

John L. Harvey: Were Chicago and Providence really so far from Königsberg and Tübingen? The Rothfelsstreit in an American Key
by John L. Harvey

When considering the current debate about the legacy of Hans Rothfels, one would hardly know that the subject was an American citizen for nearly half of his professional life. Perhaps it is only one discursive paradox among many regarding a figure whose life was bathed in irony. Yet aside from hypotheses about how the exile experience of Rothfels may have influenced his Weltanschauung, both his admirers and critics seem unsure about how to treat him in a truly international context.¹ A chief contributing factor is the pronounced significance of Rothfels within his native national culture, which tends to discuss his years in exile years only through the impact of personal displacement.² But the lack of an international perspective also reflects the ongoing inattention to Rothfels as a member of the American historical guild. In general, scholarship on German émigrés relegates Rothfels to a brief

¹The sole work to examine Rothfels in a general international context is the unpublished dissertation by Walther, Peter Thomas, *Von Meinecke zu Beard? Die nach 1933 in die USA emigrierten deutschen Neuhistoriker*, State University of New York at Buffalo 1989. However, Walther's dissertation is limited largely to the decade of 1933 to 1941 and does not address his actual experience in the United States or his reception by British or American scholars. Clarence Pate, an earlier student of Georg Iggers, had produced the most thorough existing examination of Rothfels during the similar interwar years, but focused only on German historiography. See Pate, Clarence, *The Historical Writing of Hans Rothfels from 1919 to 1945*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of New York at Buffalo 1973.

²The only detailed discussion of Rothfels beyond his German context are the flattering contributions by his former students Conze, Werner, Hans Rothfels, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 237 (1983), S. 341-347 and Klemperer, Klemens von, Hans Rothfels (1891-1976), in: Lehmann, Hartmut (ed.), *Paths of Continuity. Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 119-135. Neither attempts to place Rothfels in a social, professional, or cultural context, other than to reemphasize his contacts with other German émigrés or basic characterizations of his persona. Two treatments of refugee scholars in a limited American cultural context pass over Rothfels after very brief recognition. See Radkau, Joachim, *Die deutsche Emigration in den USA. Ihr Einfluss auf die amerikanische Europapolitik 1933-1945*, Düsseldorf 1971, pp. 54, 219 and Epstein, Catherine, Introduction. *A Past Renewed. A Catalog of German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933*, Cambridge 1993, p. 7.

visitor who promptly returned to the more conservative environs of his homeland.³ American surveys on the lives of the émigré historians pass over Rothfels in favor of comfortable laudatory assessments of his more liberal colleagues.⁴ Even the latest discussion on Rothfels, ranging from the Haar-Winkler debate to the contributions of this forum, still confines the scope of analysis to the individual or uniquely German, devoid of a wider Anglo-American intellectual and cultural context.

Without belittling the deeper critical differences on the conserva-

³Students of both American and German historiography agree that among refugee historians Rothfels was „the last to arrive and the first to go.” See Radkau and Epstein (Footnote 2); Wolf, Heinz, *Deutsch-jüdische Emigrationshistoriker in den USA und der Nationalsozialismus*, Bern 1988, pp. 230-231; Faulenbach, Bernd, *Der „deutsche Weg“ aus der Sicht des Exils. Zum Urteil emigrierter Historiker*, in: *Exilforschung* 3 (1985), pp. 11-30, here p. 13; Walther, Peter Th., *Emigrierte deutsche Historiker in den USA*, in: *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 7 (1984), pp. 41-52; Berghahn, Volker; Maier, Charles, *Modern Europe in American Historical Writing*, in: Molho, Anthony; Wood, Gordon S. (ed.), *Imagined Histories. American Historians Interpret the Past*, Princeton 1998, pp. 393-414, here pp. 245-246.

