

December 2000

Message from the Chair

Welcome to this, the first primarily electronic version of the ASGP Newsletter. I do hope you find the new medium and format to be useful and usable. I admit to a certain fondness for the old hard copy, not least because I edited and produced it for several years! But most of us now have reliable electronic communication at our fingertips [those who don't still get the hard copy], and electronic dispatch is vastly cheaper and much quicker. We also hope in due course that this format will allow us to update the Newsletter and issue supplementary bulletins on a more frequent basis.

For those discomfited by change, there will be some succour in that the content of the Newsletter follows well-trodden paths. The first of these is to update you on preparations for the next **Annual Conference**, set to take place in **Birmingham** on **26-27 April 2001** (preceded, as usual by the Annual Graduate Conference on 25 April). The theme of the Annual Conference this year is Parties and Party Systems in Germany. This will involve round tables on developments in the parties, and sessions on party system dynamics and party funding controversies. The keynote, **German Politics Lecture** will be given by **Professor Peter Mair** of the University of Leiden. Other guest speakers include **Gerald Kleinfeld** (Arizona) and **Christian Soe** (California). A full version of the programme, together with booking details will be sent out in the New Year. I hope very much that you can attend what promises to be a top-class event.

Gerry Kleinfeld and Christian Soe will be coming to Birmingham as part of an intensifying spirit of cooperation between the US **German Studies Association** (of which Gerry is Executive Director) and the ASGP. One of the items of business we will have in Birmingham will be to finalise arrangements for taking a substantial delegation of ASGP members to the **GSA Conference in Washington DC in October 2001**. We are currently exploring ways of subsidising this and hope to have more to report by the AGM next April.

A further novelty at the AGM is going to be the award of the **inaugural ASGP Postgraduate Prize** for the best paper written by a graduate student. Pioneered by the ASGP Secretary, Simon Green, this new prize is designed to reflect and sustain the graduate input and *Nachwuchs* which has strengthened the Association so much over the last six years or so. We have had a very good response to the call for papers, and a small 'jury' of myself, Marianne Howarth and Thomas Saalfeld will be reading the submissions over the Christmas vacation ...

... which brings me to **seasonal greetings**. The fact that the 'season' this year is as much that of the RAE as much as the Christmas break means that things may not be as relaxing as usual. Nonetheless, the very best of wishes to all our members and their departments for both!

Charlie Jeffery

Announcement: ASGP Annual Conference 2001

The Annual Conference 2001 will be held at the Institute for German Studies, University of Birmingham. The theme will be *Political Parties in Germany* and we are delighted to announce that Prof. Peter Mair (University of Leiden) has accepted our invitation to deliver the now traditional German Politics lecture at the conference.

The Graduate Conference is scheduled for Wednesday, 25 April 2001, with the main conference following on Thursday and Friday, 26 – 27 April 2001. As in previous years, we hope to be able to offer an attractive package deal, and details and booking forms will be available in the New Year.

Please note new contact details for the ASGP Secretary and Treasurer

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Message from the Treasurer

Please note that subscriptions are now due for 2001. The rates as agreed at the AGM in April are the following:

Full	£28
Full Postgraduate	£14
Basic	£10
Basic Postgraduate	£5

If you haven't done so already, members are urged to arrange to pay their subscriptions by standing order. The ASGP's banking details are:

Nat West
New Mills Branch
25 Union Road
New Mills SK22 3EP
Sort Code 01-06-05
Account Number 83994327

If you do already have a standing order, please ensure that the correct amount is debited from your account.

Full Members: Please also arrange for the standing order to be paid in early January to ensure that your subscription to German Politics is not disrupted

If paying by cheque, please note my new contact details above.

Prof. Wolfgang Streeck, ASGP Honorary President

Excerpt from *laudatio* held by Willie Paterson on the occasion of the award of a Doctor in Laws honoris causa to Prof. Streeck, Berlin, 8 November 2000.

Too much reading of certain British newspapers could help to fix a view that we are an exceedingly insular people clinging to the past. This can clearly only be a very partial view of what has been and continues to be one of the world's most influential and successful trading powers. It is also wholly uncharacteristic of British universities where the norm continues to be an open market for ideas regardless of origin.

One indication of this openness is the way in which German sociologists have been so influential in wider British academic debates. In the United Kingdom, sociology has traditionally been accorded a modest place in the academy. It is indicative that Oxford only created a Department of Sociology last month. This outsider role of sociology makes the influence of Jürgen Habermas, Ulrich Beck and Wolfgang Streeck all the more remarkable. Ralf Dahrendorf is of course in a category of his own as a member of the House of Lords. Life peers may not be called “immortals” like the members of the Academie Française but being a denizen of the House of Lords is a pretty fair substitute this side of eternity.

