Inspired by the need to increase general awareness of foreign sentiments and cultures the Prussian Parliament decided in 1917 to found Area Studies Institutes. In the University of Greifswald the reform saw the establishment of the Nordic Institute, an interdisciplinary institute that was to study Northern Europe in a wide variety of aspects and disciplines. Beholden to interdisciplinarity and implicitly political tasks, the Nordic Institute and its successor institutions remained an oddity in the university, existing in a field of tension between politics and academia.

This study tracks the development of the Nordic Institute under four different political regimes, the interaction between scholars, their academic environment, and the political system. It asks for the motivation and outcome of scholarly cooperation with the regimes, and tries to contextualize the specific problems of Area Studies in German academia.

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Academics and Politics
Academics and Politics

Northern European Area Studies at Greifswald University, 1917–1991

Marco Nase
Abstract

The decision to institute Area Studies in German universities in 1917, was born out of a perceived need to widen the intellectual horizon of the public and academia alike. At Greifswald University this ambitious reform programme saw the foundation of a Nordic Institute, charged with interdisciplinary studies of contemporary Northern Europe. Its interdisciplinarity and implicit role in public diplomacy made the Nordic Institute, and the institutions that succeeded it, an anomaly within the university, until the institute was fundamentally reformed in the early 1990s.

The study explores the institutional development of the institute under five different political regimes – Kaiserreich, Weimar Republic, Third Reich, GDR and FRG. It does so through the lens of scholars as utility-seeking actors, manoeuvring between the confines of an academic environment and the possibilities afforded by the institute’s political task. It becomes apparent that the top-down institution of interdisciplinary scholarship produced a number of conflicts between the disciplinarily organized career path on the one hand, and scholars’ investment in broader regional research on the other. Personal conflicts in a confined and competitive environment, and a persistent shortage of funding provided further incentives for scholars to overcome perceived limitations of the academic sphere by offering their cooperation to the political field. Individual attempts to capitalize on a reciprocal exchange of resources with the political field remained a feature under all political regimes, but the opportunity to do so successfully depended on the receptiveness of the political field. Cooperation, where it was established, also proved to be difficult, with the interests of political and academic actors often diverging, and the political side’s interest becoming dominant.

The study examines the underlying motivations of scholars to seek assistance from outside the academic field, but also the problems connected with that approach, and demonstrates the specific problems faced by Area Studies in a German context.

Keywords: Scandinavian Studies, Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, History of Universities, Nazi Germany, GDR.
Acknowledgements

The end seems to be the hardest part of writing a dissertation. It is not the avalanche of formal details and endless reviews, always unexpected in their number and magnitude, which make it so difficult, as much as having to admit that the work is done. There is always the temptation to rethink a certain aspect, to unearth new sources, to rewrite some passage or other. But while one never ceases to learn, the writing must stop at some point, and the writer must face the melancholy and dread that comes with handing the manuscript over to the printer. This act of putting down the pen marks the end of a period in my life, and gives me the opportunity to reflect on all that has happened in the past several years, and thank the many people who have made this book possible.

I was fortunate to be accepted as a doctoral candidate at the Baltic and Eastern European Graduate School, where the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (Östersjöstiftelsen) generously funded my studies. I owe a great deal to everybody at BEEGS and CBEES. To Ann-Cathrin Jungar, Helene Carlbäck, Anu Mai Köll, and Rebecka Lettevall for creating a research environment that was both inspiring and welcoming. To Lena Arvidsson, Nina Cajhamre, Karin Lindebrandt, and particularly Ewa Rogström, for taking care of us newcomers and helping us to settle into life in Sweden and in academia. Also to the colleagues in the Historical Institute, who showed us the ropes, and were always ready to explain, reassure, or lend a hand. Thank you, Per Bolin, Madeleine Hurd, Heiko Droste, Anne Heden, Monica Einarson, and Patrik Höglund! Further afield, I am indebted to Dirk Alvermann and Barbara Peters, who have always greeted me as an old friend in the Greifswald University Archives, and without whose assistance this thesis would not exist. I also would like to extend my thanks to Jens E. Olesen, my old mentor, who never ceased to support and encourage me, and to Andreas Åkerlund, without whom I would never have
come to Sweden, and who also provided many helpful comments in my final seminar.

On a more personal note I am grateful to my fellow doctoral students in BEEGS, whose contribution cannot be valued highly enough, whether in the form of a friendly word, a cautious reminder, or an engaged debate. Without people like Peter Balogh, Liudmilla Voronova, Adria Alcoverro, Natalya Yakusheva, Ekaterina Tarasova, Iuliia Malitska, Michal Salamonik, Steffen Werther, Ann-Judith Rabenschlag, and Kjetil Duvold completing my thesis would have been unthinkable. Two people in the BEEGS crowd deserve special mention: First, Francesco Zavatti, my friend, confidante, and co-conspirator. Without your inspiration, energy, and reaffirmation this book would have been a lot tougher to write. Then there is my wonderful partner Maarja Saar, who has graciously agreed to share her life with me and has made me a better person in the process. Thank you for your patience, support, and love.

Generally one thanks the supervisor of one’s thesis first. But it is also possible to reserve one’s all-encompassing heartfelt gratitude for the last. My supervisors, Norbert Götz and Mark Bassin, have contributed the most of any individuals involved in my dissertation. Especially Norbert Götz, whose patience, attention to detail, and motivation have gotten me through many rough patches, has shown a dedication to this thesis that was beyond what anyone could have expected. Clear-headed advice where I had lost my way, endless proofreading, and sometimes just an uplifting smile and a kind word – for all that my sincerest gratitude goes out to both my supervisors. I am deeply endebted to them.


Many others have contributed to this thesis whose names may not have been mentioned. My sincerest gratitude to all of you. Studying for one’s doctorate in a foreign country can be unnerving, but I have never felt alone or without friends here. Thanks to you all for that!
Contents

CHAPTER I
Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 11

I.1. The Nordic Institute in context – Previous research ............................................ 13
I.2. Theoretical Considerations ....................................................................................... 28
I.3. The Case ..................................................................................................................... 36
I.4. Sources ....................................................................................................................... 39

CHAPTER II
Antecedents – Auswärtige Kulturpolitik and Auslandsstudien .............................. 41

CHAPTER III
The Nordic Institute (1918–1933) ................................................................................. 55

III.1 Personnel and Personalities
– Setting up the Nordic Institute (1918–1920) ......................................................... 55
III.2 Braun vs. Dalman
– Auslandskunde and Public Diplomacy (1918–1920) ........................................... 65
III.3 Gustav Braun vs. Paul Merker
– Follow the Money (1921–1933) ............................................................................. 75
III.4 Paul vs. Magon
– The Area and the Disciplines (1927–1933) ........................................................... 90
III.5 At the End of Weimar ........................................................................................... 104

CHAPTER IV
The Nordic Area Institutes (1933–1945) ................................................................. 109

IV.1 Cleansing and the Coup d’Institute (1933–1936) ............................................. 110
IV.2 Research and Teaching after 1933 ................................................................. 127
IV.3 Foreign Contacts and Public Diplomacy ............................................................ 148
IV.3 New Customers and Services ............................................................................. 164
IV.4 War-time scholarship (1937–1945) ................................................................. 177
IV.5 Loyal Opposition
– Leopold Magon and the Passive Resistance of Academia .................. 189

IV.6 When the Third Reich Fell ................................................................. 200

CHAPTER V
The Nordic Institute again (1945–1968) ....................................................... 203

V.1 “…nothing beside remains”
– The long Hiatus of Northern European Studies (1945–1956) .......... 204
V.2 The Partyfication of the Nordic Institute (1957–1959) ...................... 211
V.3 From Cadre-Factory to Research Centre (1958–1962) ....................... 223
V.4 “Our Line will be enforced!” (1962–1967) ......................................... 232
V.5 On the Way to Real Socialism............................................................. 245

CHAPTER VI
Section Northern European Studies (1968–1991) ..................................... 249

VI.2 On a Mission – Diplomats and Spies (1954–1989) ......................... 274
VI.4 A Farewell to Pens (1975–1990) ......................................................... 329

CHAPTER VII
Conclusions ............................................................................................... 353

VII.1 A Look Back ...................................................................................... 354
VII.2 A Look Around ................................................................................ 360
VII.3 A Look Forward ................................................................................. 371

List of Abbreviations .................................................................................. 375

Sources and Literature .............................................................................. 379

Register ......................................................................................................... 411
CHAPTER I

Introduction

In 1917, Carl Heinrich Becker, professor of Oriental Studies in Berlin and then working in the Prussian Ministry of Education, proposed the introduction of a new type of academic study to the Prussian Parliament. The proposal tied in with ongoing discussions about means to increase the cultural attraction of Germany internationally, as it had been found that, while German industrial and military power had increased considerably since 1871, its cultural radiance abroad had not grown correspondingly. This had become particularly visible in the prelude and early stages of World War One, where German diplomacy and cultural policy had proven unable to garner meaningful international support for the Central Powers’ cause. In light of discussions about more fruitfully employing soft power-instruments in international correspondence, Becker’s proposed *Auslandskunde* (Study of Foreign Countries) was to create dedicated Area Studies centres at various Prussian universities, in an effort to educate the German public and prospective civil servants about foreign matters and to increase academic contact.

In the Pomeranian university of Greifswald this initiative led to the creation of the Nordic Institute, which was tasked with a) conducting research into Northern European affairs in a wide variety of disciplines, b) disseminating the results to students and a general public, and c) furthering academic and cultural contacts with Northern Europe. The Nordic Institute began its work as an Area Studies institute in the last days of the *Kaiserreich*, and its variously named successors continued to work under the same general tasking during the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic, until it was remodelled into a more traditional philological institute in the early 1990s.

Among university institutes, the Nordic Institute stands out in a number of ways, which make it worthy of study. With its threefold task – research,
teaching and public diplomacy – the Nordic Institute was from its inception part of a larger political endeavour. Its foundation did not reflect an organic development of academic disciplines, but rather a need by the state to further domestic knowledge about international affairs. Its raison d’être thus intertwined with foreign policy, the institute had to relate itself to different efforts to effect international communications with Northern Europe, under different political regimes and in a process that was often experimental and structure-seeking. Furthermore, the institute was an interdisciplinary endeavour, founded at a point in time when academia was still almost exclusively organized along disciplinary lines. This presented its own challenges, not only in terms of the institute’s position within the university, but concretely to the scholars involved, whose career logic was often at odds with the interdisciplinary alignment of the institute, and then necessitated the search for alternative strategies to secure or extend one’s own position.

For a scholar interested in the interaction between political regimes and academia, the Nordic Institute thus presents a valuable object of study. Being situated in a zone of tension between academia and politics on the one hand and a disciplinarily organized university and its own interdisciplinary structure on the other, the Nordic Institute’s history can shine a strong light on the motivations, strategies and preconditions of academic-political interaction during the 20th century.

Departing from this observation, the present study aims to examine the institutional development of the Nordic Institute, between its inception in 1917 and its transformation into a philological institute in the early 1990s, with a view on the logic of action of individual scholars. Particular attention will be paid to the role of career strategies and intra-academic competition via the application of external political, power in the development of institutions and academic structure on the one hand, and strategies to create and utilize academic knowledge and personnel by the political powers on the other. The study focuses, therefore, on the personal strategies employed by scholars to further their own careers and research interests as well as the structures and political currents that enabled and shaped these strategies. It will, furthermore, ask for the short-term and long-term outcomes of these strategies, on an individual as well as on an institutional level.
I.1: The Nordic Institute in context – Previous research

Despite, or perhaps because of, its uniqueness, the Nordic Institute has not received extensive treatment by historical research. The first major contribution on the topic was Rainer Höll’s dissertation of 1979, republished with a short summary of post-war development in 1997.¹ Höll’s work gives a thorough account of the institute’s development until 1945, with a particular emphasis on the Third Reich. In holding with the spirit of the times, the study highlights the role of individual scholars in the politicization of the institute between 1933 and 1945, while at the same time downplaying the particular character of the institute itself. As a study commissioned by the then thoroughly politicized Section Northern European Studies in Greifswald and conducted by one of its members, Höll’s work served to emphasise the humanist tradition of the institute. In this vein, the study acknowledged the regular brushes with the borders between politics and academia, which characterized the Nordic Institute, but did not understand them as a structural problem. Instead, it relegated all such border violations to the machinations of easily identifiable individuals, without asking for the driving factors behind these developments. While certainly fulfilling scholarly standards, Höll’s indifference to structural considerations cannot satisfy modern readers. The other monograph devoted to the Nordic Institute is the author’s master’s thesis, which was published in 2014.² The study of historian Johannes Paul, who managed to become the head of his own Swedish Institute between 1933 and 1945, already showed the significance of the Nordic Institute’s interdisciplinary character and its political tasking. Paul, who had found himself in a difficult career situation before 1933 due to his fixation on his Swedish object of research, advertised his capabilities in public diplomacy vis-à-vis Sweden to align himself with the new political powers, thus strengthening his own position in the university. The study also showed some of the pitfalls of this strategy, in particular the marginalization of Paul in his own research project once the interests of state agencies and academia diverged.

Greater attention has been paid to the role of the Nordic Institute and the Section Northern European Studies in the GDR’s foreign policy. In a 2004 article, Alexander Muschik examined the politicization of the Nordic Institute, predominantly in the late 1950s, and gave a general overview of development trends within the institute. The article pointed out the interests of the GDR’s foreign policy establishment and their importance for the reinvigoration of the Nordic Institute. In the same vein, the Nordic Institute and the Section Northern European Studies are hard to ignore for studies into German–Scandinavian relations during Socialism. Birgitta Almgren, for example, devotes a chapter to the role of the Nordic Institute in facilitating politically desirable relations between the GDR and Sweden, while Greifswald’s role as a training centre and cover for Stasi activities in the North is described in the works of Thomas Wegener-Friis as well as those of Mette Herborg and Per Michaelsen. All of these studies broach the issue of the Nordic Institute as an accessory to East German foreign policy and intelligence, though underrepresenting or brushing aside the role of local scholars in bringing about and sustaining the political function of the institute. A promising approach has been made by Berit Tobler, whose 2011 master’s thesis studied the development of Nordistik in Greifswald between 1954 and 1969. Nevertheless, the rather compact thesis suffers from a number of shortcomings which limit its utility. First of all, while it does give a good overview of teaching and instruction in Greifswald, it restricts itself to this topic, doing little to illuminate other aspects of the institute’s work. And while Tobler devotes a short chapter to “The Limits of Plannability”, in which she anecdotally shows how material shortages hampered the centrally planned development of Nordistik, this seems to be the only mediating factor between political interest and facts on the ground. Otherwise, the connection between the interests of the Politburo and study

5 Wegener-Friis, Thomas: Den usynlige front. DDR’s militære spionage i Danmark under den kolde krig, Copenhagen 2005, especially pp. 222–234.
8 Tobler, pp. 53–60.
plans in Greifswald appears to be direct and immediate. In this respect, the study adds little that is new, since it shows that Nordistik was streamlined along politically relevant lines, but not how.