⁴Compare Iggers, Georg, *Die deutschen Historiker in der Emigration*, in: Faulenbach, Bernd (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland. Traditionelle Positionen und gegenwärtige Aufgaben*, Munich 1974, pp. 97-111; Coser, Lewis A., *Refugee Scholars in America. Their Impact and Their Experiences*, New Haven 1984; Sheehan, James J.; Lehmann, Hartmut (eds.), *An Interrupted Past. German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933*, Cambridge 1994. The treatment of Rothfels in the latter important volume is revealing. Discussion of Rothfels was limited to contributions by non-American scholars to the interwar German background of the émigrés. It is striking that sections on the post 1939 period, delved deeply into the lives of Holborn, Gilbert, Theodor Mommsen and Kantorowicz, ignored the senior chair of modern history at the University of Chicago. The assessment of an „interwar Rothfels“ was notably divisive. Compare Wolfgang Mommsen's unproblematic conclusion that „Rothfels was a strong opponent of National Socialism from the start“ against the more balanced review of Michael Kater: Mommsen, Wolfgang, *German historiography during the Weimar Republic and the émigré historians*, in: Lehmann, Hartmut (ed.), *An interrupted past. German-speaking refugee historians in the United States after 1933*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 32-66, here p. 52 and Kater, Michael H., *Refugee historians in America. Preemigration Germany to 1939*, in: Lehmann, Hartmut (ed.), *An interrupted past. German-speaking refugee historians in the United States after 1933*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 73-93, here pp. 87-89. This disagreement continued in the clashing perspectives of von Klemperer and Unfug, Douglas: Lehmann, Hartmut; Melton, James van Horn (eds.), *Paths of continuity. Central European historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 119-154.

tive character of Weimar liberal-nationalism between Dr. Haar and Professor Winkler, none of the assessments promise to address certain nagging inconsistencies surrounding his Lebenslauf.⁵ Broadly speaking, these concerns relate to situating Rothfels in a wider „Western“ context during his years in Weimar Germany, explaining his dramatic success in American academia and his professional influence during the Cold War, and examining his personal self-identity as a German-American as well as a victim of Jewish racism. Although Winfried Schulze has offered some specific considerations on the reaction of Rothfels after a return to Germany post-1945, many issues remain that must be addressed through future research in order to complement the current national German debate.⁶

It was during the early 1920s that Rothfels laid the foundation for much of his subsequent international and domestic reputation. His ties, both among the political right and more moderate academics, enabled Rothfels to extend his sphere of acquaintances to important English-speaking scholars. In 1925, he first advised graduate students on dissertation subjects from the University of Chicago, an interest that he would expand later as an advisor to the international student exchange service and the Cecil Rhodes Foundation. His *Ideengeschichte* of Clausewitz, his deification of Bismarckian statesmanship, his considerations of nineteenth-century German liberalism, and his anti-

⁵The current project for a biographical series on leading German practitioners of Ostforschung continues to be the singular German focus. See the overviews by Petersen, Hans-Christian, „Ostforscher“-Biographien. Ein Workshop der Abteilung für Osteuropäische Geschichte der Universität Kiel und der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Malente, 13.-15. Juli 2001, in: *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 49 (2001), pp. 827-829 and Jaworski, Rudolf; Petersen, Hans-Christian, Biographische Aspekte der 'Ostforschung'. Überlegungen zu Forschungsstand und Methode, in: *Bios. Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen* 15 (2002), 1, pp. 47-63.

⁶Winfried Schulze's observations in: Schulze, Winfried, *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945*, Munich 1989, pp. 141-143 and Schulze, Winfried, Hans Rothfels und die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945, in: Jansen, Christian (ed.), *Von der Aufgabe der Freiheit. Politische Verantwortung und bürgerliche Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Festschrift für Hans Mommsen zum 5. November 1995*, Berlin 1995, pp. 83-98, here: pp. 83-84.

Versailles revisionism generally met with affirmation among specialists of modern German history in America and England.

Aside from important considerations of the ideological roots of his dubious „Ostforschung“ program, a different set of questions that place Rothfels in the „West“ still remain unaddressed. How did German conservatives, moderate liberals, and the underappreciated foreign audience actually receive his early works on Clausewitz, Anglo-German diplomacy, and Bismarckian Realpolitik?⁷ Having established his international reputation in Berlin, how exactly did these same groups react to Rothfels' later „Ostforschung“ that blended authoritarian statesmanship with a supra-German „federalism.“ Beyond the circles of Eastern revisionists, did his colleagues consider his ideas to be „merely“ „anti-Western“ or unacceptably to the right? To cite one example, just why would Eckart Kehr agree to habilitate under Rothfels if he actually considered him to be a leading proponent of fascist historiography?⁸

If scholars ask why Rothfels was perceived so positively beyond the circles of the politicized „Ostforschung“ network and his radical students of the „junge Generation,“ then we must examine more critically Anglo-American perceptions and the views of émigré historians.⁹ The importance of their opinions about Rothfels cannot be underestimated. After all, it would be their own valuation that saved his family from genocide and then quietly supported his resurrection in American academia. How was this possible if his scholarship so clearly manifested „reactionary“ ideals, measured against the supposedly democratic and progressive Western historiography? How could

⁷The major works of Rothfels that formed initial professional impressions in the U.S. were Rothfels, Hans, *Carl von Clausewitz. Politik und Krieg. Eine ideengeschichtliche Studie*, Berlin 1920; Rothfels, Hans, *Bismarcks englische Bündnispolitik*, Stuttgart 1924; and his introduction to Bismarck, Otto von, *Deutscher Staat, Ausgewählte Dokumente*, Munich 1925.

