1917-1925

**Sabrina Lausen (University of Paderborn)**

The “Human Factor”: The Development of the Human-Machine Relationship in Civil Aviation over the Decades. An East-West Comparison, 1950s-1980s

**Pai-Li Liu (LMU München)**

Drug Control, Poverty Reduction, Rural Development: The Thai-German Highland Development Program in the 1970s/80s

## **DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE DC (VIRTUAL) MEETUP #DCHDC, 2022**

**June 14**

**June Outdoors Meet-and-Greet at  
Wunder Garten**

# GHI Calendar of Events 2022/23

2022

- September 8-10**    **Roads to Exclusion: Socio-Spatial Dynamics of Mobility Infrastructures since 1800**  
International conference at the GHI Washington | Organized by Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş (GHI Washington), Andreas Greiner (GHI Washington), Mario Peters (GHI Washington), and Roland Wenzlhuemer (LMU Munich)
- September 25-30**    **Environments of Inequality: Crises, Conflicts, Comparisons**  
International Summer School at the Maria Sibylla Merian Center for Advanced Latin American Studies (CALAS), Guadalajara, Mexico | Organizing Committee: Cornelia Aust (Bielefeld University, SFB 1288), Sarah Beringer (GHI Washington), Olaf Kaltmeier (CALAS), Albert Manke (GHI Washington Regional Office), Mario Peters (GHI Washington), Ann-Kathrin Volmer (CALAS)
- September 30**    **Beyond Work for Pay? Basic-Income Concepts in Global Debates on Automation, Poverty, and Unemployment (1920-2020)**  
Conference at the German Historical Institute Washington | Conveners: Manuel Franzmann (Sociology, Kiel), Axel Jansen (GHI Washington), Alice O'Connor (History, University of California, Santa Barbara)



**October 10-13 Histories of Migration: Transatlantic and Global Perspectives**

Sixth Annual Bucerius Young Scholars Forum at the GHI Washington's Pacific Office | Conveners: Frithjof Benjamin Schenk (Department of History, University of Basel) and Sören Urbansky (Pacific Office of the GHI Washington)

**November 3-5 German Migrants and Migrating Knowledge in Latin American History**

Conference at GHI Washington | Conveners: Simone Lässig (GHI Washington), Mario Peters (GHI Washington), H. Glenn Penny (UCLA), Stefan Rinke (Freie Universität Berlin)

**November 3 More Stories about Lives and Ideas**

Keynote Lecture (Virtual) | Speaker: Jeffrey Lesser (Emory University)

**November 4-5 Fourth West Coast Germanists' Workshop: Global Germany**

Workshop at the University of California, San Diego | Conveners: Frank Biess (University of California, San Diego), Ulrike Strasser (University of California, San Diego), and Sören Urbansky (GHI Washington, Pacific Office Berkeley)

**November 4 European History after the Global Turn**

Keynote Lecture (Virtual/Zoom) | Speaker: Sebastian Conrad (FU Berlin)

**November 10 When Democracy Died in Darkness: German-Jewish Responses to Hitler's Rise**

36th Annual Lecture at GHI Washington | Speaker: Michael Brenner (American University/Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München), Comment: Marion Kaplan (New York University)