Apart from these studies, the Nordic Institute and its successors appear in a number of congratulatory contributions of wildly varying depth and with a generally limited news value. In sum, the historiography on Greifswald’s Nordic Institute currently gives some rough outlines of the institute’s development, with a special interest devoted to its role in the GDR. Especially in this latter field, the importance and thorough politicization of the Nordic Institute has been noted as an independent variable, but few of the studies presented here consider the fact to be in need of explanation.

The Political–Academic Divide
– Approaches from a German Perspective

The absence of the question about the how of the politicization of the Nordic Institute is not particularly surprising. The relationship between academia and politics is a contentious one, and received wisdom holds that both are, while interacting, inherently incompatible, and strong arguments have been made to the effect that science is – ideally – guided by a combination of scientific principles and accumulated knowledge. If scientific progress was guided by considerations other than these factors, the results would be invalid and ultimately fail to account for reality. Klaus Fischer brings this incompatibility into the formula that the core goal of science is truth, whereas that of politics is action-oriented consensus. Considering the immense power academia still holds over the interpretation of itself, the conceptualization of the relationship between academia and politics is a difficult one. Positions that uphold the factual truth of the normative division between the political and the scientific still hold sway, not only in


popular imagination but also in the household names of the sociological discipline, such as Max Weber or Niklas Luhmann.\footnote{For a more in-depth discussion: Ash, Mitchell G.: “Wissenschaft und Politik. Eine Beziehungs geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert”, in: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte, 50 (2010), pp. 11–46, here: 11–13. For a proof of the continued efficacy of Luhmann’s model, which perpetuates the two-spheres-view look no further than Fischer 2005.}

Historical research has for a long time subscribed to this belief, particularly where the German case was concerned. Up until the 1970s historical studies, for example, operated under the assumption that National Socialism was a decidedly anti-academic movement that disregarded proper scientific conduct in favour of dilettante and pseudo-scientific endeavours.\footnote{Nordic mythology, Glacial Cosmology and “Aryan” Physics spring to mind.}

Since National Socialism shunned science, only “bad” scientists, who were willing to compromise their scientific mind-set or never had any, could cooperate with the regime. Most scholarship would concede that the Third Reich was something that happened to academia, where their work was abused for ends that were not their own, while often enough academia was portrayed as inherently immune to and defiant of the Nazi movement and its state, fighting for “proper science” in the face of compelling external factors.\footnote{Szöllősi-Janze, Margit: “National Socialism and the Sciences. Reflections, Conclusions and Historical Perspectives”, in: Szöllősi-Janze, Margit (ed.): Science in the Third Reich (=German Historical Perspectives, XIII) Oxford 2001, pp. 1–36, especially: 4–6.}

Between the coming to light of ever more collaborations between academics and key projects of the Third Reich, the gradual retirement of the directly concerned professorial generation, and the waning of Totalitarianism theory as the key interpretation scheme for National Socialism, a shift away from this perspective did not come about until roughly the 1990s.\footnote{Orth, Karin: “Neuere Forschungen zur Selbstmobilisierung der Wissenschaften im Nationalsozialismus”, in: N.T.M., 20 (2012), pp. 215–224, especially: 215f.}

Since then, research has remarked that the reality of political–academic relations might be more complex. Especially the far-reaching university reforms of the past 15 years have rekindled interest in this relationship. Several notable scholars specializing in university history have, for example, pointed to the many inaccuracies of a clichéd understanding of university history under what they called the Humboldt myth. The idea of a supposed “golden age” of the Germanic university during the 19th century, when freedom of research and teaching, the unity of teaching and research and the unity of science and scholarship ruled, and when “pure science” was removed from practical considerations of utility, they argue, was a legend
invented by later generations to tackle perceived crises in the setup of their higher education rather than any reflection of historical reality.\textsuperscript{15} Other scholars have emphasized the interconnectedness of the scientific community and its audience as mutually constitutive elements,\textsuperscript{16} while scholars of law and statecraft in particular have pointed out the necessity of a close interconnection in light of what has come to be called the “knowledge economy”.\textsuperscript{17} Sociological and politological literature indeed knows “epistemic communities”, networks of scientific experts whose authority drives political decision-makers before them, reducing the latter’s room for manoeuvre.\textsuperscript{18} This turns historical experience on its head, and in a German context sociologist Peter Weingart has tried to account for this fact by diagnosing a double movement towards a politicization of academia and a scientification of politics. With “scientification of politics” Weingart described the increasing tendency of the political sphere to view political problems as technical issues, which could be solved through technocratic measures. The “politicization of academia”, on the other hand, pointed to the tendency by academics to specifically discern and tackle pertinent societal problems.\textsuperscript{19} Nevertheless, while Weingart describes a clearly ongoing phenomenon, he fails to reliably explain the phenomenon within a system. While, therefore, a boon for sociology and political science, whether Weingart helps in historical analysis is a point of contention.

A rather radical approach to the academic–political divide has been presented by discourse analysis, which analyses linguistic social practices as constitutive of non-linguistic social practices. This approach perceives academia as one among several hierarchies, in which power is created and

\textsuperscript{17} See e.g. Münch, Ingo von: “Wissenschaft und Politik. Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten”, http://www.diw.de/sixcms/detail.php/81805 [retrieved: 04/05/2015]; as well as the more renowned Limbach, Jutta: Der Wissenschaftler als Bürger und Beamter. Das Verhältnis von Wissenschaft und Politik, Göttingen 2010.
\textsuperscript{18} Haas, Peter (ed.): Knowledge, Power and International Policy Coordination (=International Organization, 46,1) Massachusetts 1992.
upheld by a variety of social processes. This approach is especially popular in History of Ideas and History of Science, but while the analysis of the interlacing between power and knowledge has become a cornerstone of cultural studies, it still struggles to accommodate the mechanisms of political influence on academic production.

Among the multitude of available approaches, this study is particularly connected with the research tradition of History of University (German: *Universitätsgeschichte*). Distinct from the related History of Education and History of Science, History of University is interested in the institutional framework of the production of knowledge, the university and research academies with their own culture, organization and historical inertia. With this perspective, it puts its focus less on the ideas developed in laboratories and institutes but more on the institutional, structural and organizational aspects of the production of knowledge. The approach attempts to take the “domestic politics of science and scholarship” (vom Bruch) more seriously than culturally oriented approaches, without aspiring to replace those. Instead, it asks for the mechanisms governing research steering from medieval patronage to the research funding of modern nation states and the interactions between state, economy and academia. In the past decade, this research has been very much interested in the borders – and the crossing of these – between academia, state, military and economy.

22 While having traditions reaching as far back as the 19th century, with Friedrich Paulsen and Paul Symank, the research-strand was only institutionalized rather late. The International Commission for the History of Universities was founded in 1960 and publishes “History of Universities” since 1981, while the German Gesellschaft für Universitäts- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte was founded in 1995 and is connected to “Jahrbuch für Universitätsgeschichte”, published since 1998. Rüegg, Walter: A History of the University in Europe, 4 vols, Cambridge 1992–2011, can be considered a beacon-project for this research-strand.
24 Especially Schleiermacher, Sabine & Schagen, Udo (eds.): Wissenschaft macht Politik. Hochschule in den politischen Systemumbrüchen 1933 und 1945 (=Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft, 3) Stuttgart 2009; Pieper, Christine & Uekötter, Frank (eds.): Vom Nutzen der Wissenschaft. Beiträge zu einer prekären Beziehung (=Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft, 6) Stuttgart 2010; and Berg, Mathias/ Thiel, Jens/ Walther,
In an influential paper, Mitchell G. Ash suggested considering the interactions of politics and academia as governed by a mutual interest. Much as the political sphere considered academia a mobilizable resource, so academics viewed political interest as a resource that could be mobilized for their own advantage. This model has since found widespread acceptance in History of University. By giving agency to the academics and stressing their interest in the interaction, it allows for individual- and institution-focussed study into the political–academic borderlands, without having to resort to a simplistic representation of the academic–political relationship as one of command and obedience.

Area Studies – The Intersection of Academia and Foreign Policy

One field of research that bears strongly on the history of the Nordic Institute is that of Area Studies. Area Studies in themselves enjoy a substantial scholarly interest in the Western world, as they are an important part in – especially US – academic life. Anglophone literature agrees that Area Studies are interdisciplinary collaborations pertaining to the study of a certain foreign region or country. This definition hinges upon two main points of distinction: firstly, it insists on an organizational framework that includes several disciplines, predominantly from within the humanities and social sciences, be this in the form of area-focussed departments, centres or institutes. This multi- or transdisciplinary lens distinguishes Area Studies from regional specializations within individual disciplines, for example Nordic or Arabian History, as well as philological disciplines, which are focussed on a particular region or country, yet do not “present a foreign society as a well-rounded human organization.” The second point of distinction concerns the regional focus. The definition of the region under scrutiny may vary, as long as the region can be considered to be “other” from the researcher’s culture and, therefore, in need of translation. As such,
German Studies in Germany or American Studies in the US would not qualify, as they lack the inherent translator function of Area Studies.27

Area Studies were established – according to widespread consensus in the scholarly community – in the post-War United States. Prior to the 1940s, few academics were professionally familiar with non-European societies. Although many of them would have varying degrees of familiarity with one or more countries if they happened to need it for regular field-work, research and teaching on non-Western societies was for all practical purposes absent from American university life. It was the experience of World War Two and the need to gain a deepened understanding of the German and Japanese mentality and decision-making that first spurred a coordinated engagement with regional and cultural studies of foreign regions. More so, the post-war situation found the US confronted with the then largely enigmatic Soviet Union and entangled with political developments all over the world, most notably in Asia. Having to stay abreast of these developments led decision-makers to develop an increased interest in the provision of genuine knowledge of regions where the US was now involved. Such knowledge was only available in the form of statistical and economic material, while it had for a while been contended by academics and policy-makers alike that Western social theory might not adequately account for the workings of non-Western societies. The effect of this conjecture of political interest and academic curiosity was a remarkable growth of Area Studies, in institutions as well as in teaching and research. Liberally funded by foundations like Ford and Rockefeller and with their graduates and research outcome requested by state agencies, Area Studies began to grow in light of their political desirability. From the 1960s onward, though, academia had largely emancipated itself from its political task, and while enmeshments between academic research and state service remained commonplace, many area specialists actually became ardent critics of the political agendas they were expected to help implement. The end of the Cold War seemed to herald an end of Area Studies as a large-scale project, but new global challenges and the acceptance and firm position that Area Studies had in the meantime achieved ensure their continued survival. This highly condensed account is based on the knowledgeable contribution by

David Szanton, but is representative of the common historical view on the subject, up to the point where it is even the main reference point for scholarly papers on other countries’ traditions.

Considering their relatively much larger impact on the academic system, it is little wonder that the vast majority of scholarly contributions on Area Studies are specifically concerned with the Anglo-American academic system. Knowledgeable remarks have been made on the singular importance of Area Studies for the development of modern academia, such as acting as a trail blazer for other interdisciplinary and critical cross-section studies, for example Gender or Black Studies. Others have critically remarked on the historical proximity between area specialists and the powers that be, pointing out the rootedness of Area Studies in colonial endeavours and as an instrument of state policy. And, while at least these critical voices argue the features of Area Studies historically, their timeframe rarely extends before the 1940s. Only a few, such as Biray Kolluoglu-Birli, have pointed to the longer intellectual traditions in this field of study.

Considering that Area Studies in the US enjoy such a wealth of intellectual interest and the existence of a dedicated community for university history in Germany, the near-total absence of literature on German Area Studies is unexpected. Where the subject receives attention, it is either in contemporary policy-level discussions or, if a historical perspective is chosen, to explain the singular difficulties that Area Studies faced in

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Germany.\footnote{Brahm, Felix & Meissner, Jochen: “Von den Auslandswissenschaften zu den area studies. Standortspezifische und biographische Perspektiven auf die Frage nach dem Zäsurcharakter des Jahres 1945”, in: vom Bruch, Rüdiger/ Gerhard, Uta/ Pawliczek, Aleksandra (eds.): Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts (=Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft, 1) Stuttgart 2006, pp. 263–279.} In practically all cases, the American model of Area Studies is taken as a reference point. An exception is the contribution by Dietrich Briesemeister, who knowledgeably gives an overview of historical development and at least tries to disentangle the skein of different German concepts.\footnote{Briesemeister, Dietrich: “Landeskunde – Kulturkunde – Auslandskunde. Historischer Rückblick und terminologischer Überblick”, in: Henning, Bernd & Schröder, Stephan Michael (eds.): Vom Ende der Humboldt-Kosmen. Konturen von Kulturwissenschaft, Baden-Baden 1997, pp. 33–56.} Apart from Area Studies, a term that often denotes the American model, \textit{Regionalwissenschaften} (regional studies) is in use, regularly coupled as \textit{Regional- und Kulturwissenschaften} (regional and culture studies). These are often, but not exclusively, used to refer to extended philological subjects. Older terms such as \textit{Auslandswissenschaft} and \textit{Auslandskunde} (Study of Foreign Countries) are mostly out of circulation, but do crop up occasionally. Apart from the different connotations, even the pure denotations are a source of confusion.

