

## The Challenge of Modernity

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(continued on last page)

# The Challenge of Modernity

*German Social and  
Cultural Studies, 1890–1960*

ADELHEID VON SALDERN

*Translated by Bruce Little  
With a Foreword by Geoff Eley*

*Ann Arbor*

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*For Manfred*



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# Foreword

*Geoff Eley*

Adelheid von Saldern is one of the most interesting historians currently working in Germany. Since the mid-1960s, beginning with a monograph on the collapse of the Weimar Republic, she has steadily amassed a remarkable bibliography on central questions of Germany's history in the twentieth century. Her major interests range from social histories of urbanization and the rise of the labor movement, through extensive studies of the housing question in Germany and elsewhere, to analyses of popular culture between the wars and a pioneering project on radio under Nazism and the GDR.<sup>1</sup> Her work also includes studies of local government, a rich portfolio of publication specifically on Hanover, and an underappreciated book on the *Mittelstand* under the Third Reich.<sup>2</sup>

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1. For Adelheid von Saldern's first book, see *Hermann Dietrich: Ein Staatsmann der Weimarer Republik* (Boppard, 1966). It was followed by *Vom Einwohner zum Bürger: Zur Emanzipation der städtischen Unterschicht Göttingens 1890–1920: Eine sozial- und kommunalhistorische Untersuchung* (Berlin, 1973); *Auf dem Wege zum Arbeiter-Reformismus: Parteilalltag in sozialdemokratischer Provinz: Göttingen 1870–1920* (Frankfurt, 1984); *Neues Wohnen: Wohnungspolitik und Wohnkultur im Hannover der Zwanziger Jahre* (Hanover, 1993); and *Häuserleben: Zur Geschichte städtischen Arbeiterwohnens vom Kaiserreich bis heute* (Bonn, 1995). See also the following edited volumes: *Stadt und Moderne: Hannover in der Weimarer Republik* (Hamburg, 1989); with Sid Auffarth, *Wochenend und schöner Schein: Freizeit und modernes Leben in den Zwanziger Jahren: Das Beispiel Hannover* (Berlin, 1991); with Inge MarBolek, *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden*, vol. 1, *Radio im Nationalsozialismus: Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung* (Tübingen, 1998); vol. 2, *Radio in der DDR der 50er Jahre: Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung* (Tübingen, 1998); with Inge MarBolek, *Radiozeiten: Herrschaft, Alltag, Gesellschaft (1924–1960)* (Potsdam, 1999).

2. For the work on local government, see, for example, "SPD und Kommunalpolitik im Deutschen Kaiserreich," *Archiv für Kommunalwissenschaften* 23 (1984): 193–214; "Geschichte der kommunalen Selbstverwaltung in Deutschland," in Roland Roth and Hellmut Wollmann (eds.), *Kommunalpolitik: Politisches Handeln in den Gemeinden* (Opladen, 1994), 2–19; and "Kommunale Verarmung und Armut in den Kommunen während der

If this impressive inventory seems to reflect the profession's passage from the critical social histories of the 1970s to the new cultural history of the last decade, this is because Adelheid von Saldern played a vital role in pioneering those very innovations. Her *Vom Einwohner zum Bürger*, published in 1973, was an excellent case study in the social and political dynamics of urbanization in the central German university town of Göttingen between the Kaiserreich and the Weimar Republic, which captured admirably the new potentials of the upsurge in social history already under way. Ten years later, *Auf dem Wege zum Arbeiter-Reformismus* then became the companion study, complementing the earlier social history with an analysis of the Göttingen SPD, whose local minute book von Saldern was lucky enough to have discovered.

