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Editor's Introduction

With the end of the Cold War and the onset of novel forms of globalization in the 1990s, it sometimes seems as if a chasm has opened up between the present and the recent past. Of course, it is a familiar lament among those of us who teach high school and college students that, as we grow older, they become "too young" to remember and share with us certain defining moments of our lived past. But it is particularly disconcerting to ponder the frequently repeated claim by politicians and commentators in the United States that the world changed completely on September 11 and the implication that what went before does not matter anymore. What many of us have taken, for better or worse, as the historical backdrop of the present—fascism and communism, colonialism and anticolonialism, the rivalry of the postwar blocs led by the United States and the Soviet Union, the popular upheavals and social movements across the "three worlds," the elusive promise of the modern nation—has apparently receded into the shadows, if not vanished utterly like the twin towers of the World Trade Center.

Of course, it is not such a sharp or irrevocable break; far from disappearing, the past sometimes circles around only to confront us again in the future. Indeed, some journalists, scholars, and public intellectuals have from the beginning of the current crisis called attention to its overdetermined, historically specific economic, political, and ideological nature. If we consider more generally the recent histories of European countries and their former colonies, and Russia and the other former Soviet republics, the last decade has seen numerous discoveries, commemorations, and controversies concerning events once forgotten or suppressed. The disturbing disclosures include the lengthening list of German and foreign perpetrators of and collaborators with National Socialist enslavement and extermination during the Second World War and the Holocaust; newly opened records of the fate of victims of

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Stalinist repression; compelling testimonies about the human suffering and staggering loss of life during the partition of India; documentation setting forth some of the decisions and policies that brought about the Palestinian *nakba* (catastrophe); admissions of the use of torture during the French war in Algeria; confirmation of suspicions about the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo; revelations of brutal violations by security forces in the countries of "liberal democracy" as well as "actually existing socialism." But what we are witnessing is not simply the return of the repressed in history. The past always exceeds what we know as its history, whether official, popular, or academic. To the degree we respond to the pressure of the past on our reductive accounts of modern and contemporary history, and come to recognize the mingling together of what we had assigned to the past and the present, the production of new and critical histories becomes possible.

Changing real and symbolic borders, the reunification of Germany, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, the independence of Ukraine, the growing autonomy of Catalonia and Scotland, the possible incorporation of the Baltic states into NATO, and that of Turkey into the European Union underline the fact that "Europe" and its "nation-states" are not self-evident units of historical analysis. It is tempting, for example, to regard the division of Europe into East and West as an artificial phenomenon of the Cold War and the reemergence of Central Europe as the resumption of interrupted historical patterns of political and economic development, and thus a more natural or normal state of affairs. But what is this Central Europe, in which Turkish, Vietnamese, and other immigrants and refugees are murdered, Gypsy or Roma people are persecuted, and anti-Semitism is manifesting itself again? If we are ever to escape the binary historiographical logic that for so long has produced, on the one hand, a liberal, progressive, modern Europe and, on the other hand, a shifting array of exceptional, backward, violent Europes—Nazi Germany, the Balkans, and overseas displacements in the form of colonies like the Congo—we need to deconstruct the whole idea of "Western civilization" so recently and revealingly defended by the right-wing Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. We need to focus critical historical inquiry on the discursive, social, and institutional processes that have continuously defined and redefined insiders and outsiders as the basis and condition of belonging and citizenship in all of the "national" polities (and now in the new supranational European polity).

In an age of decolonization and globalization, such work must find ways of bringing the local and the global into a single analytic field. Millions of British, French, Belgian, and Dutch citizens and residents are either immigrants from the ex-colonies of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, or their descendants, and these settlers, as Paul Gilroy has aptly called them, are challenging the racialized limits of Britishness, Frenchness, and Europeanness itself. The old Muslim communities in Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia have been joined by new commu-

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nities spread throughout Europe. Notwithstanding Berlusconi's reactionary remarks, Southern Europe from Portugal and Spain to Greece and Bulgaria is really a series of contact zones or borderlands that simultaneously enact and transcend the supposed historic boundary between Europe and the Islamic world. It is interesting to note that travelers from Victorian Britain often expressed the view, as they entered the Mediterranean reaches of Europe, that they were already in Africa or the Orient. In fact, as the Egyptian novelist Ahdaf Soueif has wisely reminded us in response to rhetoric about the "clash of civilizations," the same is true in reverse on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean.

In this issue, we publish six articles that historicize and problematize citizenship, national identity, race, and diaspora in contemporary Europe. Appearances can be deceptive. These contributions to "French" or "German" history offer a fascinating glimpse of new work and new directions in what is a transnational and transcultural field. And, we might add, they demonstrate that contemporary history is an interdisciplinary field; only three of our six authors work in history departments.