To do justice to the subject and cast at least a glance at the epistemological ballast of 20\textsuperscript{th} century Area Studies, it pays to go farther back to unravel the strands of ideas that play into it. \textit{Landeskunde}, the wholesale study of – not necessarily foreign – places, has a longer history than the common account of the development of institutionalized Area Studies in the US indicates. Briesemeister begins his historical outline in ancient Greece, and while this might stretch the tradition, it certainly points to the dominance of geography as the major councellor and interpreter of foreign lands and people. The concept of land and people as “bonded in spirit”, in the sense of an innate causal connection between the geographical features of a region and the mind-set of the people inhabiting it, has a long tradition in travel accounts and geography, and continued its predominance as the master interpretation of foreign people well into modernity. Romantic and nationalist thought of the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century added the idea that folk life was a biologically and culturally grounded holistic phenomenon, and as such gained an autonomous character worthy of study. In this school of thought, \textit{Kulturkunde} (cultural studies) or \textit{Volkskunde} (folk studies), the all-pervasive “national
spirit” (Volksgeist) and the “national way of thinking” (Nationaldenkart) expressed itself in a distinct culture and politics. With this near-all-encompassing approach, folklore studies gradually came to acquire the character of a “science of life as such”, and exerted a strong influence on 19th century German humanities. Not only was it an integral part of the school curriculum, where it served to instil a patriotic mind-set and regional pride in the young citizens of the culturally and religiously diverse Germany, it also served as the basis for a widespread popular interest in folklore and as the focal point of a number of academic disciplines, such as Economics, Statistics, Political Science and History. Even today, a large number of German universities operate affiliated centres for the Landeskunde of their region, apart from the regional museums and chairs of regional history, showing the longevity of this trend.35 The intersections between geographically oriented Landeskunde and culturally oriented Kulturkunde are numerous and both are sometimes hard to distinguish. The same is true of their intersection with other disciplines. A major influence has been psychology, creating the idea of a “national psychology” (Völkerpsychologie) and thereby creating a bridge to other disciplines once psychology attained the position of something of a base science in the social sciences and humanities. These connections branched out into ideas such as Karl Lamprecht’s cultural (read: ethnically determined) history, as well as approaches founded in völkisch and racial viewpoints.36

While the different intellectual strands thus sketched reverberated strongly in 19th century Germany and beyond, they were only peripherally concerned with understanding foreign cultures and peoples, but more with Germany and its different cultures. While the middle of the 19th century already saw an expansion of foreign language training in universities, it was not until the end of the century that voices made themselves heard that demanded an increase in area lore, at least as part of philological studies and language training. In the latter half of the 19th century that the study of countries abroad became politically interesting. Education of the elites, at the very least, was a viable measure in the interest of the state.37

Therefore, German Area Studies, when they began their life in the early 20th century, already had an historical inertia that strongly shaped their

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35 Examples include the Centre for Rhenish Landeskunde and Regional History in Bonn, the Institute for Franconian-Palatine History and Landeskunde in Heidelberg, or the Institute for Historical Landeskunde in Mainz.
design in a form not entirely comparable with their US counterparts. Their comparatively minor role in German academic development is generally attributed to the appropriation of Auslandswissenschaften, a foreign policy-related branch of Political Science, by the NS-regime, and widespread collaboration in other related disciplines, which thoroughly delegitimized the notions underpinning Area Studies. The idea of Kulturkunde was perceived as having been carried away by its own promise of understanding foreign cultures, to the point where it only served as a canvas for the researcher’s own projections and delivered little more than stereotypes. Its theory and method discredited and out of fashion in a less romantically inclined age, Area Studies failed to achieve a notable place in West German academia after 1945. The fact that the impetus of Area Studies had faded earlier than 1945 is overlooked in these studies, whose explanatory power is thus diminished. Literature concerning itself with the starting point of institutionalized Area Studies, C.H. Becker’s memorandum to the Prussian Parliament of 1916, does in passing remark on the rapid waning of many of the projects’ outcrops, but disregards the reasons for this failing. Between a largely unexplained loss of momentum of Area Studies during the Weimar Republic and an explanation that does not account for all the facts, there remains a critical gap that this study sets out to bridge.

38 Even though the Auslandswissenschaftliche Fakultät and Deutsches Auslandswissenschaftliches Institut only amalgamated some Area Studies, and then only those in Berlin, even experts in the topic consider it to be the endpoint of the national-liberal German Area Studies-project. See Müller, Guido: “Einleitung”, in: Becker, Carl Heinrich: Internationale Wissenschaft und nationale Bildung, ed. by Guido Müller (=Studien und Dokumentationen zur deutschen Bildungsgeschichte, 64) Cologne 1997, pp. 1–29, here: 17.


Public Diplomacy – The Intersection of Culture and Foreign Policy

A further field where politics and academia interact by definition is that of public diplomacy. For the history of the Nordic Institute, public diplomacy as a concept is crucial, since the foreign policy-dimension that shaped the institute from its inception continued to have a strong influence on its development.

Public diplomacy, as a term, is historically rather recent. Received wisdom in the field of study holds that the term was first coined by Edmund Gullion in 1965, but the earliest documented use hails from 1856, when a London Times article reproached American President Franklin Pierce for showing less than complete civility in his public proceedings with foreign audiences.41 While the traditional meaning of the word “public diplomacy” in this text is derived from its opposition to “secret” backroom diplomacy, the reference to civility and the emphasis on leaving a good impression on a foreign public audience is what came to form the basis of the modern concept of public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy, by the definition of Hans N. Tuch, is “[a] government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies.”42 It thereby forms the fourth dimension of international relations, the others being “traditional diplomacy”, economy and military.43 In contrast to military and economy, public diplomacy employs soft power-means to achieve its goals, and in contrast to traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy does not communicate with a foreign government and its officials, but with a target country’s wider public. Soft Power, a term coined by Joseph Nye, is a form of power that is not exercised directly, through the use or threat of force or

economic incentives, but indirectly, through cultural and ideological means. Where culture is attractive to others, political values are lived up to, and foreign policy is perceived as legitimate and moral, a country can count on having a strong soft power, attracting others to emulate its policies and share its goals.\textsuperscript{44} To further the soft power of a country, its public diplomacy can employ a variety of vectors to expose target audiences to its culture and values, from media (film, literature, music, art) to facilitating personal exchange, for example via student exchange programmes, international cooperation and institutional networking.\textsuperscript{45}

As a modern concept of policy-making, public diplomacy overlaps in part with related policies and sometimes finds it hard to draw its boundaries. Of particular interest here are propaganda and cultural relations, which are at least partly inherent in the Public diplomacy-concept. Both concepts are older than public diplomacy, and scholars and practitioners often struggle to distinguish the defining boundary between the three.\textsuperscript{46} Propaganda is an effort to persuade audiences to further an agenda, often but not always associated with biased or falsified information, which obviously constitutes a problem for the analytical use of public diplomacy. Propaganda is a loaded term, evoking connotations of deceit and manipulation, and while it describes one aspect of public diplomacy, Foreign relations scholars would likely reject the association. Furthermore, the term is difficult to use analytically, since it runs the significant risk of sounding dismissive.

The problem with the concept of cultural relations is less dramatic but nevertheless a tricky one. Cultural relations are quite simply contacts between different cultures, be they direct, through personal contact, or indirect, through exposure to ideas and ideals of a different culture. On a modern policy level, cultural relations are often fostered by state actors, from support for the own cultural industry and their distribution abroad to academic exchange programmes. The terminological problem here is that cultural relations either extend to the phenomenon of cultural contacts, with a lot of it lying to varying degrees outside of the realm of policy, or it

\textsuperscript{44} Nye, Joseph S.: The Future of Power, New York 2011, especially p. 84.
I - INTRODUCTION

denotes the policy field of Cultural Relations, as institutionalized in a variety of cultural centres, institutions and funds. In the first case the term becomes too wide to be of any use here, in the second case, it becomes bogged down in the terminological struggle for delimitation between diplomats and cultural relations personnel.

To avoid this problem, we will henceforth employ the terminology of Benno Signitzer, who distinguishes two types of public diplomacy, a hard and a soft version. Hard Public Diplomacy or political information, is oriented towards short-term effects, and aims to explain or defend a government’s concrete positions or actions at a given time. It is conceived of as a one-way communication, and as such incorporates elements of propaganda without necessarily being identical to it. Its preferred vector is “quick media”, such as daily or weekly newspaper, radio, television. Soft Public Diplomacy or cultural communication, on the other hand, is aimed towards enabling long-term communication, which fosters mutual understanding for cultural viewpoints, ideals and goals. It thereby includes elements of cultural relations as far as the policy level is concerned, and employs “slow media”, such as movies, language instruction, academic exchange, literature and the arts. Signitzer’s terminology is oriented along the purpose and timeframe of a given policy, and offers the advantage of a broad categorization without necessarily mixing terms with adjacent fields of activity.

In the case of Germany, public diplomacy is still a contested field. This is at least partially due to a difference in terminological choices, with Public Diplomacy not being a well-established term in German discourse. Instead, the dominant term is Auswärtige Kulturpolitik (Foreign Cultural Policy), which is used in historical scholarship as well as in the historical and contemporary discourse of German policy-makers. Due to the terminological proximity of Foreign Cultural Policy to what Signitzer would call soft public diplomacy, scholarly research into the history of German public diplomacy has tended to overemphasize the discontinuities between a “peaceful”

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Foreign Cultural Policy and occasional lapses into propaganda. Especially Kurt Düwell, whose meritorious research on the topic has dominated the field for a long time, has focussed strongly on the early 20th century as the origin of the cultural dimension of Germany’s foreign policy, as well as on the “re-softening” after 1945. In such a view, German public diplomacy presents an image of conforming to international trends and being in general a peaceful, even emancipatory, endeavour. Very recently Frank Trommler has challenged this view by stressing the continuity of a particularly German view on cultural policy. Trommler argues that ideas of Cultural Power (Kulturmacht), which introduces a view of culture as a tool of domination rather than cooperative exchange, and the homogeneity of national culture, which excludes and marginalizes ethnic and political minorities, form a thread running through 20th century German public diplomacy. The tendency of these ideas to present culture as normative and at least partially imposed on the foreign recipient links late 19th century discussions about cultural policy to National Socialist foreign propaganda and even to post-1945 public diplomacy, especially that of the GDR. In the institutionally and methodologically changing, yet ideationally rather stable, concepts of public diplomacy, the development of the Nordic Institute will have to be contextualized.

I.2 Theoretical Considerations

How then, does one approach the chasm that supposedly exists between academia and politics in the face of empirical evidence that it does not. The existence of an interaction has been acknowledged for a long time, but terminologically the problem is tied to the normative claims of both academia and politics – autonomy on the one hand and all-pervasive power

52 Trommler 2008.
53 Weingart 1983.
on the other. To fruitfully disentangle these mutually contradictory preten-
ceses demands reducing them to the underlying rationality that structures
their existence and governs their interaction.

Ash’s Resources
An elegant approach to releasing this deadlock has been formulated by
Mitchell G. Ash. In 2002 he proposed viewing the relationship between
academia and politics not as abusive but as deliberative. Extending and
modifying some of Bruno Latour’s terminology, Ash described the relation-
ship between academia and politics in terms of different resources which
exist in each of the fields. These resources are continually mobilized
between the fields in a process of integrated exchange, and, especially in
times of rapid political and academic change, structure the renegotiation of
the relationship between politics, academia and economy.

Ash’s Resources, even though the term bears a strong economic con-
tonation, are not limited to a financial nature. But economic resources are an
important part of the exchange process. As much as researchers and their
institutions rely on funding, academics and their output are also an important
factor in the development of a modern industrial society. Apart from that,
universities also constitute an important tool in regional development policy.
Resources can also be of a cognitive nature, such as the concept of “risk
society”, a sociological term which has profoundly influenced the outlook of
the political system. An interesting example of a cognitive resource would be
Marxism, which began as an offshoot of academic political economy, became
a political ideology and thereupon inspired academic disciplines. Resources
can be apparative, describing technological and social means to influence the
natural or social world. Much in the same way as academics are dependent on
specific material goods – books, laboratories, testing equipment – so the polit-
ical field is interested in apparatuses, methods and concepts developed by
academics. Furthermore, resources can come in the form of personnel, mostly
specialists that both sides can release to the other, or they can be institutional,

54 Ash 2002.
55 Ash, Mitchell G.: “Wissenschaftswandlungen und politische Umbrüche im 20. Jahr-
hundert – was hatten sie miteinander zu tun?”, in: vom Bruch, Rüdiger & Pawliczek,
Alexandra (eds.): Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte
in the form of reorganizations which allow for a smoother operation of the receiving field as well as promotion within a bureaucratic setting. Lastly, rhetorical resources denote the valorisation of individuals or collectives by the rhetorical means of the respective system. The somewhat elusive rhetorical resources are an important factor in times of academic change, when they are employed to renegotiate the relation of academic branches to societal issues and their status within the framework of academia. Ash proposes two types of rhetoric employed under different circumstances, ideological coherence and instrumental reason. While ideological coherence stresses the identity of aims and affinities of the existing regime and a specific academic branch, the rhetoric of instrumental reason stresses the utility of an academic discipline or project as an instrument for the realization of the regime’s aims.

Ash’s approach has a number of advantages. First of all, it allows us to understand academia and politics as perpetually interacting and exchanging, without dissolving one in the other. Secondly, it gives both sides in this exchange clear motives and agency, allowing for an actor-based analysis on different zoom-levels. Lastly, it invites us to employ a wide concept of politics and academia, without having to look for normative borders.

The resource-model does have its shortcomings, though. On the one hand, the terminology is rather loose. The possible objection that, under his model, practically everything was a resource, was taken up by Ash in declaring that things and concepts only become resources in a specific context, when it turns out that they are useful. On the other hand, Ash’s model was developed in order to conceptualize academic change, primarily at times when it was precipitated by political change. This leaves it somewhat ill-equipped to handle the normal development of academia, which tends to involve less dramatic shifts. In particular, Ash’s model presupposes a field of open possibilities in exchange and renegotiation, which does not adequately represent the situation that most scholars and institutions find themselves in between large shifts.