But this did more than simply extend the previous picture by resting a study of the labor movement's "politics" on top of the previously assembled "material foundations." In the early 1980s, that approach was still the commonest one among labor historians in Germany, who continued to base their arguments about the strengths and weaknesses of Social Democracy before 1914 on structural accounts of industrialization, living standards, and material conditions of life, combined with the repeatedly reiterated claims about the political system's unreformed authoritarianism, the notorious Sonderweg thesis about Germany's peculiarities compared with the "West." In this prevailing approach, the one — the dynamism of German capitalism — created the conditions for the emergence of a modern labor movement, while the other — the political backwardness of an illiberal and repressive imperial state — prevented that labor movement from developing the healthy reformist proclivities of, say, the Labour Party in Britain. Instead, the authoritarian state denied the labor movement such "normal" opportunities for political participation and kept it artificially beholden to a Marxist radicalism more easily superseded or marginalized elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

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großen Krise 1928 bis 1933: Am Beispiel der Finanz- und Wohnungs(bau)politik," *Soziale Bewegungen: Jahrbuch 3* (Frankfurt, 1987), 69–110. For an indication of the work specifically on Hanover, see the references in footnote 30 of the introduction to this volume. For the book on the Mittelstand, see *Mittelstand im "Dritten Reich": Bauern, Handwerker, Einzelhändler* (Frankfurt and New York, 1979); and "The Old Mittelstand, 1890–1939: How 'Backward' were the Artisans?" *Central European History* 25, no. 1 (1992): 27–51.

3. For a critique of the Sonderweg thesis, see David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of Germany History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford and New York, 1984). The locus classicus for the labor history variant of the approach is now the multivolume *Geschichte der Arbeiter und der Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland seit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn), edited by Gerhard A. Ritter for the SPD-affiliated Friedrich Ebert Foundation. See especially Jürgen Kocka's two volumes, *Weder Stand noch Klasse: Unterschichten um 1800* and *Arbeitsverhältnisse und Arbeiterexistenzen: Grundlagen der Klassenbildung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1990); and

In the strongest versions, this approach became linked to further arguments about the cohesiveness of the labor movement's underlying "social-moral milieu," shaped by interlocking structures of residence, employment, sociability, and subcultural organization, which closed working-class sociopolitical identity against the outside.<sup>4</sup> From the early 1960s, this fashioning of a structural explanation for the distinctiveness of German labor history — based on the combination of industrializing modernity, political backwardness, and subcultural defensiveness — became established as one of the fixed referents for the wider historiography of the Kaiserreich, with profound implications for the period after 1914–18. In practice, this dominant system of explanation also severely narrowed the latitude for local studies or studies of particular aspects of the working class, for these were mainly harnessed to the established metanarrative described earlier. Complicating the latter — especially by cultural or ethnographic readings, interpretive approaches to everyday life, or symbolic analysis — might have been academically interesting, it was suggested, but scarcely altered the overriding power of structural determinations, which tragically defined the fate of German labor during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich.

This began to change in the late 1970s, when a few independent voices started questioning the sufficiency of this dominant framework. As with all major intellectual movements with cross-cutting connections to a wide array of academic contexts and broader cultural and political publics, this was a complicated story, whose ramifications I am necessarily oversimplifying here. But creative nodules of historical work began developing at the new universities of Konstanz and Essen around Dieter Groh and Lutz Niethammer, with further links to the Ruhr University in Bochum, in a growing critical distance from the freshly minted social science history then consolidating its West German ascendancy. Equally important, Alf Lüdtke and Hans Medick, two research scholars at the Max Planck Institute of History in Göttingen, began their patient and tireless

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Gerhard A. Ritter and Klaus Tenfelde, *Arbeiter im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871 bis 1914* (Bonn, 1992). For a useful summary statement in English, see Jürgen Kocka, "Problems of Working-Class Formation in Germany: The Early Years, 1800–1875," in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg (eds.), *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton, 1986), 279–351. For further critical discussion, see Geoff Eley, "Class, Culture, and Politics in the Kaiserreich," *Central European History* 27 (1994): 355–75.