- November 14**    **The CCP Information Order in the Early People's Republic of China**  
Lecture at Stanford University, Okimoto Room, Encina Hall 3rd Floor | Global Challenges in the Asia Pacific Series | Speaker: David Leese (University of Freiburg); Discussant: Andrew G. Walder (Stanford University). Sponsors: Institute of European Studies (UC Berkeley), ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, Stanford University
- November 16**    **Governing Information: The Staff Politics of the Central Party in the Post-Mao Period**  
Lecture at UC Berkeley (223 Moses Hall) | Global Challenges in the Asia Pacific Series | Tsai Wen-Hsuan (Academia Sinica, Taipei); Discussant: Wen-hsin Yeh (UC Berkeley). Sponsors: Institute of European Studies (UC Berkeley), ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, Stanford University
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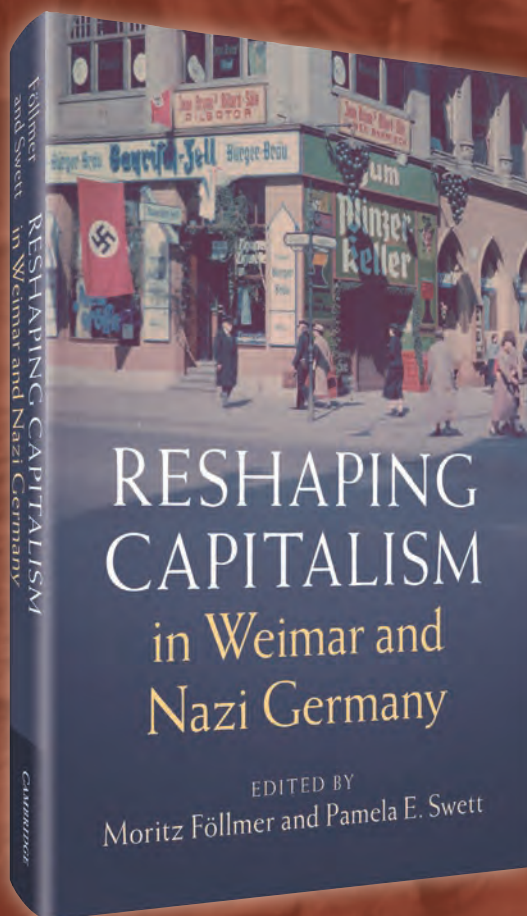
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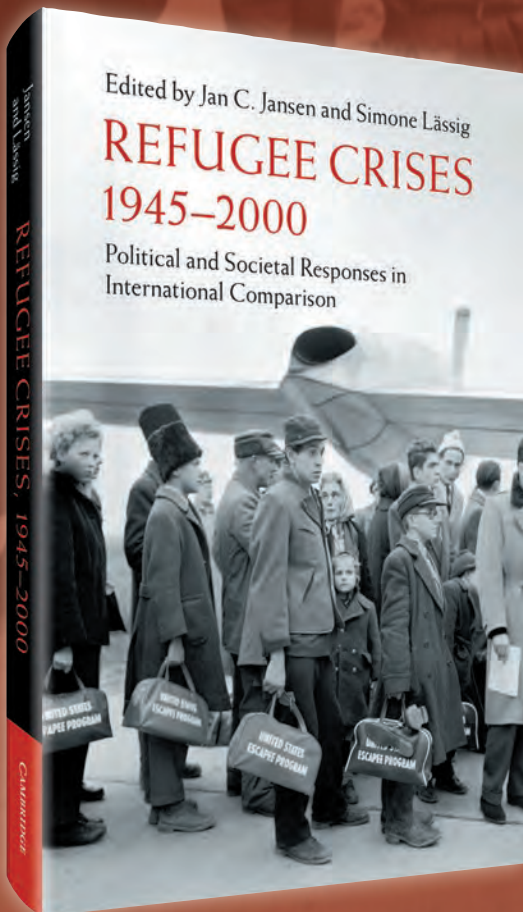
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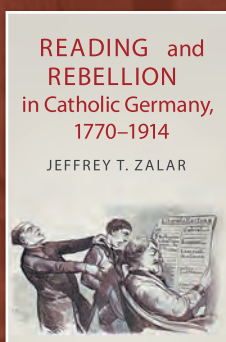
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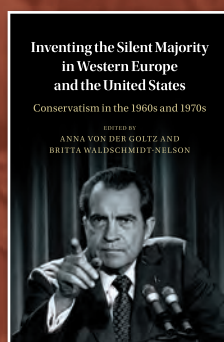