57 Ash 2002, pp. 32f.
Table 1: Resource Types and examples

Table 1 gives an overview over the types of resources suggested by Ash as well as my interpretation of what these resource types could encompass in practice. The reader should bear in mind that Ash is not particularly extensive in his explanation of these categories, as a result of which the table as well as the explanation in the text to a large degree represent my own interpretation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type</th>
<th>University → Politics</th>
<th>Politics → University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Location policy; economic advances</td>
<td>Research funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Technical solutions to existing problems; problem consciousness (e.g. global warming, demographics)</td>
<td>Ideological concepts (e.g. racism, Marxism, neoliberalism), which allow for different approaches to existing problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparative</td>
<td>Provision of information or technical services</td>
<td>Provision of specialized equipment or materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>Training in certain professions (medical, law, education); provision of specialists in technical or social questions</td>
<td>Access to additional personnel; release or exemption of specialists from state service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Reorganization of institutional arrangements; promotion of individuals or collectives within a bureaucratic setting</td>
<td>Reorganization of academic environment so as to facilitate a better service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical</td>
<td>Valorisation of individuals or collectives by academic means; cultural policy; slogans from the scientific field</td>
<td>Valorisation of individuals or collectives by political means; reordering of status relations between different academic branches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bourdieu’s Capital

In this regard, another theoretical model can help to understand the proceedings in these phases of “normal science”. Where Mitchell G. Ash developed his model to explain academic change, Pierre Bourdieu’s theories were developed to explain the strong staying power of social divisions in a settled society.

Like Ash, Bourdieu employs a terminology borrowed from economics to explain the rationality behind social actions. Central to his theory of practice is capital, which is, again like Ash’s vocabulary, not limited to economic capital, but extends to cultural, social and symbolic capital.

Among the majority society, cultural capital, which marks its holder as a man or woman of distinctive taste and knowledge, is a set of skills, attitudes and dispositions that are originally transferred from parents to their children and which allow them to adopt a position of higher status. Its main implementation is its embodiment in the holder, who exhibits a cultured poise, gaze, and style of speech. Social capital, on the other hand, denotes the resources and support available to an actor due to membership in a group or possession of a powerful network. Social capital therefore gives a name to the potential resources an actor has at their disposal even though they might not be immediately theirs. These three forms of capital – economic, social and cultural – can be employed in the form of symbolic capital to achieve social superiority. By the acknowledgement of other actors, who accept the holder’s capital to be valid, prestige, renown, titles or positions can be bestowed upon the holder that mark them as legitimate. In his work on the field of art, Bourdieu himself stresses the underlying instrumental rationality in the arts, in producing means of social distinction. Fairly recent contributions to sociological inquiry have pointed out the drug and gangster culture as producing its own kind of capital, dubbed street capital, which allows approaching an otherwise irrational behaviour, that of

60 Kuhn, Thomas S.: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago 1962. My use of the term is of course not identical with that of Kuhn, whose distinction between Normal Science and Scientific Revolutions is marked by shifts in paradigm, whereas mine is marked by shifts in the political environs of academia.
I - INTRODUCTION

street violence and delinquency among immigrant youths as an understandable rational behaviour. This research further underlines the function of symbolic capital as a group-specific distinction mechanism, even in minority groups.

In Bourdieu’s theory, the social world is thus structured through the acquisition and employment of different forms of capital. This process is often likened to a game, with different actors (and teams) jostling for supremacy. This image has some merit in analysing the environment in which academics go about their daily business. It is not only the essential contest of ideas that finds its place in this metaphor, but also the more down-to-earth competition for employment, research grants and institutional power. The game is played on a field, a semi-autonomous social cosmos with an, at least implicitly, competitive setup, which is sometimes more and often less precisely delineated from bordering fields. Bourdieu himself points out culture, education, politics and economics as obvious fields, but art or journalism can also be understood as such. While having a profound influence on its inhabitants, the field’s delineation is often fuzzy. Fields are generally distinguished by following autonomous laws, which are not identical to those of the surrounding macrocosmos, nor to those of other fields. This autonomy, though, is not absolute, in that the field cannot but interact with other social fields and thereby be forced to acknowledge and accommodate to their demands. But the relative autonomy of a field is indicated by its ability to translate outside pressures into its own language and format, in what Bourdieu calls refraction, and thereby make them their own without going back on the legitimacy of its own autonomous laws. Conversely, a field in which unrefracted voices can make themselves heard without being disqualified can be said to have a higher degree of heteronomy.

The game is structured by a set of beliefs and uncontested truths that are shared among the players, which act, if one so will, as rules. These rules, being emergent and inherent rather than pre-set and open, are understood through exposure. By experiencing and internalizing the rules of certain social spaces, players develop their habitus, a set of shared experiences

resulting in similar beliefs, tastes and modes of thinking that set them apart from inhabitants of other spaces. While not denying individuality, the shared experiences nevertheless form a rather homogenous outlook on life that stabilizes the specific social spaces. The more the habitus of an actor matches up with the field in which they try to act, the easier they will find it. A fitting habitus thereby constitutes a natural understanding for the “rules of the game”, whereas an unsuitable habitus might produce, at least initially, a “fish out of water”.66

One such field is science, where academics strive to accumulate capital. Academic capital, the type of capital dominating the academic field, is a form of symbolic capital, in that it is bestowed on a player through acts of recognition for feats of knowledge and originality, which Bourdieu calls distinctive contribution. The acts of recognition, performed by those within the field, are most commonly citation and distinction by title and appointment. These determine the specific position of the player within the structure of power distribution.67 This special capital is strongly dependent on acceptance by peers and is tied to the individual who has acquired it, but it also awards an authority that can change the rules of the game, for example by determining the research objects that are viable at a given point in time and the rewards that an inquiry into them affords.68 The second kind of capital that can be brought to bear on the academic field is what could be called temporal capital.69 While scientific capital is accumulated through accepted contributions to scientific development, temporal capital is gathered through certain political strategies: membership in commissions, acting as editor or reviewer for journals or partaking in networking and social events. This capital affords control over scientific institutions and resource distribution within the field, and while Bourdieu does somewhat pejoratively point out that temporal capital often performs a compensatory function for its holder,70 he has to admit that this control over the means of (re-)production and distribution of the field cannot be underestimated. This is especially so as this type of capital is often linked to a strong social

69 Bourdieu refers to it under a variety of terms, but for the sake of clarity I will refer to it as temporal capital.
70 See e.g. Bourdieu 2004, p. 57.
capital and appropriate habitus, thereby opening a potential pathway to influence from other fields.71

Rational Actors in Irrational Fields

Pierre Bourdieu presents academia as an inherently competitive environment, in which actors jostle for positions, seeking to secure and further their station. Beyond all pretence of otherworldliness their actions can be made understandable as self-interested, rational maneuvering in a dynamic landscape of competition and alliances, held together by the mutual agreement about the shape of the field which makes their practices possible. The academics’ individual motives can thus be framed in terms of their relative position within the field, their career situation and their weight in the scholarly community. With his insistence on the relative autonomy of intra-field dynamics and the preconditions of the field’s reproduction, though, Bourdieu can only accommodate a limited degree of historical change and interaction between different fields. The model plays out within a relatively stable framework, with little provision for outside influence or substantial change.

Ash’s concept of politics and academia as resources for each other can help us break up this static view by taking the metaphor of the rational actor further and extending it to interactions between fields. In his view both fields provide and constitute resources for one another in a mutually beneficial exchange. On both sides of the political-academic divide actors are searching for resources to help extend their own positions, a process that is moderated and conditioned by the respective intra-field dynamics, but is always rationally understandable and mutual. Furthermore, since the fields are dynamic these interactions also have the potential to restructure the fields themselves.

This synopsis of Bourdieu and Ash does not provide a comprehensive access to the interaction between politics and academia. But their common trick, “cutting out” obscure and remote practices and “turning them over” to make them a panopticon through which to view social processes,72 helps solve the problem constituted by the mutually exclusive normative claims of both fields: that academia is ontologically autonomous and politics all-

powerful. It does so by acknowledging the normative divide between the respective fields, but also stressing the underlying rationality that governs them and their relationship with one another. The picture that thus emerges is one where scholars and politicians act in their own self-interest. Rather than ends in themselves, autonomy and power are norms that define fields, but can be employed strategically where beneficial and suspended where expedient. The two theories together give us an ample set of instruments to describe the interaction of academics and their institutions with political actors and their institutions, allowing us to ask for the How as much the Why of these interactions. That both can fruitfully be combined has been proven in recent dissertations, such as Andreas Åkerlund’s study into Swedish lecturers in Germany\textsuperscript{73} and Tobias Schulz’s work on the 1960s academic reform process at Humboldt-University.\textsuperscript{74}

I.3 The Case

A case study has to state just what exactly it presents a case of. This would help to indicate how far the findings can be applied elsewhere and what the case study can be compared to in order to sharpen and extend the results. For the present study, this specification is not without its footfalls. The Nordic Institute is difficult to classify over any appreciable stretch of time. Its basic premise as an interdisciplinary Area Studies-institute sets it apart from other Northern European Studies-institutions in the German-speaking space. The latter, though superficially similar in their object of study, originated from German Studies, with a traditionally Old Norse orientation and with contemporary language and literature studies being a historically comparatively recent addition. And while the Nordic Institute was a case of an Auslandskunde institute, specimens of which could be found in several Prussian universities after 1917, by 1933 the majority of these institutional brethren had taken their own paths, not necessarily in a structure that would accommodate a direct comparison with Greifswald. After 1945 this family-resemblance broke down completely, and while the Nordic Institute/Section Northern European Studies acquired a new system of reference in

\textsuperscript{73} Åkerlund, Andreas: Mellan akademi och kulturpolitik. Lektorat i svenska språket vid tyska universitet 1906–1945 (=Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 240) Uppsala 2010.

the form of *Länderwissenschaft*, being grouped institutionally with African, Asian and Latin American Studies, it still remained an oddity even in this environment. Insofar it can be argued that the present case – while bearing on a number of institutionally similar cases – cannot claim to represent these cases to a satisfying degree.

While synchronous comparison is, therefore, only possible to a limited degree and cannot be a defining factor of the study’s setup, this is offset by the long timeframe. From its inception in 1917 to its effective dismantling in 1991, the history of the Nordic Institute spans 74 years in five political systems. Founded in the last days of the *Kaiserreich*, it saw the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic, to be converted into a philological institute in the Federal Republic of Germany. For a study interested in the development of Area Studies and the interaction between the academic and political fields, this long timeframe presents a number of possibilities for a diachronic comparison within the Greifswald case. This not only includes different political but also academic professional regimes, with different bouts of professionalization and bureaucratic differentiation present over the chosen timeframe. Insofar, what the case cannot provide in synchronous representativeness it can provide in diachronic diversity.

**The Heavens reflected in a Village Pond**

An important factor that shapes the present case is its location. Greifswald University is an old and prestigious, but nevertheless small and peripheral university. In 1914 the university housed a modest 1,400 students, while the numbers today are about 10,000.\(^{75}\) It was the smallest Prussian university with a little more than 100 teachers of different ranks before 1945.\(^{76}\) The town of Greifswald itself had some 23,333 inhabitants in 1917 and 66,251 in 1990.\(^{77}\) None of these numbers were impressive, and Greifswald was not only small but also rural. At the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century, only around


1,000 of its inhabitants were industrial workers, and of these the majority were employed by the railway, giving them the competing identity of state employees. Most people in Greifswald were employed in agriculture or public administration, mostly the regional court. It was not until the 1970s that industry became a noticeable part of Greifswald’s social landscape, and even then it did not become a major factor. In effect, the sociotope inhabited by the protagonists of this study was of a limited size. Even if one takes the upper echelons of jurisprudence and administration, the clergy and the officers of the local regiment into account, the upper middle class, to which employed academics belong, can never have amounted to more than 400 people until far into the second half of the 20th century. Until the extensive housing programme that began in the 1960s, crossing the town took a calm twenty minutes of walking.

For our study this means two things: First, Greifswald was not a university in close contact with regional or national power. The regional administration was situated in Stettin until 1945 and in Rostock after that, with both centres always being between a one- and two-hour-journey away. While generalizations are difficult, the average scholar would see Greifswald as a starting point for a career rather than as their end point. The jurist Carl Schmitt might have begun his career in Greifswald, but quickly moved on to one of the medium-sized universities – Bonn in his case, but it could just as well have been Königsberg or Breslau – and finished his career in Berlin. While some professors did have parliamentary mandates, ministerial offices, or even went on to become ministers themselves, the university was not habitually a hub of political influence. Insofar, external influence on “academic home-rule” can be supposed to have been low, even if this is only a surmise at this point and certainly worthy of further inquiry.

Secondly, the limited extent of the upper middle classes meant that academics had little chance to escape their colleagues in their free time, and professional disagreements easily spilt over into private affairs. Whatever else the scholars might have been – colleagues, confederates or rivals – they could not help the fact that they were also close neighbours, often literally. This helps to explain the unusual amount of personal animosity and rumour-mongering that is present in much of the material. Scholars familiar with larger universities often look in amused incredulity upon the petty

squabbling that seems to dominate the pre-1945 material in particular. This does not, however, mean that all those incidents were entirely private affairs. Instead, professional disagreements were often difficult to distinguish from private feuds because of the limitations of the social cosmos in which they took place.

II.4 Sources

The source material used for this study is primarily drawn from the University Archives of Greifswald (Universitätsarchiv Greifswald, UAG). Their collections include the most extensive stock of material about the Nordic Institute and its successor institutions. The institutes did keep their own files, but in terms of document types and density the collection varies significantly over time. Before 1945, the records are primarily made up of correspondence, both within the university on administrative matters and with outside organizations, while after 1945 periodical documents, such as plans, reports and minutes dominate. The implications are clear, in that the correspondence provides more context, while the periodical documents are more consistent. Furthermore, they contain a number of personnel files, which have been used for a variety of purposes, since those often contain corroborating correspondence not found anywhere else. Due to existing personal privacy laws these files are to a large degree off-limits for the time after 1945, for which reason their importance for this period is limited. The already existing unevenness of the material is further compounded by intermittent cleansings, which bereaved us of large types of material. The first cleansing happened in 1945, when Leopold Magon was instructed to destroy the documentation of the Swedish Institute and ostensibly also used the opportunity to sanitize his own. The loss thus incurred is substantial and seems also to stretch into records from before 1933, but can be compensated for by consulting other stocks, such as the Office of the Vice Chancellor (Rektorat) and the Curator. Furthermore, the documentation of the Institute for Finland Studies is preserved and allows careful conclusions by analogy. The second cleansing was more systematic in nature and concerns the handling of confidential information after 1965. An unspecified number of documents, mostly relating to cooperation with the Stasi and other intelligence agencies, was separated and stored in a special safe. The safe, in turn, was summarily emptied and its contents destroyed in 1990. There are even indications that records already in the university archive
were punctually cleansed at the same time. Attempts to acquire the relevant corroboration from the German Stasi Archives (BdStU) have been delayed by the extent of the material, and arrived too late to contribute substantially to this study. A cursory review of the material indicates, though, that secondary literature has mostly evaluated the available files, so that their findings can be used to compensate. Nevertheless, the records of the Greifswald University Archives provide a well-rounded picture of the Nordic Institute’s activities and development.