4. See especially M. Rainer Lepsius, "Parteiensystem und Sozialstruktur: Zum Problem der Demokratisierung der deutschen Gessellschaft," in Gerhard A. Ritter (ed.), *Die deutschen Parteien vor 1918* (Cologne, 1973), 56–80; and Peter Lösche, "Is the SPD Still a Labor Party? From 'Community of Solidarity' to 'Loosely Coupled Anarchy,'" in David E. Barclay and Eric D. Weitz (eds.), *Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840 to 1990* (New York, 1998), 531–45.

advocacy and over the longer term helped decisively shift this historiographical agenda.<sup>5</sup> These, then, were the endeavors that von Saldern's study of the SPD's local everydayness also pushed forward, presaged by her pioneering essays on municipal socialism and distinguished by the nicely bounded concreteness that the Göttingen materials allowed.<sup>6</sup>

Adelheid von Saldern and her fellow advocates wanted to move social history away from the primacy of structural analysis—the “big structures, large processes, huge comparisons” unremittingly celebrated by the social science historians—but without recurring to the older ground of an institutionally or politically limiting labor history.<sup>7</sup> Instead, they called for a more “qualitative” appreciation of the circumstances under which ordinary people lived their lives, including not only the material conditions of daily existence but the interior world of popular experience in each of those contexts too. By pushing historical analysis into these experiential or subjective domains, they argued, the conceptual and instituted boundaries between the “public” and “private” might be broken down and new ways of connecting the political and cultural realms worked out. This was the really difficult but ultimately decisive terrain of historical investigations, if problems of democratic political culture and the rise of fascism were to be effectively addressed.

Although the mainstream of the West German profession did its best to marginalize these new efforts, they converged with important directions elsewhere and found much sustenance in international arenas of discussion. By the early 1990s, the “new cultural history,” historical anthropology, and cultural studies were all encouraging such transnational conversations in the United States, whose interdisciplinarity further emphasized the importance of going outside the immediate disciplinary boundaries in Germany.

5. See especially Lutz Neithammer and Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, “Wie wohnten Arbeiter im Kaiserreich?” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 16 (1976): 61–134; Jürgen Reulecke and Wolfhard Weber (eds.), *Fabrik—Familie—Feierabend: Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte des Alltags im Industriezeitalter* (Wuppertal, 1978); Dieter Groh, “Base-Processes and the Problem of Organisation: Outline of a Social History Research Project,” *Social History* 4 (1979): 265–83; Hans Medick, “The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Household and Family during the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism,” *Social History* 1 (1976): 291–315; Alf Lütke (ed.), “Bedürfnisse, Erfahrung und Verhalten,” *Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen für Unterricht und Studium (SOWI)* 6 (1977): 147–96.

6. Adelheid von Saldern's *Auf dem Wege* provides the kind of book-length exemplification that the essays edited by Alf Lütke in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, 1995; original German edition, Frankfurt, 1989) programmatically project.

7. See Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York, 1984).

Finally, the growth of *Alltagsgeschichte* in the 1980s had larger political inspirations. At first, the bulk of practical research occurred beyond the official profession in a wider domain of public history, embracing museums, exhibitions, further education, and the programs of local government cultural offices, as well as the mass media, local publishing, and local research projects in schools. This grassroots activity became loosely coordinated through a West German history workshop federation, whose emergence also interacted with the peace movement and the launching of the Greens during the late 1970s and early 1980s. A preponderance of interest in the Third Reich—in uncovering the character of popular experience and coming to terms with the impact of Nazism—sharpened this unmistakable political edge.<sup>8</sup> Adelheid von Saldern was centrally involved in these organizational histories, one of the few tenured professors of history behind the efforts eventually producing the new journal *WerkstattGeschichte*.

Everyday-life historians created a “third space” *between* the older institutional accounts of labor history and the structural approaches to industrialization and working-class formation preferred by social science historians. In *Auf dem Wege zum Arbeiter-Reformismus* and her writings on housing that immediately followed, von Saldern wanted to dig beneath the organized party, trade-union, and associational activity, which had usually identified working-class agency and consciousness, to examine the behaviors and attitudes of ordinary working people themselves. In the informal settings of working-class everydayness, in families, households, streets, neighborhoods, bars, and recreational spaces, as well as in the manifold contexts of the workplace, she and her colleagues argued, specific patterns of sociability and subjectivity were generated that crucially shaped the possible forms of politics. In other words, to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the German labor movement, historians needed to look beyond the established antinomy between the modern industrial economy and backward authoritarian state, which supposedly shaped the character of German labor history in such ironclad ways. Moreover, if that structural framework limited the development of the labor movement, the latter’s institutions themselves acted on the potentials of working-class culture in selective and limiting ways. Once the implications of this insight were grasped, differences and conflicts between the labor movement and the working class could then be properly faced.