⁸See Kehr, Eckart, *Economic Interest, Militarism, and Foreign Policy. Essays on German History*, ed. by Craig, Gordon A., Berkeley 1977, pp. 186-187.

⁹Haar, Ingo, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*, *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der „Volkstumskampf“ im Osten*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 86-90.

the German historian most clearly opposed to the civic and political values of the Western democracies arrive in the United States with a bare command of English, only to achieve the greatest professional success in the shortest time of any of his displaced colleagues?¹⁰ Most importantly, what do these observations imply about the principal of a *Sonderweg* that defines the most basic framework of the history of modern German historiography? Can one explain the career of Rothfels if conservative Central European scholarship is analyzed only according to a problematic deviation against the apparent norms of enlightened American „guardians of German history?“¹¹

Scholars have yet to map the origin or operation of the network that paved his successful applications to the Universities of Brown, Denver and Chicago, or to suggest what kind of cultural values supported him in the United States. As counter-intuitive as it might appear, it was the very foreign sponsors of Eckart Kehr (Eugene Anderson and Walter Dorn) who first met Rothfels in Berlin and later supported his emigration. The same faculty at the University of Chicago that sat before Kehr during his famous denunciation of German historiography in April of 1933 held Rothfels in high enough esteem to appoint him in 1946 - and its leaders considered him a valued friend thereafter.¹² If, in the previous year, Brown University refused to grant him tenure

¹⁰This claim may seem odd when first compared with the successes of Ernst Kantorowicz, Hajo Holborn, or Dietrich Gerhard. Yet only Gerhard competed for and won outright a tenure-track post. His position at Washington-St. Louis - or that of Hans Rosenberg at Brooklyn College in the 1940s - lacked the professional influence equal to the University of Chicago. Only Holborn and Kantorowicz were placed at important centers of graduate instruction on their arrival and they remained untenured lecturers with limited faculty privileges for a period equal to that of Rothfels at Brown.

¹¹As touted by Stern, Fritz, *Europe's Past and America's Experience*, New York Times Book Review (Oct. 24 1965), p. 57 or Pinkney, David H., *American Historians on the European Past*, in: *American Historical Review* 86 (1981), 1, pp. 1-20, , here p. 14, http://www.historians.org/info/AHA_History/dhpinkney.htm (30.03.2004).

¹²The explanation of Rothfels as a professional and cultural outcast in America has originated from scholars who were students at Chicago or Brown in the 1940s. See von Klemperer, op.cit., p. 128 and his necrology of Rothfels in *Central European History* 9 (1976), p. 382; McNeill, William, H.Hutchins' University. A Memoir of the University of Chicago, Chicago 1991, p. 81; Iggers, Georg; Iggers, Wilma, *Zwei Seiten der Geschichte. Lebensbericht aus unruhigen Zeiten*, Göttingen 2002, p. 91.

track upon the return of Sinclair Armstrong from wartime service, the faculty nevertheless succeeded in helping him find a position in a better research school. Certainly the university newspaper testified to his personal popularity among students.¹³

Archival papers further reveal that the Rothfels were not considered „loners“ or „outsiders“ during their subsequent stay in Chicago. Both Rothfels and his wife attended private faculty parties and Hans Rothfels was a fully active member of the department.¹⁴ Perhaps more tellingly, Rothfels valued his American citizenship so highly that he fought to preserve it against State Department regulations in 1951 by employing a Washington legal firm. (American stipulations at that time demanded that persons returning to Germany for full-time employment would have to forsake their American citizenship. But only in 1969 did he revert his citizenship back to German). Rothfels would not accept the Tübingen chair without a guarantee of his American position until his mandatory retirement in 1956 and a promise from the University that he could return at any time, should the political-cultural environment in Germany turn „hostile.“ The Rothfels also became „Americanized,“ to an extent, through the integration of their children Klaus, Ursula, and Hans-Jürgen into Anglo-American society and their education at the best schools of England, Canada, and the United States. Until the death of Rothfels' first wife Hildegard, the parents returned each year to visit their children and grandchildren in Colorado and California, stopping in Chicago along the way for visits with friends and faculty luncheons at the Quadrangle Club.