Further material was drawn from a variety of archives. The most extensive documentation exists in the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv, BA) where especially the institute’s correspondence with the state-level agencies is documented. For the time before 1945 this concerns correspondence with Nord- und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and Reichsdozentenschaft. For the period after 1945 the Federal Archive holds the records of the State Secretariat, later Ministry, of Higher Education, which acted as the superordinated agency for the institute. Records here largely match the University Archive in extent and source type. The same cannot be said of the Prussian Privy State Archive (Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, GStA PK), which holds the files of the Prussian Ministry of Education, the superordinated agency before 1945. Of the five volumes of ministerial communication with the Nordic Institute, four have been lost during the war. The Greifswald State Archive (Landesarchiv Greifswald, LAG) holds records from the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands – Socialist Unity Party of Germany) Regional Party Organizations, which was strongly involved with the development of the institute in the 1950s and 1960s, providing minutes, reports and planning materiel.

Minor contributions come from the German Historical Museum (Deutsches Historisches Museum, DHM), where parts of Johannes Paul’s personal estate are kept. The private documents there, including letters and otherwise rare photographs, serve to illuminate a number of secondary questions. The same goes for the archives of the Gothenburg University Library (GUB), where Andreas Åkerlund has kindly provided the author access to some of the correspondence between Johannes Paul and Vilhelm Lundström, as well as the Pennsylvania Folk Collection at the Ursinus College, Pennsylvania, where Diane Skorina made a number of documents pertaining to Günther Falk’s tenure in Norway available.
CHAPTER II

Antecedents – Auswärtige Kulturpolitik and Auslandsstudien

The unschooled German is much less capable than other nationalities. He lacks the ease and versatility in communication, he lacks the fortunate mixture of assertiveness and adaptivity that inheres in the Englishman. The unschooled German is generally helpless, since he can never rely on the accuracy of his instinct. If he is forced to adapt, he will soon degrade into an undignified dependency and immediately abandon his character, homeland and folk tradition. But strong and firm schooling protects him from this, and that can and must be provided for him domestically in such a way, that he can furthermore assert himself with superiority when abroad. – Adolf von Harnack, 1913

We are a young nation, maybe having too much of a naïve faith in force, underestimating the more delicate means, and do not yet know that what force gathers, force alone cannot preserve. – Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, 1913


2 “Wir sind ein junges Volk, haben vielleicht allzu viel noch den naiven Glauben an die Gewalt, unterschätzen die feineren Mittel und wissen noch nicht, dass, was die Gewalt erwirbt, die Gewalt allein niemals erhalten kann.” – Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg to Karl Lamprecht, 21.06.1913, printed in Vossische Zeitung, 12.12.1913, quoted after: Düwell 1976, pp. 18–21, here: 19.
The long 19th century is generally associated with a predominance of power politics and gunboat diplomacy, nowhere more so than in the case of the German Empire. Built on the glory of Prussian arms in the victory against France in 1871, Imperial Germany held a reputation for power politics and militarism. But, since the fin de siècle international competition between the European powers had begun to extend into the field of culture and the arts, and an increasing competition over relations with minor powers lent credibility to the notion that culture and its presentation abroad were becoming a factor of power as important as military and economic means. Especially the embarrassing diplomatic defeats in the Moroccan Crises 1905/06 and 1911 fuelled the public perception that, while the German Empire was economically – and certainly scientifically – on a par with its European rivals, this increased international weight could not adequately be transformed into tangible diplomatic gains. Faced with a growing international isolation, which was at least partly blamed on an intellectual and cultural self-sufficiency, calls for an extension of foreign policy into the field of cultural policy became more frequent.

After 1880, France, the “eternal rival” but also the paragon of progressive nationalism, had made the export of its own cultural products a national policy, and many German intellectuals, particularly those of liberal convictions, began viewing an extension of the cultural influence in the world as a necessary complement to a growing economic and political domination. With the German government unwilling to commit to such an undertaking, the years between 1912 and 1914 saw the foundation of a large number of private associations to foster cultural activities and connections abroad. Considering the limited means of many of these endeavours, their focus was on extending influence in the neutral countries, meaning those that were not colonies of rival powers and promised economic development, while their foothold consisted primarily of the already present German expat communities of merchants, settlers and missionaries. While

4 Trommler 2008, pp. 19–35, uses the Franco-German disputes over the 1904 World Fair in St. Louis as an illustration of this developing phenomenon.
their achievements were mostly local, their uncoordinated fervour did put pressure on the imperial government to take matters into their hands.\footnote{Klosterhuis 1981, pp. 15–18.}

The passivity of the government was based on three contravening factors. Firstly, there was a widespread distrust of a foreign policy with an admixture of other means to the right of the political spectrum. The introduction of a cultural dimension into German foreign policy was suspected of softening a German position in the world that was, to all intents and purposes, built on strength and force. Secondly, the relationship between the national government and the different German cultures was a point of contention. This not only concerned the question of the distinct regional cultures and which of them – if any – could be the German representative abroad. This line of thought also opened into the question of German state versus German nation. If, in a nutshell, the German state represented German culture, did it also represent German-speaking populations in other countries, be they autochthonous, colonists or expats?\footnote{For a more extensive discussion of this aspect: Trommler 2008, pp. 123–184.} And thirdly, there was an amount of recalcitrance in the state apparatus itself against widening the toolset of foreign policy, since such an extension would necessarily undermine the monopoly that the national elites held on politics, which was still widely considered to be their privileged art. Under these circumstances, the caution that Reich Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg expressed in the second introductory quote is understandable, and even though the chancellor prompted official funding for different private endeavours in the foreign cultural policy-field, the Imperial government remained wary of becoming too involved.\footnote{Trommler 2008, pp. 109–116.}

Auslandsstudien

This is not to say that all cultural and foreign policy concerns were strictly separated. One important part of the Reich’s colonial and overseas economic programme was the training of German nationals for service abroad. The Seminar for Oriental Languages (\textit{Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen}) in Berlin had already been founded in 1887, primarily to assist the Reich’s foreign policy in the Middle East, where a lack of interpreters had been
particularly hard felt, and as a training base for colonial administrators. In 1908 the Free City of Hamburg had combined its ambitions to found a university with the Reich’s need for an academic institution to train colonial administrators and settlers into the Hamburg Colonial Institute (Hamburgisches Kolonialinstitut). Merging foreign political and educational affairs was a complicated task, since the German constitution assigned the field of foreign policy to the Reich-level, while educational and cultural matters were the responsibility of the individual state. The needs for preparatory training of German colonials and overseas merchants had led to pragmatic solutions, though. In the case of the Seminar for Oriental Languages, the seminar was directly subordinated to the Reich, while in Hamburg the state-level university was supported by funding for professorships from the Reich. Endeavours to reinforce the effectiveness of German activities abroad through an increased education of the respective agents only gathered force in the years preceding World War One, not least because the two institutions in Berlin and Hamburg soon reached objective limits in their capabilities.

With the outbreak of World War One, this discussion received a new dimension of virulence. Even from the opening moves of the war – with the German invasion of Belgium and the violent reprisals against presumed partisans – international criticism focussed on the perceived unity of German high culture and Prussian militarism. The fact that prominent German scientists, scholars and authors rushed to the aid of their beleaguered nation by publically declaring their support for the actions of the

12 In a 1914 article, Karl Helferich, one of the directors of Deutsche Bank and former head of the Bagdad Railway-project, summarized the advances that had been made in improving the education of prospect German missionaries, settlers and colonial administrators. But his article also lamented the technical and one-sided character of the specialized colonial training institutions, and called for a wider education of prospective emigrants. The article was reprinted in 1918 to retroactively provide the Prussian Ministry of Culture’s advances with further legitimacy: Helferich, Karl: “Hochschulbildung und Auslandsinteressen”, in: Internationale Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik, 1/1917, pp. 1–16.
German military, only reinforced this criticism. Furthermore, the international isolation of Germany, which had become so painfully obvious during the autumn of 1914, led to renewed criticism of the incompetence and heavy-handedness of the diplomatic service. The war thus lent a sense of urgency to many of the problems in German cultural policy which had already been discussed since the beginning of the century.\footnote{Trommler 2008, pp. 185–201.}

When, therefore, in February 1917 the Prussian House of Representatives put the question of a German Area Studies-programme on their agenda, the topic was not an entirely academic one. The “Memorandum of the Prussian Ministry of Culture for the Promotion of Auslandsstudien”, which Minister of Culture August von Trott zu Solz presented to Parliament, was not least a resounding criticism of the prevalent self-sufficiency and introversion in German education in general, and the training of the diplomatic corps in particular. Commissioned by Friedrich Schmidt-Ott and developed by Carl Heinrich Becker, the memorandum only made covert reference to the diplomatic blunders that had preceded the war, but made clear that “The education to a Weltvolk (people of the world/international people) does not come about through consuls and diplomats, but through an extension of the content of our education that corresponds to the facts of our new position in the world.”\footnote{”Die Erziehung zum Weltvolk erfolgt nicht durch Konsuln und Diplomaten, sondern durch eine den neuen Tatsachen unserer Weltstellung gerecht werdende Erweiterung unserer Bildungsinhalte.” – Becker, Carl Heinrich: “Die Denkschrift des preußischen Kultusministeriums über die Förderung der Auslandsstudien” (1917), in: Becker, Carl Heinrich: Internationale Wissenschaft und nationale Bildung, ed. by Guido Müller (=Studien und Dokumentationen zur deutschen Bildungsgeschichte, 64) Cologne 1997, pp. 157–170, here: 161f.} Despite this restraint, the context was very clear to the Prussian House of Representatives, where Social Democrat Konrad Haenisch declared in March 1917:

Gentlemen, the fiasco of international mobilization in the first months of the war has – if I understand the intention of this memorandum correctly – not played the smallest role in motivating the Honourable Minister of Culture to approach the topic of Auslandsstudien, which have already been debated here before the war, and finally set the matter into motion.\footnote{”Meine Herren, dieses Fiasko der weltpolitischen Mobilmachung in den ersten Kriegsmonaten hat – wenn ich den Sinn der Denkschrift recht verstanden habe – den Herrn Kultusminister nicht zum wenigsten veranlasst, die Frage der Auslandsstudien, die ja}
Political Education

The widespread acclaim for the memorandum was not least due to its diverse and somewhat vague intentions. The inherent criticism of the diplomatic service was one of the memorandum’s appeals, but so was its impetus to broaden the educational goals of higher education in general:

Auslandsstudien are certainly also for those who want to equip themselves for a life’s work in foreign parts, but it cannot be stressed enough that the goals of the ministry go far beyond that. It wants to add a new note to our education, which has hitherto been too one-sidedly focussed on literature, history and aesthetics. The war has made clear, even to those who did not know it before, how alarming our ignorance of foreign thought has been and how urgently we need a polito-logical understanding of the present times. Especially those who will never set foot outside the boundaries of the German Empire, but who nevertheless make up the bulk of the educated classes, need to compensate for their lack of personal experience with studies. The young generation of jurists, who will provide the state with civil servants, the prospective teachers, who are to plant our educational ideals into the youth of the future, they must experience in their most susceptible years that the Ideas of Weimar and the Discipline of Potsdam shall continue to form the basis of our culture, but that the new Germany has more tasks to fulfil than to cultivate the literary and artistic education and foster loyal state servants and brave soldiers. Our field is the world. Every academic must consider it an obligation of honour to educate himself in the science of statecraft – be it in matters of economy, law or politics – and inwardly relate to the great problems of international politics and economy.
Discussions within the preceding parliamentary commission had focussed on transforming the existing educational infrastructure for diplomatic and colonial service to allow it to cope with increased demands, but the final memorandum had gone beyond that, much to the positive surprise of the parliamentarians.\footnote{Minutes of the 69th session of the Prussian Parliament, February 28th 1917, printed selectively as “Die Auslandsstudien im preußischen Landtag”, in: Internationale Monatschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik, 7/1917, pp. 769–820.} \textit{Auslandsstudien}, as they were proposed, were not in the first instance supposed to provide practical skills and knowledge to missionaries, settlers and civil servants in positions abroad, but to widen the intellectual horizon of the German public, or at least the small sliver of academically trained citizens. For the needs of the diplomatic corps or German settlers and missionaries, an extension of the Seminar for Oriental Languages and the Hamburg Colonial Institute was instigated, but the actual novelty of the initiative lay in its call for decentralized political education about foreign matters. By breaking up the perceived self-limitation of German education and opening the political sphere to responsible citizens, the memorandum hoped to give new grounds to the Reich’s public diplomacy. A politically educated electorate with a general understanding of foreign concerns, it was hoped, would form a broader base for a reasonable and peaceable German foreign policy. Pre-war campaigns against “\textit{Ausländerei}”, the adoption of habits or ideas that were perceived as foreign, were just the visible outflow of a political culture that was ignorant of foreign concerns and considered domestic perceptions and concerns to be intrinsically superior. That this widespread ignorance, and the political climate it created, had contributed to the war and the eventual defeat in it, was a general creed among the memorandum’s advocates.\footnote{Trommler 2008, pp. 253–256.}
Interdisciplinarity

Another impetus, somewhat swamped by the insistence on the national educational goals of Becker’s memorandum, was the effect that Auslandsstudien would have on the structure the German universities.