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8. For detailed discussion, see Geoff Eley, “Labor History, Social History, *Alltagsgeschichte*: Experience, Culture, and the Politics of Everyday Life: A New Direction for German Social History?” *Journal of Modern History* 61 (1989): 297–343, especially 297–300 and 315–21; and idem, “Nazism, Politics, and the Image of the Past: Thoughts on the West German *Historikerstreit*, 1986–87,” *Past and Present* 121 (1988): 171–208.

Given the broadly progressive inclinations of most labor historians, the importance of such conflicts has been extraordinarily difficult to acknowledge, particularly when socialist politicians or trade unionists appeared in less than democratic lights. Yet for the duration of its history, the socialist tradition has defined itself negatively in relation to many aspects of working-class existence, despite its abstract centering of collective working-class agency as the source of forward-moving historical change and progressive good. The self-improving and moralizing aspects of socialist philosophy always validated certain kinds of workers—and certain attributes of working-classness—over others. The socialist image of the class-conscious proletarian usually projected a manual worker in handicrafts or industry, formed by the dignity of labor and workplace cultures of skill, living by values of sobriety and self-improvement in settled working-class communities, with a respectable family life—all of which, of course, was heavily male defined. Obversely, this positive category of the worker also left out a lot of negatively perceived working-class experience—notably, the roughness and disordered transience of much working-class living, with its dependence on informal economies, casualized labor markets, improvised domestic arrangements, and crime. Entire categories of workers barely figured in the positive ideal at all, including ethnic minorities, the religiously devout, and especially women.

In all of these ways, working-class everydayness became the starting point for a more sophisticated appraisal of the potentials and difficulties of progressive politics. But this was the opposite of a naively romanticized construction of an “alternative” or “real” working class, whose authentic radicalism the labor movement had misrecognized or betrayed. Everyday-life historians certainly argued for the existence of needs and desires—elementary and informal structures of working-class solidarity—whose democratic potentials were tragically neglected, whether in and before 1914, in the German Revolution, or in the failure to head off the rise of Nazism. Yet they also pointed to equally self-interested and narrowly defensive aspects of working-class culture, including the short-term calculus of survivalism and “making it through”; forms of collective intolerance militating against the achievement of broadly based democratic unity; and the structural hierarchies of skill, age, region, ethnicity, religion, and especially gender, which divided the working class and fragmented the efforts at solidarity.<sup>9</sup>

9. See especially Alf Lüdtke, “What Happened to the ‘Fiery Red Glow’? Workers’ Experiences and German Fascism,” in idem (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, 1995), 198–251; “The Appeal of Exterminating ‘Others’: German Workers and the Limits of Resistance,” in Michael Geyer and John W. Boyer (eds.), *Resistance against the Third Reich, 1933–1990* (Chicago, 1994), 53–74.

Gendered cultures of patriarchal and work-related masculinity were the most persistent of these internal systems of difference. But although Alltagsgeschichte and gender history possessed natural affinities in this regard, the actual convergence of these interests was very slow to occur: during the 1980s, very few of Alltagsgeschichte's practitioners noticed the absence of women's experience from their writing and research or began addressing the masculinity of their working-class subjects. Likewise, the most important advances in women's history tended to come from elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> For example, Lüdtkke's highly original concept of Eigensinn showed how the complex forms of workers' self-affirmation in the workplace, including pride in skill and the dignity of labor, could become a source of depoliticizing consolation in times of fascist political repression, so that the best resources for a positive working-class identity linked to democracy, consistently celebrated by labor historians, came to promote acquiescence and even complicity in the antidemocratic public culture of the Third Reich.<sup>11</sup> Yet this analysis was not pushed further to explore the prerequisites of patriarchal and sexualized masculinity these constructions of work-defined positive identity also entailed. The coherence and efficacy of identities in the workplace could certainly be linked to egalitarian family relationships between women and men, but they more often presumed gendered inequalities of domestic and sexual power.