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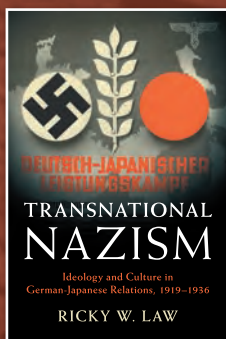
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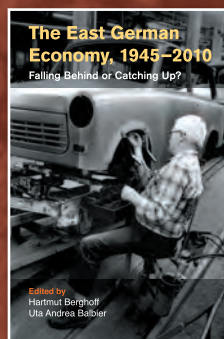
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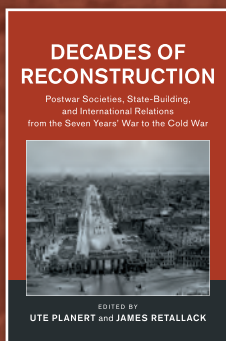
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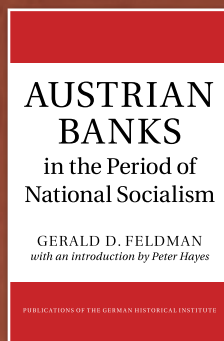
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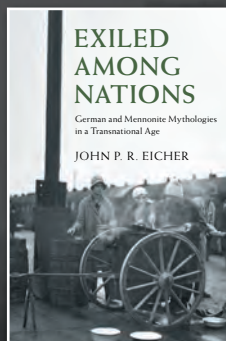
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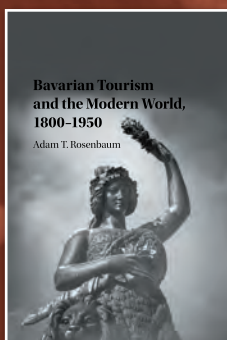
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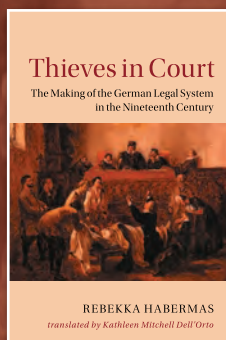
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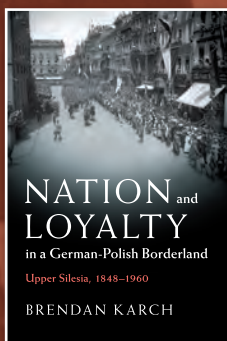
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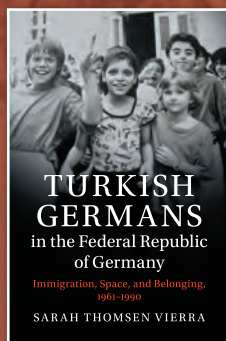
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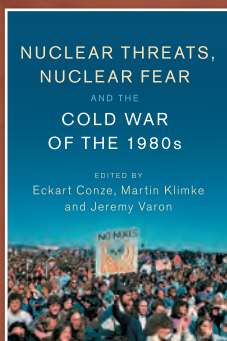
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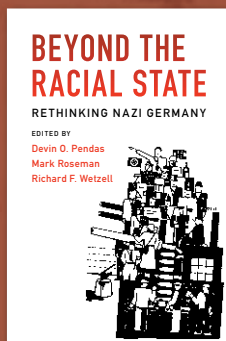
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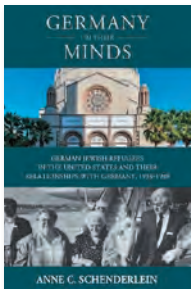
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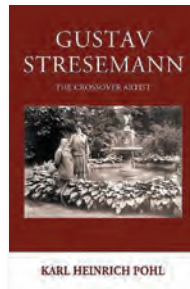
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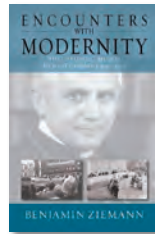