In locating an individual in a wider setting a convenient though inadequate label is that of generation. This approach is especially tempting in the German case given the cataclysmic events of the last century. Its limitations quickly become apparent when applied to any really significant thinker, and this is most decidedly the case with Wolfgang Streeck. His decision to study sociology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt in the 1960s was clearly not without influence during these early years, but his later professional career and huge achievements are more easily recognised as being the antimony of the conventional clichés about “the ‘68” generation.

It is often asserted that the post ‘68 generation had less of an international vocation than the preceding post war generations and the anti-Vietnam protests precluded an easy familiarity with the United States for many. Wolfgang Streeck's further education, professional career and research interests, by contrast, have been international and contained within the triangle Germany, the United States and Britain.

In Germany, he took his doctorate at Frankfurt and his *Habilitation* at Bielefeld. After two years in Münster, he was a Research Fellow at the International Institute of Management in Berlin and then Senior Fellow at the Wissenschaftszentrum in Berlin between 1976 and 1988. Since 1995, he has been Director of the Max Planck Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung in Cologne. This German academic persona has been interleaved with prolonged experience of the United States, which began with a

Harkness Fellowship at Columbia University from 1972-76. From 1988-95, he was Professor of Sociology and Industrial Relations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Wolfgang's Streeck's interaction with Britain has been equally intense. He was the inaugural Leverhulme Visiting Professor at Warwick University in 1985/86 and his empirical work, beginning with his studies of industrial relations in the rail and automobile industries, has often had Britain as the significant other. His work on the automobile industry which included observation of the mini assembly lines first brought him to Birmingham. Perhaps even more importantly his whole intellectual approach and style and his deep knowledge of the Anglo-American world have generated enormous respect in British academic life, indeed his closest academic interlocutors and collaborators, like Wyn Grant, Richard Hyman, David Soskice and Colin Crouch have often been British. The respect in which he is held in Britain was underlined by his recent election to the Presidency of the Association for the Study of German Politics, the largest multidisciplinary group for the study of German politics and society in Britain.

This respect is by no means confined to British academic circles. A senior British diplomat once said to me, "Wolfgang Streeck is the only German professor whom we would allow to brief UK ministers without our presence". It goes without saying that no senior British official would dream of allowing a British professor to brief a British or any other minister in their absence.

It is a common place that 1968 in the sense of a major challenge to the established conventions of British academic life falls into the category of an English summer, i.e., it only happened in London and then only for a day. The hurricane that was to sweep away much that was familiar and venerable in the academic world came more than a decade later, and would be associated with a lady with a handbag and, unlike 1968, it is still blowing. One reason for the lack of carrying power of the ideas of Berlin, Frankfurt and Paris in Britain was the often impenetrable rhetoric in which they were clothed. Here their advocates sometimes seemed to be following the example of Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board who after giving a long and complicated answer to a sensitive market question concluded by saying, "if I've made myself clear, you've misunderstood me". Wolfgang Streeck by contrast communicates with an economy, precision and clarity that makes us want to claim him as a "heimlicher Brite", i.e., we wish we could write like him.

Wolfgang Streeck's chosen area of enquiry is equally distinctive. For some in German academic life, 1968 had triggered an interest in a narrow range of theoretical preconceptions that only rarely found an echo in mainstream international social science or even in the pet concerns of their own society. From the beginning, however, Wolfgang Streeck has been concerned with the empirical examination of and theoretical reflection on the world of work and the role of institutions in economic performance. His work has always been comparative in scope and intention and quickly became part of the international social science mainstream.

He has always been concerned with the role of interest groups and associations in economic life and much of his early work was devoted to the examination of trade unions. In the 1980s this broadened into a focus on the role of interest groups in governance. Much of this work was carried out with Philippe Schmitter and separately and together they produced the defining studies of corporatism, neo-corporatism and

private interest government. In the last decade and a half, he has concentrated on comparative capitalisms. Here, his unmatched understanding of the triad of Germany, Britain and the United States places him and the Max Planck Institute at the leading edge internationally.

Deeply involved in public affairs in Germany since his return from the United States, he has played a key role in advising and conducting studies for public policy-makers on 'benchmarking' and proposing major reforms of the way in which *Mitbestimmung* is practised. Wolfgang Streeck is so enviably well organised and possesses such inexhaustible reserves of intellectual energy that these concerns have made no discernible impact on his academic contribution

In the several roles of comparativist, social scientist and policy advisor, Wolfgang Streeck has made a huge and distinctive contribution to the way we think about some of the most central issues in our two societies.