These brief reflections should make the importance and originality of Adelheid von Saldern's work much clearer. During the 1980s and 1990s, she became one of the best practitioners of the approaches Alltagsgeschichte helped to pioneer, in ways that both realized some of their best purposes and pushed them into new and exciting terrain. Thus, her study of the Göttingen SPD in *Auf dem Wege zum Arbeiter-Reformismus* was not just an excellent account of the vagaries of socialist organizing in the unpromising environment of a small provincial town dominated by the official culture of university and garrison, with a "traditional" social structure and little developed industry. It was far more an attempt to understand the rigidities of a socialist subculture that failed to work with those limitations. Faced with the challenge of its local circumstances, von Saldern argues, the Göttingen SPD turned inward, taking refuge in the party's overarching ideology and national program and evading the tasks of local strategy. But while preserving a seemingly radical class-political

10. For one key exception, see Dorothee Wierling, "A History of Everyday Life and Gender Relations: On Historical and Historiographical Relationships," in Alf Lüdtkke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, 1995), 148–68.

11. See the essays in Alf Lüdtkke, *Eigen-Sinn: Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen, und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg, 1993).

vision, this blocked the party from intervening effectively in the local arena or from developing an effective grassroots political style. Even more, this retreat into the abstract territory of the SPD's formal revolutionism immunized local activists from addressing their politics to the everyday actualities of living under capitalism—to the practical, personal, and experiential dimensions of ordinary working-class life.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, von Saldern's book was one of the earliest attempts to get inside the tense and difficult relationship between the SPD and its putative working-class supporters, which traditional labor historians had tended all too easily to obscure. By exploring the gaps between SPD practice and its idealized constituency, her analysis inserted itself *between* the social history of working-class formation and the rise of the labor movement, in ways intended to pose that relationship as a difficult and open-ended problem rather than an assumed causality or foregone conclusion. After conducting one of the earliest local studies of the labor movement's social history in *Vom Einwohner zum Bürger*, therefore, von Saldern also became one of the first to respond to the Alltagsgeschichte's new possibilities. Through a variety of publications, she then translated the resulting insights into a general argument about the labor movement's historiography, for which the first two chapters in this volume are excellent illustrations.

By exploring the areas of tension linking and separating the Social Democrats and their working-class supporters, von Saldern prized open the concept of the "social-moral milieu" on which so much of the social history of German politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries relies. In the resulting analytical space, she reclaimed the area of "everydayness" for its political significance, pushing past the classical Marxist dismissals of everyday environments as the scene of unconsciousness and alienation and reevaluating their place in working-class subjectivity. Here, the housing question became an ideal context of study—simultaneously a classic object of socialist analysis and concern, a growth area of the new social history since the 1970s, and an undertheorized site of political action, whose neglect the emergent everyday-life histories were trying to address.

Once again, von Saldern moved from more orthodox treatments of SPD local government politics and programmatic practice, through studies of housing reform and new working-class housing developments in the 1920s, to imaginative and searching analyses of domestic culture and

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12. In other words, *Auf dem Wege* becomes far more than a local party history based on the exceptional source of the SPD's local minute book, because von Saldern reads that local archive against the theoretical, interpretive, and ethnographic possibilities Alltagsgeschichte had started to provide.

the broader definitional contests over the meaning of home.<sup>13</sup> In this context, her work converged with another area of exciting innovation during the 1980s, namely, the study of “social rationalization” during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. As a broader discourse of modernizing social reform, encompassing large-scale industrial planning, the structure of the firm, the priorities of social policy, and efforts at molding family and domestic life, social rationalization became the focus of pioneering work in German women’s history during the 1980s, with exceptionally fruitful collaborations between West Germany and the United States.<sup>14</sup>