Were Chicago and Providence really so far from Königsberg and Tübingen? Consider another nagging paradox: those who worked hardest to secure Rothfels' emigration and well-being in America knew him personally from the years of 1930-1935, the years he can

¹³See the personal dossier of Rothfels at Brown and the search letters by the Brown department chair in the E. M. Earle Papers, Princeton University.

¹⁴These observations are drawn from a range of archival sources at the University of Chicago archives, including the Presidential Papers, Department Papers, and papers of the Chairman, William Hutchinson.

most clearly be linked to the political right. His recommendations came not from the well-regarded Vernunftrepublikaner and victims of Nazi tyranny - his Doktorvater Hermann Oncken and his habilitation director Friedrich Meinecke. Instead one finds letters from Siegfried A. Kaehler and Reinhard Wittram, who fully demonstrated the dedication of Rothfels to the academic sponsorship of historical claims by Eastern or Baltic Germans. It is difficult to claim that the *patrons* of European history in the United States who intervened to guide his career - Anderson, Dorn, Armstrong, William Langer, Edward M. Earle, Louis Gottschalk - were not fully familiar with his increasingly nationalistic, militaristic, and anti-democratic writing. There were, of course, several younger critics of Rothfels and his colleagues, such as Oscar Hammen and Paul Sweet, who were then only beginning their academic careers.¹⁵ But what was the reaction of those refugee historians, such as Gilbert, Vagts, Holborn and Gerhard, who were in positions to warn more senior scholars informally about his „complete credentials,” especially when his record was under review?¹⁶

Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of Rothfels' relation to Anglo-American historiography was his decision about what to publish after his departure from Germany in 1939. From the time he arrived in Britain to his successful candidacy at Chicago, Rothfels understood well enough that unless he published in English there would be little hope for a new academic position. What should he publish from his own past that would best meet the interests of the foremost Western democracies? His decision is illuminating, especially

¹⁵See especially Hammen, Oscar J., German Historians and the Advent of the National Socialist State, in: *Journal of Modern History* 13 (1941), 5, pp. 161-188, here p. 163 and Sweet, Paul, Recent German Literature on Mitteleuropa, in: *Journal of Central European Affairs* 3 (1943), p. 11. Sweet, who was one of the most informed students of Central European historiography during the 1940s, was hired by the University of Chicago in 1946 as an assistant professor of German history, beating out both Felix Gilbert and Helmut Hirsch. He left under unclear circumstances one year later for a temporary teaching position at Colby College in upper Maine.

¹⁶Consider Holborn's review of Rothfels in the *American Historical Review* 57 (1952), pp. 963-965 and Gilbert, Felix, Mitteleuropa - The Final Stage, in: *Journal of Central European Affairs* 7 (1947), pp. 61-62.

from a comparative perspective. Emigrés such as Fritz Epstein or Richard Solomon temporarily ended their attention to interpretations on Germany and the East. Baron, Gilbert, or Holborn dedicated their precious time to politically uncontroversial themes drawn from their German experience. Yet all but one of Rothfels' writings from 1939 until 1947 were on „Ostforschung” - and the exception, his essay for E. M. Earle on Clausewitz, was the sole article that he had not volunteered himself.¹⁷ If Rothfels earned his international reputation on familiar themes of traditional diplomatic history, nineteenth-century German liberalism, Kaiserreich-era social policy, or the „history of ideas” a propos Meinecke, then why risk his reception and limited energy on four key articles directed at the eastern Germans. And yet, Americans measured him by these works and rewarded him with one of the most powerful chairs of European history in the United States.