Joseph Perry traces the complex reception of the "Madonna of Stalingrad," a German chaplain's drawing that survived the titanic battle between the Red Army and the Nazi invaders in 1942–43 and came to represent a disavowal of the aggressive nature of the conflict for West Germans. Perry reveals the troubling ways in which its meaning in the Bonn and Berlin republics still draws from the wartime meanings originally attached to it by frontline soldiers, Nazi propagandists, and ordinary Germans.

Arguing against the notion that it is only now being remembered, Richard Derderian explores the uneven formation of collective memory of the Algerian War of Independence among different constituencies, such as *pied noirs* and veterans, in France. Pointing to the possibility of a wider, critical public memory, he highlights the creative and political work of Algerian immigrants and French Algerians not only in giving voice to Algerian experiences of the war, but also in breaking the silence surrounding deadly police actions against FLN (Front de Libération Nationale) and antiwar activists in France.

Combining the methods and concerns of political economy and cultural studies, Rita Chin analyzes the phenomenon of West Germany's "guest workers." In particular, she produces a sensitive reading of the literary response of the German Turkish poet Aras Ören to the struggles of immigrants, their children, and their German fellow workers and neighbors. Entangled in the crushing structures of capitalism and racism and the conflictual solidarities of class, community, and nation, the characters in his epic poem seemingly inhabit the same world as the actual immigrants. They keep this world alive in the imagination of readers, even after the West German state ended the guest-worker program.

Tina Campt reflects on the complex negotiations of identity and location that arose when she, a researcher from the United States, interviewed an African Ger-

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man man about his life and encountered the gentle intercultural scrutiny of her informant. While African American culture enjoys global influence around the African diaspora, its relevance for African Germans presents a complicated question. Even Paul Gilroy's suggestive model of the hybrid and syncretistic communities of the "black Atlantic" is of limited purchase. Understanding the African German experience requires coming to terms with the historically contingent emergence and survival of this community under colonialism, fascism, two wars, two occupations, and, for a time, two states with continuing but different relationships to Africa.

Addressing the controversy surrounding the legislative establishment of civil unions for unmarried couples, both homosexual and heterosexual, in France, Catherine Raissiguier uncovers and examines the connections between racist and homophobic discourse in the rhetoric of conservative and rightist politicians. Activists in the movements of lesbian and gay people, the HIV positive, and the *sans papiers* (undocumented immigrants and refugees), and in the wider struggle for equal human rights and radical and plural democracy cannot afford to discount such convergences that derive at least in part from mainstream French republican discourse.

Finally, John Grech combines images and text to create an ironic and insightful perspective on postmodern Berlin, a city where massive construction projects are burying, obliterating, rebuilding, and replacing urban spaces, but where the observer can nonetheless discern the layered outlines—some faint or fading, some still sharp and clear—of the Berlins of Bismarck, Hitler, and the Cold War and wonder about the future of this capital city/city of capital.

In "Reflections," we are delighted to publish a wideranging correspondence between the novelist Amitav Ghosh and the historian Dipesh Chakrabarty about the latter's important new book, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2000). A leading scholar of South Asian studies and history and a member of the *Subaltern Studies* Editorial Collective, Chakrabarty has emerged as a major contributor to the theoretical critique and reconstruction of historical analysis, we might say, paraphrasing Janet Abu-Lughod, *after* European hegemony. Chakrabarty has found a wonderful interlocutor in Ghosh, a writer who infuses a profound sense of global history into his work (see, for example, his extraordinary account of his time in Egypt, *In an Antique Land*, and his latest novel, *The Glass Palace*, set in Burma and Malaya). As Duane Corpis points out in his introduction to the correspondence, the result is a rich and exciting intellectual exchange between Ghosh and Chakrabarty.

In "Teaching Radical History," we offer four essays on film and history. Rachel Greenwald, Mona Siegel, Michael Vann, and Laura Mayhall each focus on one or two films they use in their classes. They discuss how the analysis and interpretation of films can enhance students' understanding of the larger themes of their courses.

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Although our four contributors are Europeanists, what they have to say about the pedagogical possibilities of film should be of interest to all teachers. We are also happy to present "(Re)Views" and, last but not least, the spring collection of R. J. Lambrose's line of distressed history in "The Abusable Past."

Many people helped put this issue together. I would especially like to thank Van Gosse, Kavita Philip, Antoinette Burton, Joshua Cole, Manfred Enssle, Heidi Fehrenbach, Yaël Simpson Fletcher, and Hugh Hudson.

—Ian Christopher Fletcher

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