In common with the latter, von Saldern developed a sophisticated double analytic of power and contestation in order to investigate this important area. On the one hand, she captured the clear neo-Foucauldian or disciplinary logics recognizable in government interventions; in the developing machinery of social work practice; and in the social policy initiatives of industrial firms, trade unions, and other private agencies. But on the other hand, she saw equally clearly the room for conflict and the ability of those targeted by the new policies to bend and reshape them to their own ends—what her own introduction to this volume, which follows, calls the “subjective appropriation process” of “compliance, refusal, subversion, or a complex combination of attitudes.” As she says, social rationalization was the opposite of a fixed term or closed concept. As in her earlier study of the SPD’s local practice, *Alltagsgeschichte* afforded the tools for opening up the gaps and dissonances between the implementation of policies and their encounter with the complex cultural resources of the people affected. While the reformists’ vision of a “clean modernity” motivating the Social Democratic housing policies of the 1920s proved insensitive to many of the actual needs of their working-class recipients, the coordinates of daily life also remained disconnected from political culture.

At the same time, the social agenda of housing policies had some profound long-term effects. On the positive side, definite material improvements for limited sections of the working class combined with a new sense of entitlement to welfare during the Weimar Republic to

13. In addition to the chapters in this volume, see the two books *Häuserleben* and *Neues Wohnen* and the edited collection *Stadt und Moderne*; also see “The Workers’ Movement and Cultural Patterns on Urban Housing Estates and in Rural Settlements in Germany and Austria during the 1920s,” *Social History* 15 (1990): 333–54.

14. See Atina Grossman, “Gender and Rationalization: Questions about the German/American Comparison,” *Social Politics* (1997): 6–18; Dagmar Reese, Eve Rosenhaft, Carola Sachse, and Tilla Siegel (eds.), *Rationale Beziehungen? Geschlechterverhältnisse im Rationalisierungsprozess* (Frankfurt, 1993); Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (New York and Oxford, 1994).

broaden the understanding of rights and citizenship. On the other side, of course, these progressive potentials were brutally cut off by the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. More insidiously, the new moralizing talk of cleanliness and hygienic living blurred into more authoritarian discourses of social order and social hygiene, where the racialized versions of the Nazis were already working aggressively away. If the new pedagogies of improvement and orderliness in the 1920s remained profoundly different from the fascist social policy regime that supplanted them, they also contrasted with the repressive systems of policing and social administration under the empire before 1914. In common with other recent studies of the Weimar welfare state, von Saldern's work provides a much-needed basis for thinking these specificities through.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the second section of this collection, "Social Rationalization and Gender," brings together fascinating treatments of the interrelations among housing reform, domestic culture, social policy, women's history, and the mundane dynamics of working-class life. Here, von Saldern makes good *Alltagsgeschichte's* neglect of women, not only bringing domestic space into public view but also clarifying the political significance of domestic culture in its gendered dimensions, while retrieving women's everydayness from the narrowly constructed histories of family where it has been conventionally subsumed. She also offers a necessary comparative perspective, posing the differing valencies of social rationalization in Germany and the United States.

The final section of this volume, "Popular Culture and Politics," shows a further broadening of *Alltagsgeschichte* toward the study of commercialized and mass-mediated popular culture, using the approaches usually summarized these days as "cultural studies."<sup>16</sup> The new mass culture of the 1920s, crystallizing around movies, dance halls, spectator sports, radio, advertising, cosmetics, and fashion, proved deeply antithetical to the established socialist ideals of "ennobling" the working class by expanding its access to existing cultural goods. Indeed, mass culture was perceived by socialists as steadily undermining the labor movement's organized culture of self-improvement. For the high-minded architects of cultural socialism, the emergent cultures of consumption were the new enemy, threatening "traditional" working-class values, corrupting

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15. See especially Young-Sun Hong, *Welfare, Modernity, and the Weimar State, 1919–1933* (Princeton, 1998); David F. Crew, *Germans on Welfare: From Weimar to Hitler* (New York and Oxford, 1998); Greg Eghigian, *Making Security Social: Disability, Insurance, and the Birth of the Social Entitlement State in Germany* (Ann Arbor, 2000).