Can one claim ignorance on the part of American professors to his full oeuvre of German-language writings? Were the English pieces truly free of any ideological undertow for the Anglo-American audience? Recall these articles appeared both against the background of the devastation inflicted by Nazi Germany on Russia and Poland. Certainly any American historian evaluating Rothfels had to be aware of his explicit association with „Großdeutsch” historiography by Sweet and Hammen in the premier academic journals of European history.¹⁸

¹⁷It is most likely that Felix Gilbert contacted Rothfels and arranged for his contribution to the Earle volume, as the editor had a sparse background in German history. Gilbert was on the staff of Earle's Institute for Advanced Study from 1939 until 1943 and knew Rothfels from his student days in Berlin, as well as through their common affiliation with Meinecke. He had also arranged for the participation of Holborn in the collection, with an essay on von Moltke. Any American attempting to familiarize himself with Rothfels at the time of his Chicago application would rely on the following readily available English-language works published since his emigration. „Russians and Germans in the Baltic,” in: *Contemporary Review* 157 (1940), pp. 320-332; Earle, Edward M. (ed.), Carl von Clausewitz. *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Princeton 1943, pp. 93-113; The Baltic Provinces. *Some Historic Aspects and Perspectives*, in: *Journal of Central European Affairs* 4 (1944), pp. 117-146; Russia and Central Europe, in: *Social Research* 12 (1945), pp. 304-327; Frontiers and Mass Migrations in Eastern Central Europe, in: *The Review of Politics* 8 (1946), pp. 37-67.

¹⁸See fn. 15.

Perhaps Rothfels sensed a certain strain of conservative cultural predisposition in his adopted homeland. Exploiting his bottomless personal energy and undeniable charisma, Rothfels adapted again to powerful tides of conservative thought, just as he had done in Berlin and Königsberg. For despite the logical conclusion that American historians of modern Europe particularly opposed the ideals of the Weimar-right and Nazi Germany, the leaders of the more conservative German historiography enjoyed warm relations with their Anglo-American counterparts, even before the Cold War. The list of contacts prior to 1941 is imposing, including both non-party ideologues (Aubin, Brackmann, Brandi, Fester, Kaehler, Kahrstedt, A. O. Meyer, Oncken, Rörig, Windelband,) and members of the NSDAP/SA (Andreas, Bittner, Dopsch, Mommsen, Rein, Rohden, Schönemann Schramm, Wittram, Zechlin). Surely this question merits greater attention than scholars on either side of the Atlantic have yet offered.

Skeptical readers might question why one might be so critical of the professional success of Rothfels in the „land of opportunity.“ The presence of Rothfels at Brown or Chicago did not produce a new generation of „radical conservatives“ in America and opinion remains divided among his students as to the relative quality of his instruction. To his credit, Rothfels waged campaigns against certain ex-Nazi or pro-Nazi historians after the war, such as Erwin Hölzle and David Leslie Hoggan, who offended his personal sensibilities. But there was another price to pay in terms of academic integrity. Rothfels, as only one example among other American historians, used his position at Chicago to coordinate the efforts of non-German scholars, such as the Danish historian Aage Friis, to overturn the removal of Percy Ernst Schramm at Göttingen, despite his association with the NSDAP and the SA.¹⁹

There is also unsettling evidence that Rothfels acted with other leading American historians to overturn denazification proceedings against some clearly culpable historians. Clarence Pate, a student of

¹⁹See the correspondence in Mappe 186, Rothfels Papers, Koblenz.

Georg Iggers, was the first scholar of any nationality to undertake a systemic and detached examination of the career of Hans Rothfels. After completing a scathing assessment of Rothfels in his dissertation, „The Historical Writing of Hans Rothfels from 1919 to 1945,“ Pate seemed well positioned for a successful academic career at Montclair State College, located in upper New Jersey. He was popular among students, liked in his department, and was the editor of the school's new flagship academic review, *The Montclair Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. Then Pate's world abruptly collapsed in 1975. After several years of teaching, he was preparing to publish the first article from his thesis in the journal, while also concluding negotiations with Hoffmann & Campe for a German translation of his manuscript, with the assistance of Immanuel Geiss.²⁰ But after printing the latest volume of the journal and packaging them for shipment, his dean ordered him to end all activity and to immediately deliver all specimen volumes to his office for confiscation. The journal was promptly shut down without explanation and never appeared again. Within weeks, his tenure review, which had been approved by the department and the college dean, was overturned by the schools' board of trustees without explanation - a fatal blow for any young scholar. Finally, Hoffmann & Campe reversed its earlier support of the German translation, alleging a „lukewarm“ reception at the annual Frankfurt book fair. Clarence Pate left academia, never returned again to German history, and remained unaware as to the circumstances of his destruction. In fact, the final doctoral student of Hans Rothfels, Professor Edith Lenel, was chair of the German Department across campus until her retirement, also in 1976. Lenel, who admitted that the Rothfels family considered her „as a second daughter,“ was the primary benefactor of Hans

²⁰Pate, Clarence, *The Historical Writing of Hans Rothfels and the Kriegsschuldfrage, 1924-1945*, in: *The Montclair Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 3 (1974), pp. 30-56. Barring an opening of the personal files and private trustee minutes of Montclair State University, the complete case surrounding Clarence Pate remains shrouded in uncertainty. The evidence, including a copy of the confiscated review, comes from the material and testimony of Dr. Pate himself to the author.