Scientific studies concerning foreign countries extend beyond the framework of individual disciplines, and the specialist for a certain region needs not just philological knowledge, i.e. language skills, but also political science, history and geography. Above all, he needs to know and understand the multiform thinking and feeling, the whole sociological structure of the country in question, if his work is to have any sense. Through practical application in a particular academic field, a new structure emerges, which does not detract from the old disciplines, but leads to new constellations that largely coincide with certain large cultural areas. This reordering of particular branches of the great old disciplines into new units can also be seen elsewhere and is to be commended, since only in that way can our science be preserved from disintegrating into special studies; only in this way can the necessary cohesion and unity of our education be preserved.19

The interdisciplinary approach extolled in this passage is interesting in that it is derived from two different directions: On the one hand, Becker argues, the subject of Auslandsstudien demanded an interdisciplinary and sociological approach, and on the other hand, such an approach was necessary even without Auslandsstudien. Even though his memorandum kept discussion about this subject pragmatically short, Becker’s wider intentions for academic reform did aim at a strengthening of synthesizing observations and especially advertised the extension of sociological approaches.20

19 “Fachstudien in Bezug auf das Ausland greifen über den Rahmen der Einzeldisziplinen hinaus, und der Spezialist für ein bestimmtes Gebiet braucht nicht nur philologische, d.h. hier sprachliche, sondern auch staatswissenschaftliche, historische und geographische Kenntnisse. Vor allem muss er das vielgestaltige Denken und Empfinden, die ganze sozio-logische Struktur des betreffenden Landes kennen und verstehen, wenn seine Arbeit einen Sinn haben soll. Es bereitet sich hier also auf einem Sondergebiet der Wissenschaft durch ihre Anwendung auf die Praxis eine neue Gliederung vor, die den alten Wissenschaften nichts nimmt, aber zu neuen Zusammenfassungen führt, die im Wesentlichen mit gewissen großen Kulturkreisen zusammenfallen. Diese Neugruppierung spezieller Zweige der großen alten Wissensgebiete zu neuen Einheiten ist auch sonst zu beobachten und zu begrüßen, denn nur so kann unsere Wissenschaft davor bewahrt werden, in Spezialstudien zu zerfallen; nur so bleibt die notwendige Geschlossenheit und Einheitlichkeit unserer Bildung erhalten.” – Becker 1917, pp. 166f.

His colleague and collaborator, Eduard Spranger, presented a parallel memorandum, which was less concerned with pragmatically garnering multi-partisan parliamentary support, and instead focussed on the challenges that *Auslandsstudien* presented to the academic system. His paper was more radical in a number of respects, beginning with the statement that hitherto there had not actually been education on foreign affairs in Germany, and that *Auslandsstudien* was not an attempt to accommodate growing colonial and imperialist endeavours, but a start from scratch.\(^{21}\) Consequently, his thoughts about the implications of interdisciplinarity were much clearer and less accommodating than Becker’s. In contrast to Becker’s insistence on national political education, Spranger stressed the scientific character of *Auslandsstudien*, and he extolled interdisciplinarity not just as an incidental and commendable side-effect, but as one of the main points of the reform programme. “If one wishes to seriously support *Auslandsstudien*, one will have to dare to take the step from an incidental to an entirely systematic procedure. In this decision alone lies protection from fragmentation and wastefulness.”\(^{22}\)

Especially, he noted, the near-monopoly of the philological branches of the humanities on all things foreign would have to be broken. This was not because philology had no useful contributions to make, but because the traditional approach was via language history. “But it is clear, that as an entry into modern England and France the path via Beowulf and the Song of Roland is a wide detour, and that contemporary foreign countries can be viewed through other lenses while still remaining scientific.”\(^{23}\) Foreign countries, he argued vehemently, could only be understood through a systematic interdisciplinarity, if they were to be more than “Realiensalat” (salad of specimens). Primary for the epistemological foundation of such an under-


\(^{22}\) “Will man also die Auslandsstudien ernstlich fördern, so muss man auch den Schritt wagen, vom gelegentlichen Verfahren zu einem ganz systematischen überzugehen. In dieser Entscheidung allein liegt der Schutz vor Zersplitterung und Vergeudung.” – Spranger 1917, p. 1044.

taking was observation of the “indivisible wholeness of the culture” and its “geographical-sociological totality” as well as a “historical grounding.”

Decentralization

From these observations, Spranger deduced that the idea of a central Area Studies-institute was not just impractical but intellectually inconceivable, since Area Studies formed a methodological unit, but had no common subject. Instead, each institute had to concern itself with a single culture, and this task was best distributed between different universities, so as to avoid the temptation for Area Studies to become a separate discipline and lose sight of its empirical underpinnings. Becker’s memorandum had pussyfooted around this point, arguing it primarily with the intended national educational goal and the need to offer Area Studies to a wide range of students. In all other regards, it remained vague enough not to offend any sensibilities or close off room for manoeuvre.

25 Spranger 1917, pp. 1044–1046.
26 “Everywhere the existing should be taken up, rudiments should be refined and the novelty sought less in the form than in the content. First and foremost, a slow, organic growth is desired, an adaption to the gradually developed needs; no flaunting of highly visible organizational forms and grandiloquent names, but a conscious furtherance of the will to contribute, a searching and educating of competent teachers, a quick seizing of arising opportunities for teaching and learning. […] It will not be easy to create an opportunity in the schedules for this civic education to receive its place in the sun. Much is dependent on the discretion of the representatives of the regular disciplines and the good will of the students. […] The war has hopefully created such an interest in these questions, that it only takes encouragement to integrate this new subject into the academic syllabus without problems.” (Überall soll angeknüpft werden an das Vorhandene, Ansätze weiter entwickelt und auch das Neue weniger in der Form als in der Sache gesucht werden. Vor allem wird ein langsames, organisches Wachstum erstrebt, ein Sichanpassen an die erst allmählich entstehenden Bedürfnisse, kein Prunken mit weithin sichtbaren Organisationsformen und vollklingenden Namen, sondern eine bewusste Förderung des Willens zur Sache, ein Suchen und Erziehen von sachverständigen Lehrern, ein rasches Ergreifen sich bietender Lehr- und Lerngelegenheiten. […] Es wird nicht leicht sein, in den Studienplänen die Möglichkeit zu schaffen, dass diese staatsbürgerliche Erziehung ihren Platz an der Sonne erhält. Es wird hier viel von der Einsicht der Vertreter der üblichen Brotstudienfächer und von dem guten Willen der Studenten abhängen. […] Der Krieg hat hoffentlich das Interesse an diesen Fragen derartig geweckt, dass es nur der Anregung bedarf, dieses neue Gebiet dem akademischen Stundenplan ohne Schwierigkeiten einzugliedern.) – Becker 1917, p. 164f. Even though very few specific provisions were made in the memorandum, so as to reduce political and academic resistance, one
Again, it fell to Spranger’s paper to explain the specific thoughts and intentions of the ministerial workgroup. Above all, the general structure of an Area Studies-institute would have to include professorships for civil and private law, sociology, economics, the educational system, contemporary literature and religion and ecclesiastics, assuming that history and older literature were already represented at the university in question. The memoranda even made first stabs at determining places of study and instruction. Kiel was for example pointed to as the most likely candidate for overseas cultures, most likely the English one, while Bonn and possibly Strasbourg would offer themselves for the study of French culture. Breslau and Königsberg, which were in need of invigoration anyway, would be natural candidates for the study of Russian or Slavic cultures. Geographical positions were an important consideration, but beyond that the division of Area Studies between the universities was left open to further deliberation.

Birth Defects

What Becker and Spranger did give the universities were two somewhat distinct sets of tasks. Becker’s emphasis was first and foremost on “1. Scientific Area Studies; 2. Practical schooling of civil servants or private citizens who wish to go abroad; 3. Awakening interest in and understanding of international politics at home”. This was in itself not unproblematic. The success of Becker’s memorandum was in no small part due to its pragmatic vagueness. What Becker meant, when he wrote “Political thinking must be trained; the young German must be politicized”, is not necessarily what the members of parliament heard. This sentence in particular was cheered from all sides of the political divide, if for different reasons. Where social democrats perceived this statement as a challenge to Prussian authoritarianism, more conservative readers saw a call for national spirit and activism.
That everybody could read their own preferences into the text made it successful in Parliament, and that at least Becker’s official text restricted itself to appeals to the goodwill of the universities and its faculties, made it unobjectionable. But, it also undermined the intellectual cohesiveness of the programme and opened the initiative to wide reinterpretation on the ground. This fact was further aggravated by the proposed decentralized structure of Area Studies, since much of the expected organic growth would happen in different universities, hampering a coordinated approach.33

Ironically, while Becker, the Oriental scholar, insisted on the national pedagogical programme of Auslandsstudien, the pedagogue Spranger insisted on the scientific rigour in its application. His minority opinion from the parliamentary workgroup insisted on a methodology derived from his tutor, Wilhelm Dilthey, and stressed a hermeneutic understanding of the subject under scrutiny. “Understanding, not accumulated empiricism, is the goal of ‘scientific’ Area Studies, else one should forgo that name.”34 Hans

32 Joseph Heß (Zentrum), as a sample: “We will soon approach the whole German youth with entirely new ideas, from the elementary pupil up to the student; and our whole corps of teachers, from village school teacher up to university professor, will have to serve this new educational task of instilling national consciousness. And it will be a pleasure to soon raise our youth as true and righteous German men, remembering Germany’s darkest hour, from which it will then have emerged victorious.” (Mit ganz neuen Ideen werden wir demnächst an unsere gesamt Jugend herantreten, vom Volksschullehrer bis zum Hochschulprofessor, und unsere gesamte Lehrerschaft, vom Volksschullehrer bis zum Hochschulprofessor, wird sich in den Dienst dieser Erziehungsaufgabe zum deutschen Nationalbewusstsein zu stellen haben. Und es muss eine wahre Lust sein, demnächst in der Erinnerung an Deutschlands schwerste Stunde, aus der dann siegreich hervorgegangen sein wird, unsere Jugend zu echten und rechten deutschen Männern zu erziehen.) – Minutes of the 69th session of the Prussian Parliament, February 28th 1917, printed selectively as “Die Auslandsstudien im preußischen Landtag”, in: Internationale Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik, 7/1917, pp. 769–820, here: 788f.

33 This last point has also been made by Bock 1991: Auslandswissenschaften, p. 39.

Manfred Bock has remarked that this commitment to hermeneutics gave *Auslandsstudien* a distinct ideological dimension, by opening the study of foreign countries to preconceived notions.\(^{35}\) Whether this dimension was as momentous as Bock makes it out to be, is open to debate, considering the widespread reinterpretation that German Area Studies experienced on the ground.

The present chapter will deal with the original Nordic Institute. Set up in 1918 as one of several area institutes according to the memorandum by C.H. Becker, the first years were characterized by teething problems. Many tasks of the Nordic Institute either directly or by implication contradicted each other. Others were infeasible or difficult to fulfil under the current circumstances. These fundamental conflicts then discharged in personal conflicts, especially since the Nordic Institute had a number of incompatible personalities, which at times gave controversy a particular edge.

III.1 Personnel and Personalities – Setting up the Nordic Institute (1918–1920)

Preliminary discussions about the placement of the Auslandsstudien-clusters quickly produced Greifswald as the locus for the study of Northern Europe.¹ This ministerial decision had been made not so much in consideration of existing competence within the university, but for historical reasons. The expertise that Becker and the Ministry of Culture had set out to foster here was simply not existent by 1917. While Greifswald had been a Swedish University between 1648 and 1815,² this historical connection had no counterpart in scholarship. A proposal by theologian Friedrich Wilhelm von Schubert in 1821, to form a Nordic Institute and a professoriate for

Nordic culture had been without any lasting effect. And even though Greifswald was still connected to the North, Sweden in particular, by summer schools for teachers and the excursions of the Greifswald Geographical Society towards the North (*Greifswalder Geographische Gesellschaft nach dem Norden*), around the fin de siècle systematic research of Northern Europe was as absent here as at any other German university. When it came to language training, Greifswald was even underequipped in comparison with universities such as Jena, Berlin and Kiel, which already had lectorships in Swedish. In this respect, proposals to build the Nordic Institute from the bottom up and rely on local personnel, without much ministerial interference, were hardly viable.

The Chosen Few

Actual area experts had to be imported first. For the field of Nordic languages the German scholar Wolf von Unwerth was recruited from Breslau. Von Unwerth had gathered merits in such diverse fields as dialect studies, Old Norse religion and contemporary Swedish literature, and had just returned from the Eastern Front, where he had conducted dialect studies on Russian prisoners of war. In fact, he was one of few German scholars who could actually present a certain knowledge of contemporary Scandinavian issues, if only within the confines of his own academic discipline. But, despite occupying a key position in the intellectual infrastructure of the Nordic Institute, von Unwerth remained curiously invisible in its proceedings. His hasty promotion to extraordinary professor did not compensate the fact that he was a rather young scholar who showed little

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4 Friese 1993, pp. 113f. For the institution of the lectorates: Åkerlund 2011.
6 These were published as Unwerth, Wolf von: Proben deutschrussischer Mundarten aus den Wolgakolonien und dem Gouvernement Cherson (=Abhandlungen der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 11) Berlin 1918.
interest in academic politics and had little in the way of an institutional base to work from. His health did not permit a vigorous participation in the ongoing struggles to shape the newly constituted institute, either, and when he died in early 1919 he had left little trace in the Nordic Institute.

That academic youth did not strictly necessitate the occupation of a peripheral position in the institute’s constellation was evidenced by geographer Gustav Braun, the second scholar to be imported for the sake of the Nordic Institute. Braun hailed from a professorial family and exhibited a strong degree of enterprise. Braun, who had been born in Dorpat, studied in Königsberg and received his qualification as university teacher in Greifswald in 1907, was no stranger to the Baltic Sea, which had remained a research interest of his during his work in the Institute for Oceanography in Berlin in 1911. In 1912 Braun, 31 years old by that time, received his first professoriate in geography in Basel, where he mainly concerned himself with morphology. After a brief deployment as a lieutenant of the reserve during the fighting in Alsace-Lorraine in 1914, Braun managed to be granted leave to return to his studies of German physical geography. Having concerned himself with the Baltic Sea Region and German Landeskunde, Braun seemed the ideal candidate to take over the geographical part of the Nordic Institute and was consequently called to Greifswald in 1917. Upon arrival, Braun took over directorship of the Geographical Seminar, which was expanded into a full-blown institute under his care. With his forceful nature, his familiarity with the rules of the academic field and his prolific publishing, Braun quickly became a powerful figure within Greifswald University in general and the Nordic Institute in particular.