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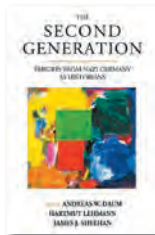


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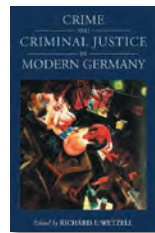



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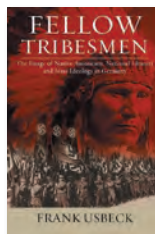
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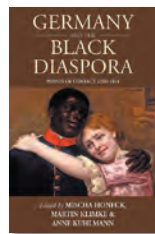


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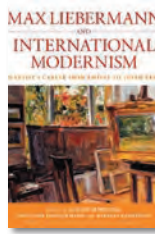


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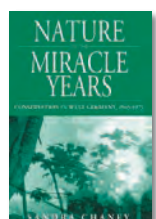
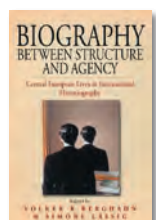
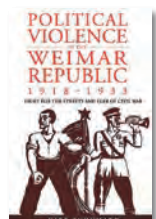
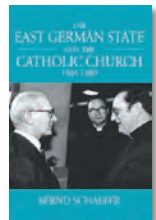
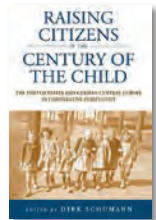
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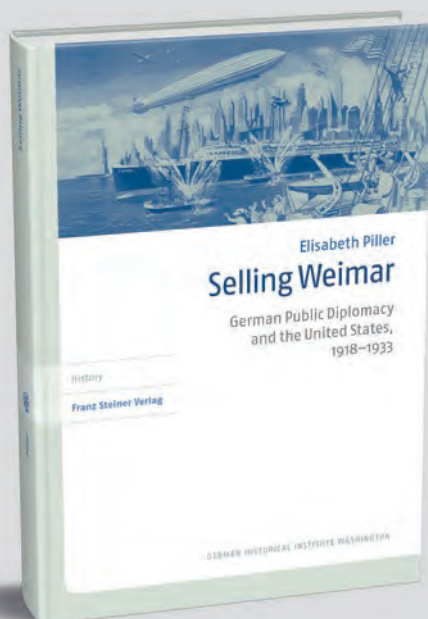


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In *Encountering Empire*, Elisabeth Engel traces how black American missionaries – men and women grappling with their African heritage – established connections in Africa during the heyday of European colonialism. Reconstructing the black American ‘colonial encounter’, Engel analyzes the images, transatlantic relationships, and possibilities of representation African American missionaries developed for themselves while negotiating colonial regimes. Illuminating a neglected chapter of Atlantic history, Engel demonstrates that African Americans used imperial structures for their own self-determination. *Encountering Empire* thus challenges the notion that pan-Africanism was the only viable strategy for black emancipation.

After a successful career in the Weimar Republic’s cultural industry, German director William Dieterle accepted a contract offered him by the US film company Warner Bros. Pictures in 1930. There, he succeeded in building a network of German-speaking artists, including Max Reinhardt and Fritz Kortner and made films that contributed to the fight against National Socialism and to representing a “different Germany” in emigration. In this German-language book, Larissa Schütze describes Dieterle’s integration into the institutional structures of Warner Bros. Studios and reconstructs the production history of the films he made there on the basis of the company’s documents.



Larissa Schütze

### William Dieterle und die deutschsprachige Emigration in Hollywood

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Concepts of “good citizenship” dominated the US in the interwar period, which was characterized by restrictive migration legislation. The immigration debates were linked to strict Americanization demands. Using the example of members of the gymnastics organization *Sokol* and athletes from the *Jewish People’s Institute* (JPI) in Chicago, Melanie Henne shows in this German-language book how Czech and Jewish migrants and their descendants used sport as a strategy for legitimation and in the struggle for recognition. Their behavioral choices were framed by the competing forces of adaptation, rejection, and the reinterpretation of dominant US citizenship concepts and included the integration of cultural self-concepts.



Melanie Henne

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