

Title: 1946. Before and After.

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Summaries:

- Beatrice Vierneisel, Das Schlosspark Ensemble in Steglitz, 1880-1949

This essay surveys the cultural history of the so-called Schlosspark Ensemble in Steglitz. During the period under consideration, the Schlosspark Ensemble consisted of the area enclosed by four streets in Steglitz: Schlossstraße, Wrangelstraße, Wulffstraße, and Grenzburgstraße. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the area was the site of popular open-air theater festivals. Shortly before World War I, the local government had begun to plan for a new theater on the Albrechtstraße, but after 1918 – as Steglitz was absorbed into Greater Berlin and public funding was scarce – a private investment consortium stepped forward to realize an ambitious new cultural center. Spearheaded by three individuals, Robert Friedlaender-Prechtel (1874-1950), Joachim Tiburtius (1889-1967), and Hans Lebede (1883-1945), the plans initially put forward by their “Schlosspark Gesellschaft mbH” included theater, concerts, cinema, exhibitions, and public lectures. Drawing upon unpublished collections housed in the Berlin state archives and the German federal archives, as well as published sources, Vierneisel’s account touches on many subjects of interest. Readers should not expect a straightforward chronological approach, nor a detailed exploration of the architecture of the proposed and realized structures, but instead a tour de force of the cultural politics of Steglitz focusing mainly on the 1920s. Readers learn much about the tastes and personalities of Steglitz’s theater and cinema goers during the fabled Weimar era, but her essay also informs us about the politics and finance of culture – without ever losing sight of the larger historical context. Vierneisel ends with a glimpse into the fascinating rebirth of the Schlosspark Theater Steglitz and other entertainment plans for the area after 1945, sharing with the reader both what she has learned and, for the time being at least, what remains unanswered. Her account is rich in details, underscoring the point that popular culture during the Weimar era bore a good deal more in common with the tastes of the 1930s and 1940s than is generally acknowledged.

- Gerhard Niebergall, Israel and Sara at Zehlendorf’s Civil Registry Office

Gerhard Niebergall essay reminds us of the special role of the civil registry office in German public life, in our time as well as during the Nazi era and its immediate aftermath. As Reich measures to discriminate against Germans of Jewish descent multiplied during the 1930s, local civil registry officials sprang into action. Niebergall’s focus is the 1938 Law Concerning Change of First Names and Surnames. Issued on August 17, 1938, this law famously compelled Jews living in Germany to adopt the first names “Israel” (men) and “Sara” (women). Niebergall examines a set of files housed in the Berlin state archives containing correspondence between Jews and officials of Zehlendorf’s civil registry office regarding the discriminatory measure. Especially interesting are accounts he offers of individuals who disputed the bureaucrats’ effort to add the name “Israel” or “Sara” to their own. The files contain the names of 131 individuals, twenty-six of whom wrote from abroad. Why anyone persecuted by the Nazis would nonetheless correspond with civil registry office – particularly from abroad

– is one of many complex questions Niebergall raises and seeks to answer, noting that those labeled Jews by the Nazis might need documentation to travel, protect family members or possessions remaining in Germany, or perhaps even to return to their country, Germany, after the Nazis had been thrust from power. Niebergall connects the micropolitics of the civil registry office in the Berlin district of Zehlendorf with legal movements at the Reich level, connecting his analysis of the 1938 law to a host of discriminatory measures. With the arrival of the Allied Control Council, the process of returning citizenship to the Germany's remaining Jews began in earnest, though as Niebergall demonstrates, Berlin's registry offices did not immediately proceed to eliminate "Israel" and "Sara" from their roles. The political division of the city with the emergence of the Cold War only complicated matters further. But of course by then, civil servants' efforts to remove past injustices were, in so many instances, truly too late.

- Doris Fürstenberg, "Dear Comrades!" The SPD and KPD in Steglitz, 1945 and 1946

This essay documents rapprochement between the two main left-wing parties in immediate postwar Germany, the SPD and KPD, in the months following the conclusion of the Second World War. It does so through a careful study of actions taken in the Berlin district of Steglitz, placing measures considered and adopted during the critical period of May 1945 to October 1946 in the larger contexts of national politics and the policies of the occupying powers. In Steglitz, the KPD's efforts to force a merger with the SPD met with some limited support, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the war. Fürstenberg clearly delimits the areas where the parties never saw eye to eye, while at the same time highlighting subjects where the two parties appeared to share common objectives. Drawing on records housed in the Berlin state archives, she describes terms of agreement between the two parties in the arenas of educational policy, justice reform, and social work. Fürstenberg also points out that, as late as autumn 1945, the terms of merger between the two parties remained part of an inter-party dialogue in Steglitz, a discussion regarded with suspicion by US authorities. Fürstenberg documents the growing pressure from the KPD in early 1946 to force a merger of the two left-wing parties, while at the same time exploring a diverse range of reasons SPD men and women in Steglitz regarded the KPD and the Soviet occupying authorities with varying degrees of suspicion and openness. In her epilogue Fürstenberg examines a November 1946 speech delivered by the Lord Mayor Arthur Werner. A Steglitz resident, in his remarks Werner presented the German people as victims of the war, ignoring both the wide support the Nazis had enjoyed during the war as well as the untold suffering inflicted by Germany on Europe. Representatives of the four wartime Allies attended the speech.