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7 His father was the biologist Maximilian Braun, who had studied in Greifswald 1871 to 1874 and among other things published on the marine fauna of the Baltic Sea while Assistant Vice Chancellor in Dorpat 1880–86. Max Braun’s other son, Otto Braun, became a professor of philosophy.
8 Braun, Gustav: Das Ostseegebiet, Leipzig 1912.
Attempts to utilize local personnel were more complicated. Apart from Braun and von Unwerth, the minister had planned to appoint the economist Wilhelm Kähler, jurist Paul Merkel and historian Ludwig Bergsträsser. Since Merkel, who was serving in the army during the entirety of the war, would have his plate full upon his return, Albert Coenders was to stand in for him to represent the field of law in the new institute.\textsuperscript{10} Bergsträsser accepted a new appointment in Berlin in early 1918, and his position was filled by theologian Gustaf Dalman. While Kähler and Coenders were chosen because of the disciplines they represented, Dalman was actually selected despite his academic speciality. Dalman had achieved a profile as a scholar of Palestine and the Old Testament, but was also connected to Sweden via his mother and had acted as honorary consul for the Kingdom of Sweden in Palestine. Nevertheless, like Coenders and Kähler, he had never published nor taught on Scandinavian matters.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite no local scholar having any expertise or even visible interest in Northern European matters up to that point, the first announcement of the Nordic Institute triggered an extensive reaction in Greifswald, and pre-

\textsuperscript{10} Curator UG Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/02/1918, GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58, vol.1.
\textsuperscript{11} The discussion about the original directorate is documented in Prussian Minister of Culture to Curator UG, 28/01/1918, GStA PK, Tit. X, Nr. 58, vol.1 and Curator UG to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/02/1918, both GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58, vol.1.
liminary inquiries led to many scholars expressing their willingness to work within the new institute. When the minister first made his intent to set up a Northern European research centre in Greifswald known, local scholars actually began making their own plans to head off the Ministry of Culture with their own proposal. After the faculties had first attempted each to elect their own representatives for the new institute, the Faculty of Law and Economics demanded an inter-faculty solution. After the Senate had declared itself not competent, the Vice Chancellor was charged with setting up a work group which drew “very numerous gentlemen”.12

At this point the pragmatic vagueness of Becker’s memorandum became apparent, as the university and even the ministry seemed to have very few concrete ideas about the outline of the Nordic Institute. At most, the interdisciplinary character and a foggy academic task had been determined, while everything else was left open to discussion. In situ this led to a veritable frenzy at the feeding troughs, as it appeared that many of these gentlemen were primarily interested in siphoning off a sizable share of the 10 000 Marks that the minister had assessed for the Auslandskunde. Especially jurist Eduard Hubrich showed a strong interest and, after a preliminary meeting had agreed that Greifswald should propose not just personnel but also fully fleshed statutes, handed in his own proposal. The Curator, who could only report on the issue via hearsay, doubted very much that Hubrich’s plans were in line with what the ministry had in mind:

But the spirit of these statutes is marked by calling the institute a ‘free association of the participating academics’, reserving special rights to its ‘founders’ and delegating all decisions to the ‘general assembly’. A ‘distribution of funds’ has also been planned as a precaution. A kind of academic joint stock company, so to say, that would surely not be what Your Excellency envisages.13

12 “sehr zahlreiche Herren” – Curator UG to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/02/1918, GStA PK, Tit. X, Nr. 58, vol.1.
13 “Da ich selbstverständlich von diesen Dingen nur gelegentlich durch wohlgesinnte Teilnehmer der Sitzungen etwas erfahre, kann ich ganz zuverlässige Mitteilungen über diese Satzung nicht machen; sie wird ja in einigen Wochen Eurer Exzellenz vorgelegt werden. Aber der Geist dieser Satzung kennzeichnet sich dadurch, dass das Institut als eine ‘freie Vereinigung der beteiligten Hochschullehrer’ bezeichnet wird, ihren ‘Gründern’ besondere Rechte vorbehalten und der ‘Generalversammlung’ überall die Entscheidungen zugewiesen werden. Auch ist eine ‘Verteilung der Gelder’ vorsichtigerweise vorgesehen. Also eine Art akademische Aktiengesellschaft, die ganz gewiss nicht das werden würde, was
Hubrich especially insinuated that he could get some Scandinavian doctoral students for the institute. Considering Hubrich’s well-known habit of mass-producing dissertations, the Curator was less than pleased, and advised that Hubrich from then on be kept out of the Nordic Institute. Instead, he urged, the minister would do best to quickly create facts before local enterprise became too strong to contain. Younger scholars could not really be expected to put up much resistance to Hubrich’s attempt to hijack the project, and the only counterproposal came from palaeontologist Otto Jaekel. While Jaekel was mostly in line with what the minister imagined, and found that many questions were still not sufficiently discussed to allow for the formulation of fixed statutes, he too was pressing for an extended budget that would allow an adequate remuneration of the scholars involved. The ministerial correspondence reflects a reluctance to spend more than what had already been earmarked for the institute. Insofar it is highly plausible that even Jaekel’s proposal was, at least in the respect that it also allotted a financial compensation to the participating scholars, not to Berlin’s liking.

The Directorate from Hell

Under pressure by developments in Greifswald, minister Schmitt-Ott decreed the establishment of the Nordic Institute as of April 22nd 1918. The board of directors should be manned by Braun, Dalman, Kähler, Coenders and von Unwerth, with the latter acting as brevet manager until all members were available. Von Unwerth was also to organize the first meeting of the board of directors, where the first managing director was to be elected. In its first public annual meeting on October 4th 1918 Gustaf Dalman was chosen to represent the institute and in the winter semester of 1918 the Nordic Institute began its first courses. Jaekel’s insistence that many questions were as of yet too unresolved to allow for fixed statutes was right,
something that became obvious almost a year later. With the shifting foreign political situation, it was especially the disagreements between Gustav Braun and Gustaf Dalman that rubbed against the constraints of the Nordic Institute. In its given constitution, the managing director’s position was only loosely defined. While the statutes left a lot of leg-room to all board members, the managing director was its outward representative and he had a kind of policy-making power, in that he could establish guidelines. How binding these were was a moot point, though. All the board members were professors and sometimes institute heads in their own right, and acted, habitually and structurally, with a high degree of independence. Seemingly, as had to be inferred from existing sources, the organization of the Nordic Institute was so unclear that any organized work was coincidental. The majority of board members, apart from von Unwerth and Braun, had been shanghaied for the institute and showed little inclination to devote their time to Nordic studies.

In the summer of 1919 this situation came to a head when Dalman offered his resignation for the first time and handed in a writ, in which he and the board of directors asked the ministry to be allowed to organize the institute with a different structure. A continuation under the prevailing rules was deemed impossible and “a change in personnel does not promise any improvement”.

19 Richter to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 06/08/1919, UAG K630.
20 “und durch einen Wechsel in den Personen der Vorsitzenden eine Besserung nicht in Aussicht steht.” – Board of directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/08/1919, UAG K630.
From the beginning there had been friction, especially between Dalman and Braun, “which has in the meantime reached a certain acidity”, 21 and while nobody wanted to push anybody else out, the current arrangement did not allow for coherent work. The board of directors therefore clamoured for an acephalous organization, a *modus operandi* that would minimize possible conflict areas and at the same time give some freedom to all members in the choice of their methods and subjects. The members of the institute would meet regularly and inform each other about their activities, but would otherwise be independent. 22

While the proposal by the board was hardly fleshed out, both Braun – who had not participated in the meeting at which the board had drafted its statement – and Dalman had presented their own plans for a possible reorganization. For both of them, whether openly stated or not, the question was how to shape the organization so as to gently force the unwilling members to contribute their work, while at the same time keeping the system open enough not to stifle their initiative and, ostensibly, ruffle too many feathers.

Gustaf Dalman imagined a kind of “core-Nordic Institute”, made up of the subject area “Language and Literature”, supposedly represented by the resident German scholar. This core area would handle the administrative and institutional features, such as library and locales. Around this core there would be a network of all those scholars who concerned themselves with Northern European matters and who would conduct their work on their own authority and within their respective disciplines. 23 Dalman’s idea would therefore have created not a research institute, but rather an organization where research was coordinated, while a central office took over representative and administrative duties.

Braun’s proposal was more extensive, especially since he felt he needed to justify his position vis-à-vis several of his colleagues. In contrast to Dalman, whose plan stipulated a division along disciplinary lines, Braun envisaged a geographical division of the work tasks. Of this division only the managing director, his deputy and the representative of geography were

21 “die inzwischen eine gewisse Schärfe angenommen haben” – Board of directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/08/1919, UAG K630.
22 Board of directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/08/1919, UAG K630.
23 Dalman’s proposal for a reorganization of the Nordic Institute, addendum 3 for Board of directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/08/1919, UAG K630.
exempt. The institute would, therefore, be divided into a Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish department, each with its own director. Library and office would be managed collectively; otherwise the directors would only be nominally accountable to the common office. The department heads, Braun opined, would have to become experts in their respective subjects, not only in their respective discipline, and keep all foreign cultural threads with their country in their hands.24

With their competing plans, Braun and Dalman quarrelled about two areas that were of utmost importance to the functioning of the new institute. The one that Braun put the most emphasis on was that of personal enterprise. He complained that a collegial constitution, as proposed by the board of directors, was unwieldy and eliminated all personal responsibility: “A collegial constitution is a stumbling block to all of us; I have to reject it.”25 And Braun left little doubt that he did not have much faith in his colleagues’ initiative, if they were not forced to participate in the work by some kind of clear position, where inactivity was socially punished as much as success was rewarded. Right now, he argued, most of his colleagues did not even bother to learn any Scandinavian language, whereas he himself, Dalman and German scholar Werner Richter, who had inherited the position as secretary from the late Wolf von Unwerth, did all the work.26

This unwillingness by many members of the Nordic Institute to devote any considerable share of their time and energy to their Nordic tasks depended on the more profound problem of how to structure the work of the institute. Again, it is Braun’s competing concept that illuminates the underlying disagreement within the rest of the board of directors.

The objections by my colleagues […] in their letter of August 6th 1919 ‘this regional structure seems to us incompatible with the personal responsibility of the individual disciplinary representative’ is in line with a way of thinking along strict disciplinary lines. But this must and will fail in the creation of an institute like the Nordic, devoted to sociological studies. Furthermore it seems to me to be

24 Braun’s proposal for a reorganization of the Nordic Institute, addendum 2 for Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/08/1919, UAG K630.
25 “Eine kollegiale Verfassung ist uns allen ein Hemmschuh, ich muss sie ablehnen.” – Braun’s proposal for a reorganization of the Nordic Institute, addendum 2 for Board of directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/08/1919, UAG K630
26 Braun’s proposal for a reorganization of the Nordic Institute, addendum 2 for Board of directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 06/08/1919, UAG K630 and Braun to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 25/08/1919, UAG K630.
an effluence of a certain timidity in taking responsibility for the running of a department and the associated necessity to learn the language and account for their independent work. In the younger colleagues this might spring from the desire, in consideration of their further academic career, not to commit themselves too much to one side. They might fail to see at the moment that real expertise regarding individual countries must necessarily produce tangible advantages for their future career, much as this organization would afford the older among us the possibility to foster lecturers and thereby ensure a continuity of the Nordic Institute in case any scholar accepts an appointment elsewhere.27

What Braun referred to as the greatest blockage to a blossoming interest in his colleagues was that an interdisciplinary area expertise demanded a serious investment of time and energy without any clear indication as to how this was to pay off. Apart from acquiring the language, scholars would not just have to penetrate their target country by means of their own discipline, but would have to acquire the necessary geographical, historical, political and social details as well. And in spite of Braun’s assertions to the contrary, it was not self-evident that such a regional expertise would actually translate into any career advantage. In an environment organized along disciplinary lines, the usefulness of the promoted area expertise in the case of a call from another university was of dubious value. While this was less of a concern for geographers, historians and philologists, where regional sub-specializations were an accepted phenomenon, jurists, eco-

nomists and theologians would find their specialist knowledge immediately devalued outside of Greifswald.\textsuperscript{28}

The board of directors could give their placet to neither Braun’s nor Dalman’s proposal. Dalman’s plans were hard to realize because the increased authority of the German Studies representative could not really be matched with institutional resources, and the core institute, around which other scholars would orbit, did not allow for any coherent leadership or common action. Braun’s proposal, on the other hand, would subordinate traditionally powerful and independent German professors and assign them roles within an open but firm structure. Braun even warned the minister that opposition to his proposal was so strong that the resignation of several of his colleagues would be a possible side-effect of its realization.\textsuperscript{29}

The ministry finally decided to put a stop to the petty bickering in Greifswald by putting its own man in power. The successor to Wolf von Unwerth, German scholar Werner Richter, had already taken over the responsibilities as permanent secretary in the institute and seems to have had the confidence of Dalman and Braun as a neutral personality as well as a conscientious and adroit negotiator and administrator.\textsuperscript{30} In early 1920 he was appointed not to the largely representative position of \textit{Geschäftsführer} of the Nordic Institute, but ordained with the more impressive title of \textit{Direktor}, implying a stronger, more inclusive, role. With this change in the leadership-position of the Nordic Institute having been carried out, at least the most glaring problems in the institutional setup of the institute seemed for the time being to have been solved.

### III.2 Braun vs. Dalman – \textit{Auslandskunde} and Public Diplomacy (1918–1920)

With the institutional form having been found, there was still a lot of disagreement about the content of the Nordic Institute. This mainly crystal-

\textsuperscript{28} Only one member of the Nordic Institute left it because of an appointment. This was jurist Albert Coenders, whose participation had been limited to his part in a collective lecture. It is not even entirely clear if he ever visited any Scandinavian country during his career.