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry was convened in the spring of 1998 to assess what language needs the United Kingdom required in the next 20 years and what policies were required to meet those needs. The Inquiry Committee presented its findings in May of this year with a report called "Languages: The Next Generation" which made a number of important recommendations. The first point to be made is that the inquiry was far reaching, encompassing every aspect of language education and language needs in the new global economy. In this respect, the report is comprehensive and clearly stakes out in its recommendations a national strategy for languages as a key skill in the economy of the 21st century. The substance of the inquiry report has been taken up with enthusiasm by those involved in language education; The University Council of Modern Languages, for example, has initiated a proactive programme for disseminating the inquiry's findings. However, the report has had relatively little resonance with the wider public and there is little evidence that the government has, as yet, initiated a programme of implementation arising from the report's recommendation.

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry is of great importance for the ASGP as policies arising from it may well determine the future of foreign language learning in the United Kingdom. In particular, the place of German in the national framework of the UK educational system will determine the future number of scholars and researchers working in the wide field of German Studies. Thus, the National Development Plan, proposed by the inquiry for languages in higher education will, in particular, have an effect on the availability of graduates with German in combination with other disciplines. The ASGP can have a role in assuring that positive strategies are implemented and individual members could well lobby wherever possible for the very sound recommendations that the Nuffield Languages Inquiry made.

The evidence from business and public services is both clear and consistent in that current provision for languages does not meet national needs. Given German speaking Europe's central position, in political and economic terms, in Europe the case for reversing the declining demand for German language provision is strong. In addition, given the expansion of the European Union eastwards, there is a further case for

German, as there is a German language base in the central and eastern European nation states seeking membership of the EU. This again strengthens the argument that the German language is encouraged to be more widely taught at all educational levels.

The ASGP has a vested interest in German language provision in the UK and the membership should be aware of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry and its findings.

Information about the Inquiry is available on <http://www.nuffield.org>. Reports, and the CD-ROM version, which also contains a selection of evidence received by the Inquiry, can be obtained from The English Company (UK) Ltd:
Tel: 01908 310370
Fax: 01908 310372
sales@english.co.uk
<http://www.english.co.uk>

Professor Karl Koch
Head of Modern Languages
South Bank University, London

*****STOP PRESS*****

The Institute for German Studies Discussion Papers are now available FREE of charge for use by academics and students. Papers are available in most areas of German domestic, foreign, security and economic policy, and are published in PDF format on the IGS website:

<http://www.bham.ac.uk/igs>

GradNet News

The coordinators are Emma Gittus (Birmingham) Gittusej@hhs.bham.ac.uk and Simon Pearce (Nottingham) siploos@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Call for Papers for the GradNet Conference. 'The Berliner Republik

We welcome proposals for papers which deal with the issues of continuity and change in the political, economic and social situation in and regarding Germany. We plan to keep a broad theme, but will focus on the new capital ten years after Unification. We hope that this will encourage students to present papers on issues of transition in German Politics.

**Deadline for submission of abstracts (200 words): 31 January 2001.
Please send them to Emma or Simon at their addresses above.**

**Workshop in Berlin: ‘Das Phänomen des Extremismus’
‘The Emergence of Extremism’**

Saturday, 13 January 2001

Zimmer 121, Osteuropa Institut, Gary Straße 55, Dahlem, Berlin

Programme:

10.00 -12.30 Extremismus aus europäischer Sicht

12.30 - 1.30 Mittagessen

1.30 - 3.30 Linksextremismus in Deutschland

3.30 - 4.00 Kaffee

4.00 - 6.00 Rechtsextremismus in Deutschland

Ich möchte Sie darauf hinweisen, daß die Möglichkeit immer noch besteht, Ihre Arbeit vorstellen zu können. Es ist dringend notwendig mich zu informieren, ob Sie ein Referat halten möchten oder als Zuschauer teilnehmen wollen. Der Größe des Zimmers wegen müssen wir leider die Anzahl der Teilnehmer begrenzen.

If you would like an English translation, please inform me as soon as possible.

May I point out that it is possible to present papers in English at the workshop.

Simon Pearce

siploos@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Please would all ASGP graduate members remember to send Emma or Simon any changes of address – postal and e-mail.

Note to all ASGP Members

Thank you very much to all members who sent their e-mail addresses to Graham to ensure that they would receive the electronic version of the Newsletter. However, some members may still have received a printed version. Please could you re-send your e-mail contact details to Graham at his new address.

Many thanks for your patience.

Dr Graham Timmins: graham.timmins@stir.ac.uk

Just write **E-mail Newsletter** in the subject. No further information or text is required unless the e-mail address to which the Newsletter should be sent differs to that on the confirmation e-mail.

***The ASGP Newsletter is edited by Astrid Küllmann-Lee and Beatrice Harper.
It may be accessed at the ASGP website: <<http://www.bham.ac.uk/ASGP.htm>>.
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