16. Here see Geoff Eley, "Problems with Culture: German History after the Linguistic Turn," *Central European History* 31 (1998): 197–227.

popular taste, and seducing the young with cheap thrills and superficial pleasures.

As von Saldern points out, this implies a manipulative concept of popular culture. In the historiography of Nazism, it encouraged simplified understandings of ideology, in which the Third Reich's cultural policies were viewed reductively as emanations from the regime's basic drive for control, instrumentalized into machineries of conformity and propaganda. For many years, this model of ideology pervaded approaches to the "massified" popular culture of the Nazi regime, whether through Cold War notions of totalitarianism or their left-wing mirror image in arguments influenced by the Frankfurt school about the culture industry. The new interdisciplinarity of cultural studies, reinforced by an interest in the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu, has clearly been helpful in transcending these older approaches. Arguments about the growing centrality of cultural distinctions of consumption and style under the conditions of late capitalism have usefully influenced discussions of the earlier-twentieth-century contexts.<sup>17</sup>

In von Saldern's work, they conjoin creatively with the impulse coming from *Alltagsgeschichte*, itself reworked through the impact of feminist theories of gender. The sequence of chapters in the final part of this collection—a case study of the local politics of leisure in the early years of the Weimar Republic, two treatments of the highly contested public discourse surrounding popular culture on Left and Right, and a fascinating discussion of radio and its pedagogies in the GDR—beautifully maps the territories where future work on popular culture and politics will have to be done. All the key themes are present, including the broadening of historical horizons to new subject matters and the requisite interdisciplinary approaches; the need to integrate studies of popular culture and leisure into the general social and political histories of the twentieth century; the complex interrelations between politics and entertainment under the violently contrasting regimes of democratic capitalism, fascism, and state socialism; the importance of bringing the

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17. See Alf Lüdtke, Inge Marßolek, and Adelheid von Saldern (eds.), *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum in Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1996), 213–45; Scott Denham, Irene Kacandes, and Jonathan Petropoulos (eds.), *A User's Guide to German Cultural Studies* (Ann Arbor, 1997); Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor, 1996). And for three pioneering studies of the postwar era: Erica Carter, *How German Is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* (Ann Arbor, 1997); Heide Fenhrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill, 1995); Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley, 2000).

histories and historiography of popular culture into dialogue with labor history; popular culture's centrality to questions of political order, both under democratic political systems and in resisting the totalizing ambitions of dictatorship; and the need to read these questions for their gendered assumptions and meanings.

There is much more to be said in contextualizing the chapters in this volume, and these brief remarks cannot substitute for the commentaries in von Saldern's own introduction, still less for the excellence of the chapters themselves. The author's importance in pioneering new approaches, in the institutional and intellectual environs of a West German historical profession persistently hostile to them, cannot be emphasized too strongly. For many years, she was one of only a very few women holding full professorial positions in German history departments. She also played a key role in the early organizing efforts of the history workshop movement during the 1980s and the subsequent establishment of the journal *WerkstattGeschichte*. During the 1980s and 1990s, she responded creatively to the rise of gender history. In all of these ways, her work is distinguished by a willingness to take intellectual risks by responding to new historiographical challenges.

In her early work on the SPD and the labor movement; in the fashioning of a powerful corpus of theory, methodology, and empirical scholarship for the emergent claims of *Alltagsgeschichte*; in opening up the entire domain of popular culture as well as particular subjects like sports and radio; and in demonstrating the unavoidable necessities of gendered analysis—in all of these respects, Adelheid von Saldern has become one of the most challenging and experimental twentieth-century historians currently working in Germany. *Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany* is delighted to bring this excellent historian's work into wider circulation.

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