Rothfels during his desperate attempts to leave Germany in the mid-summer of 1938. Lenel wrote scores of letters on his behalf and, as a true measure of loyalty, proposed in 1939 to donate \$1,200 of her \$1,800 life savings to support Rothfels and his family unconditionally.²¹ What happened to Pate - and perhaps also to Sweet thirty years earlier - remains a dark patch within the Central European scholarship in the United States. But it raises the unsettling possibility that even as the years turned to decades, an American „security of silence“ worked to shield a true unmasking of Rothfels' academic life.

What conclusion ought to be drawn by such a range of questions and observations? Mary Fulbrook and Volker Berghahn have asked skeptically why Germans are leading such „a curiously inward-looking debate“ about the collaboration of former scholars with the Nazi apparatus, when „we“ Anglo-American scholars have known about this since the war itself.²² This posting, however, is not a call for greater German attention to foreign scholarship simply because the opportunity exists to tap large numbers of unused archives. Rather it is a plea to reexamine the national assumptions that ground the present discussion of historiography. In the end, one might propose that the true importance of Hans Rothfels, as opposed to the scores of other conservative Ordinarien, was that he acted as a mirror, reflecting certain cultural attributes from his surrounding society. And unlike his peers on the left or right, the mirror of Rothfels ranged from the „anti-Versailles compact“ of pre-Locarno Berlin, to the ethnic battleground of interwar Eastern Europe, to the traditions of American social conservatism in the eras of the Jim Crow South and the Cold

²¹See the letters of Edith Lenel to William Langer in the Langer Papers, Box 6, HUG 19.9, Pusey Library, Harvard University. Brief asides to Lenel include Kater, op.cit., 78 and Epstein, *A Past Renewed*, 14-15.

²²See Volker Berghahn's review of Schulze and Oexle, *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus*, in: *Central European History* 134-139 and Mary Fulbrook's, *Much ado about something completely different?*, in: *H-Soz-u-Kult*, Review-Symposium „Versäumte Fragen. Deutsche Historiker im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus.“ <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/REZENSIO/symposiu/versfrag/fulbrook.htm> (02.03.2004).

war culture of anti-Slavism/anti-Communism, to the continuity of conservatism in early West German historiography.

To be sure, he was only one among a vast mosaic of reflectors, native and émigré, who fashioned the twentieth-century study of Central Europe in America. Why have we not gazed into this mirror, beyond a guarded critique of German culture from the safe distance West of the Rhine? Is it because we would not like what we might see from this side of the Atlantic? It has long been stated that a fundamental presupposition of European history in the United States is a unique gift of national neutrality and political detachment.²³ But if the prism of Rothfels refracts a range of attributes within the American profession that challenge this idealization, then what does this particular silence say about the professional culture of the present Atlantic community of Central European historiography?

²³One could cite dozens of sources on this theme, but note how strong the assertion remains even among recognized skeptics of epistemological objectivity today. Frederickson, George M., *Giving a Comparative Dimension to American History. Problems and Opportunities* (in *Comment and Controversy*), in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 16 (1985), pp. 107-110, here: p. 107; Stern, Fritz, *German History in America. 1884-1984*, in: *Central European History* 19 (1986), 2, pp. 131-163, here: pp. 150-151; Kammen, Michael, *Historical Knowledge and Understanding*, in: Kammen, Michael (ed.), *Selvages & Biases. The Fabric of History in American Culture*, Ithaca 1987, p. 3-63, here p. 19; Novick, Peter, *That Noble Dream. The „Objectivity Question“ and the American Historical Profession*, Cambridge 1988, p. 14; Higham, John, *History. Professional Scholarship in America*, Baltimore 1989, p. 40; Berghahn, Volker; Maier, Charles, *Modern Europe in American Historical Writing*, in: Molho, Anthony; Wood, Gordon S. (eds.), *Imagined Histories. American Historians Interpret the Past*, Princeton 1998, pp. 393-414, here pp. 393-394.