- Jörg Schlieper, The 1945 "Save the Children" Initiative of the Berlin Magistrate in Zehlendorf

From 2 May to early July 1945, the Red Army occupied Berlin alone, a state of affairs enabling the Soviet Union, through the exile group led by Walter Ulbrecht, to shape the city's first postwar municipal government. Within the municipal government's Office for

Social Affairs, a special Main Committee for the Victims of Fascism (*Hauptausschuss Opfer des Faschismus*) was led by Heinz Brandt, a communist who had spent almost the entire Nazi era in various Nazi prisons and concentration camps, including Auschwitz.

Following a brief description of the dire material conditions prevailing in Berlin at the conclusion of the Second World War, Jörg Schlieper turns to Brandt's 1945 campaign to "Save the Children." The magistrate's goal was to present all Berlin children – described by several active in the campaign as the most innocent victims of the war – with Christmas presents: a special gift as well as an item of clothing. In the end, approximately 365,000 children received their presents at more than 1,700 special Christmas parties. Schlieper recounts the extraordinary effort that went into this initiative, what with the material deprivations then so common in the city ravaged by war. From the Soviet military administration to German POWs to a special PR exhibition to showcase the effort, "Save the Children" appears to have united broad segments of the Berlin population at the time. Schlieper concludes his essay with a brief overview of "Save the Children" activities in the Berlin district of Zehlendorf.

- Doris Fürstenberg, Paul Oestreich and the Denazification of Zehlendorf's Schools

Doris Fürstenberg's second essay in this volume explores schools and school policy in Zehlendorf in the months following May 1945. Unlike other essays in this volume, this contribution focuses on the contribution of an individual, Paul Oestreich, a noted education reformer during the Weimar Republic and founding member of the Federation of Decisive Educational Reform (*Bund entschiedener Schulreformer*). Fired by the Nazis from his position as a secondary-school lecturer in 1933, soon after the war's conclusion Oestreich joined the KPD. Oestreich remained true to his objectives pursued by the Federation during the Weimar Republic, such as the introduction of a comprehensive secondary school form (in contrast to the three-tier system still common in Germany), parents' associations, as well as the removal of religious instruction from primary and secondary schools. As a member of the KPD, in the autumn of 1946 Oestreich became a member of the SED. He subsequently lost his position as Head of Schools (*Schuldezernent*) in Zehlendorf; efforts to remove him from a second office, the Zehlendorf Chief School Inspector, were initially unsuccessful.

Fürstenberg's recounts the complexity and nuance Oestrich brought to the complex problems of de-Nazification during his brief tenure in Zehlendorf. The picture that emerges in these pages is of an unorthodox thinker, a policymaker with a principled objection to elite dominance that nonetheless understood the need to consider individual teachers primarily on the basis of what they brought to their classrooms. Possessing the ability to grasp and appreciate the qualities of outstanding teachers. Oestrich nonetheless remained committed to a series of ideas that ultimately cost him position as Zehlendorf's Chief School Inspector.

- Dieter Fitterling, "...housed in special camps. Displaced Persons and Jewish Refugees in Berlin-Zehlendorf, 1945-1946"

Like many other parts of the city, during the Second World War Zehlendorf was the site of many different camps and other structures used by the Nazis. After May 1945, these facilities assumed a number of new purposes, for instance, as internment centers for German POWs and "displaced persons," or DPs. The latter group initially referred to those foreigners residing in Germany at the end of the war, such as former forced laborers and prisoners of the concentration camps. In the months after the war, however, Jewish refugees from Poland came to join the DP population. These individuals sought to escape postwar Anti-Semitic attacks in Poland, perhaps even to reach British-occupied Palestine via Allied-controlled Central Europe. In the process, these individuals (once again) came into the purview of German bureaucrats.

As Flitterling demonstrates in his essay, it was yet another group altogether, the ethnic Germans expelled from eastern Europe, that profoundly shaped the Berlin city government's approach to postwar refugees, including DPs. Flitterling's account takes him into municipal policy discussions with truly global impact, successfully embedding a history of individual physical structures across Zehlendorf in larger international contexts. Flitterling draws upon published studies to fill out the international, particularly American, dimensions of refugee policy toward Jews of eastern European origin. And his command of the relevant archival record adds depth and nuance to this complex story, a tale that ends dramatically in 1948 with the airborne transport of Berlin's remaining DPs to West Germany in the context of the Berlin Airlift.

Other Titles Published by the Steglitz-Zehlendorf Office of Cultural Affairs:

- Steglitz During the Third Reich (1992)
- Everything New. Steglitz 50 Years After the War's End (1995)
- Sending Children to the Countryside, 1940-1945 (1995)
- Johann Anton Wilhelm von Carstenn-Lichterfelde, 1822-1896 (1997)
- Circa 1968. The Representation of Things
- "Street Names Last Longer than Monuments." The Naming of Streets in Berlin-Steglitz, 1933-1948 (1999)
- The Wandervogel Youth Movement (2001)
- Forced Labor in Berlin, 1938-1945 (2003)
- My Orange. More than the Color of a Generation (2005)
- The Mirror Wall Memorial in Berlin-Steglitz (2005)

Übersetzung: Dr. Keith R. Allen