\textsuperscript{29} Braun to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 25/08/1919, UAG K630.

\textsuperscript{30} Braun to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 25/08/1919, UAG K630.
lized around Gustav Braun and Gustaf Dalman, the two main players in the early years of the institute.

First Forays into Politics

Gustav Braun, in a characteristically enterprising move, had begun his work in Greifswald with an extended tour of Denmark and Sweden in the autumn of 1918 to spread the news about the new institute. The high point of this promotional tour was a speech given at the German Embassy in Kristiania, in which Braun’s first sentence summed up his view of his own task:

Even though today’s gathering takes place in a legation, i.e. an institution given over to political activity, the information that I have the honour to impart on you today is of a purely academic nature. It’s tendency, once in a currently far-off future the war is over, will be to give neutral scholars the opportunity to bring academic circles abroad and at home into contact again and thereby contribute to our common mission, the exploration and dissemination of the truth.31

In fact, Braun argued, Germany with its numerous universities, academies and scholarly societies was too large and complex a system to allow for any systematic rebuilding of academic relations. The Nordic Institute was, therefore, to serve as the central point of contact between German and Scandinavian academia. The idea of turning Greifswald into the Prussian and German centre for all contacts with Northern Europe was not originally part of the founding task of the Nordic Institute. It was, on the other hand, a good way to extend the Nordic Institute’s mandate beyond the original research task, thereby increasing its weight and endearing itself to agencies outside of academia. Foreign contacts as a work task had been mentioned in Becker’s and Spranger’s memoranda, but only peripherally and as part and prerequisite of the research endeavour. That increased academic contacts would

create generalized goodwill abroad was present in the minds of the ministerial instigators of Area Studies, but what Braun proposed instead was a more active function for the institute. The networks in the North would actually become one of the main functions of the Nordic Institute, beyond the mere prerequisite function for research. This trend to an active public diplomacy for the institute's own account, was further reinforced by the need to acquire foreign donations and thereby overcome budgetary restraints.

Battlefield Academia

This creeping extension of the Nordic Institute’s mandate was entirely in keeping with the zeitgeist. The official foundation of the Nordic Institute on October 4th 1918 had been preceded the day before by the appointment of Max von Baden as Reich Chancellor and an official request by the Reich government for an armistice. In a few hectic weeks the Kaiser would abdicate, the German army – surprising to most Germans – would surrender and the Kaiserreich would turn into a republic. The severe loss of station entailed by the defeat in the war also challenged all those involved in foreign cultural policy – as the Nordic Institute now was – to rectify that situation.

Gustav Braun was the first scholar in Greifswald to fully realize the implications of this changed situation. Already in late October 1918, before the extent of the German decline in international renown had dawned on the majority of Germans, he wrote in substantiation of his first Northern European study tour:

> England and France are bestirring themselves; Rostock organizes a competing endeavour – we are in need of the utmost exertion especially now, that the war is ending unfavourably. Because the Nordic Institute can become one of those endeavours with whose help our intellectual power can rise again and win influence on the youth of neighbouring countries.32

Consequently, Braun’s subsequent tour was mainly aimed at establishing contact with Swedish academics and exploring the possibilities of an

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increased academic exchange. At the same time, it included a further extension of the Nordic Institute's mandate. Henceforward, the soft public diplomacy task, which had already been accepted by the institute's leadership, was to be directed not only at securing generalized goodwill, but at restoring Germany’s position in the world, especially the academic world. Berlin obviously approved of Braun’s endeavours and tried to support them wherever they could. Apart from a rather liberal funding and ministerial passports – issued by the Prussian Ministry of Culture and the Foreign Office both – for his study tours, Braun could also count on intangible support from Berlin.

In October 1919 the Social Democratic Minister of Culture Konrad Haenisch issued a memorandum to the Prussian universities, reminding them of the political programme of the Auslandskunde-institutions:

Peace is at the gates. With it, we hope, the boundaries that have separated our people from the international community will finally fall. In the years of a heavily nurtured enmity against us, the ties that connected us to the intellectual community of nations have been severed. Now it is time to re-establish those ties. / No estate has a greater duty to do this than Germany’s academic world. Untouched by defamations and prosecution, German scholarship has preserved its value. Now, that we will be economically impotent or dependent upon self-interested foreign help for a long time and stand on a field of debris in the struggle for our national life, we are especially dependent on our intellectual forces. Fate has handed German academia a daunting task. It must be our leader on the way towards self-determination and resurgence, which we have to seek all on our own, without concern for foreign approval or rejection.

33 Travel report by Gustav Braun about his second tour of Scandinavia, 28/5/1919, UAG K630.
34 GStA PK, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1.
In this way primed for an increased attention to a political mission in general and the establishment and activation of foreign contacts in particular, the minister continued to remind German academics that “Foreign scholars have welcomed ours in times of great intellectual turmoil and contributed to the great work of care for our interred brothers. Much debt of gratitude is still to be repaid, many signals of selfless hospitality have still to be reciprocated.”

This last cue is to be understood as a direct reference to Scandinavia, where people like the Swedish nurse Elsa Brändström and the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen had set up support organizations for German prisoners of war in Russia. Their public image had shaped the German perception of the Nordic countries to a large degree, and here, it was assumed, was a promising toe-hold to re-establish German Weltgeltung, at least in the academic field. While German science and scholarship were shunned and deliberately isolated from international communications by French, Belgian and British academics, neutral and especially Nordic scholars clamoured for a European reconciliation.

This opportunity was taken up with alacrity in Berlin, primarily by the Foreign Office, but also by the Ministry of Culture. With his memorandum, Haenisch put an official stamp on a shift in emphasis that had already taken place on the ground. In Berlin the loss of the traditional instruments of German power, the military and the economy, had led to an increased interest in cultural politics, not only to replace the lost impact of power politics abroad, but also as a means to give legitimacy to the new republic. Konrad Hänisch, assisted by his new state secretary C.H. Becker, advanced a number of programmes to extend cultural policy and public diplomacy, and

(except Frankfurt and Cologne), 24/11/1919, GStA PK I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. IV, Nr. 34.

36 “Ausländische Gelehrte haben die unsrigen in Zeiten schwerer geistiger Wirrnis willkommen geheißen und mitgewirkt am großen Werk der Fürsorge für unsere gefangenen Brüder. Hier ist noch manche Dankesschuld abzutragen, manches Zeichen selbstloser Gastfreundschaft gilt es noch zu erwidern.” – Minister of Culture to rectors of the Prussian universities (except Frankfurt and Cologne), 24/11/1919, GStA PK I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. IV, Nr. 34.


few of the parliamentary parties abstained from the prevalent discussions about culture and cultural policy. Nevertheless, a consensus was, as in the case of the *Auslandsstudien*-memorandum, difficult to reach. Between the perception of culture as a unifying element in an increasingly tension-filled Weimar Republic and the experience of the division created by different societal groups which became increasingly culturally legitimized, *Kulturpolitik* (cultural policy) became a hot topic in the years following World War One, and contentions over it continued to cast their shadows long after the parliamentary debates had subsided.\(^{39}\) *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik* (foreign cultural policy, i.e. public diplomacy) was in a different situation. While a stronger focus on cultural representation abroad seemed the logical conclusion of the changed international situation, the Foreign Office proved ill-adapted for the task. Internationally and domestically marred with the propaganda efforts that had gone wrong during the war, and staffed with personnel whose professional training and political leanings did not leave them suited to the new mission, the Foreign Office was slow to pick up on public diplomacy. Its Cultural Department, founded in 1920, was largely a bureaucratic rearrangement of existing responsibilities rather than a general change in attitude, and lacked a clear line.\(^{40}\)

Direct political control over the academic field was limited, though, with the Ministry of Culture and the Foreign Office advising and supporting, but not actually controlling activity in Greifswald. This was not only due to the lack of a cohesive political leadership in the area of public diplomacy, but large encroachments on academic independence were unnecessary, since the interests of universities and ministries overlapped in this regard. Overcoming the ongoing discrimination against German academics and the German language on the international stage was as much a concern of the universities as it was of the political leadership. The epitome of this development in the Nordic Institute was the speech given by Albert Coenders at the annual meeting of the board members in 1920, which reflected a probably widespread siege mentality among German academics:

For our Nordic Institute the past year was characterized by the inauspicious war, which is still continued by our enemies in a one-sided fashion. The word Peace, that would normally also hold a certain flair for the vanquished, promising him

\(^{39}\) Trommler 2008, pp. 289–300.

rest and other blessings, prosperity in diligent work for him as well, has now been utterly desecrated by our enemies and degraded to its opposite. Even now, that the weapons have been silent for two years, the war continues, cruel and devastating; only now it is no longer an open fight but rather a treacherous and devious war of destruction against an unarmed opponent.  

The idea that the ongoing boycott against German scholarship was a continuation of war by different means, and that Germany’s enemies had taken the first step in turning the traditionally neutral field of science and scholarship into a political arena, in turn also meant that German scholars were fully within their rights, if not obligations, to consider their academic work part of a larger inter-state struggle. Thus, not only was academic production to be geared towards immediate diplomatic utility, the open cooperation with state agencies was also becoming more and more legitimate.

Gustaf Dalman vs. the Zeitgeist

While the perception expressed by Albert Coenders was uncontroversial enough to warrant a small publication, it was by no means unanimous. Reservations about moving too close to the centres of power had been expressed as early as 1918, when Gustaf Dalman had spoken out against using the German legations in Scandinavia as bases of operation for the Nordic Institute. This could, he had argued, give the impression that the Nordic Institute was nothing more than political bait. That Dalman had deeper issues with this particular side of the institution he was heading became clear in the fullness of time. While Dalman refrained from arguing the point with the Ministry of Culture, Gustav Braun had made it clear that his main point


43 Dalman to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 24/10/1918, UAG K630.
of contention with Dalman was the latter’s complete refusal to acknowledge the cultural political mission of the Nordic Institute. Dalman left few documented statements on the matter, leaving his personal argumentation unclear, but his cautious criticism uttered against Braun’s behaviour in autumn 1918 indicates that his main fear was less the political programme in itself but rather that overstressing its importance would compromise its chances of success. In fact, the first annual report of the new institute, drafted by Dalman, did not mention its foreign policy dimension at all.

Dalman’s refusal to act along the lines of a fuzzily defined programme of national resurgence was not in keeping with the spirit of the times, though. While the Foreign Office and the political leadership were anything but clear about the outlines of public diplomacy, experiments with the new tool of foreign policy had begun, and the Nordic Institute soon became the addressee of intermittent reports by the German legations in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Kristiania, requesting statements by the Nordic experts.

Here, the fundamental flaws in the mating of diplomats and scholars became obvious. The task of actually contributing to the everyday diplomatic work of the legations was clearly overwhelming the capabilities of the scholars. While the actual responses are no longer preserved, it is hard to imagine what kind of contribution Greifswald could have made to the work of the diplomatic service. Gustaf Dalman had acted as Swedish consul in Palestine, but this was primarily a representative function, and no other scholar in Greifswald could claim any expertise on contemporary Swedish politics or even the cultural scene. The only qualification was held by the institute’s secretary Johannes Paul, who arrived in the summer of 1921, and Paul had then just recently left the employ of the legation in Stockholm, from which one could argue that the expertise he could have contributed would have been available in Stockholm anyway. On the other hand, Greifswald’s scholars were used to a culture of open exchange, often to the point of indelicacy, which was not conducive to the handling of sensitive intelligence.

46 UAG K630, passim.
Since its foundation the Nordic Institute had maintained contact with Riksförbundet för Svenskhetens bevarande i utlandet (National Association for the Preservation of Swedishness Abroad), founded in 1908 by Gothenburg’s linguist Vilhelm Lundström. In the wake of widespread Swedish emigration, especially to the United States, Lundström and like-minded people set out to support and foster Swedish-speaking communities abroad, among other things by the foundation of professorships in Swedish.\(^{47}\)

Within Europe, these professorships also served to keep up a cultural presence in former Swedish possessions, and while the Baltic countries were the most obvious target for such undertakings, Greifswald also hoped for funds.\(^{48}\) So when in March 1920 the Ministry of Culture forwarded a message by a German consul in Gothenburg, a reaction was called for:

Professor Lundström does not seem to have much sympathy for the Nordic Institute. Terms such as “Nordic”, “Scandinavian” and so on are not to his liking, and he does not seem to relish the thought that funds raised in Sweden would also be used for Danish, Norwegian or even Finnish language and literature. The Nordic Institute was more of a paper tiger anyway. The only real value was in its library and that would not be forgotten here in Sweden anyhow. Its expansion would be looked after regardless of the current fundraising endeavour.\(^{49}\)

Apart from offering a glance into Lundström’s anti-Nordic sentiments, this message also necessitated an intervention. The Riksförening was collecting money for a chair in Swedish, and Greifswald seemed to be out of the game, wherefore Gustaf Dalman immediately turned to his Swedish colleague to change his mind and calm the waves. This prompt action was not only unsuccessful – the money was awarded to Rostock but disappeared there in the

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\(^{49}\)”Für das Nordische Institut schien Professor Lundström nicht eben viel übrig zu haben; Begriffe wie ‘nordisch’, ‘skandinavisch’ u. dgl. sind ihm offenbar nicht sehr sympathisch, und er scheint den Gedanken nicht zu schätzen, dass in Schweden gesammelte Gelder auch für die dänische, norwegische oder gar finnische Sprache und Literatur verwendet werden könnten. Das Nordische Institut bestände überhaupt eigentlich mehr auf dem Papier; den einzigen reellen Wert hätte dessen Bibliothek, diese vergäße man aber hier in Schweden so wie so nicht, für ihre Erweiterung werde ganz unabhängig von der zur Erörterung stehenden Sammlung nach wie vor gesorgt werden.” – Prussian Ministry of Culture to Curator UG, 03/05/1920, UAG K630.
hyperinflation\textsuperscript{50} – it also brought Dalman a severe dressing-down from Berlin. By referring to the source of his information, Dalman had betrayed the confidentiality that had specifically been demanded by the Ministry of Culture and the Foreign Office and that was so necessary for continued consular operations in Sweden.\textsuperscript{51} Tempers were high in Berlin, but not to such a degree that the minister would have demanded Dalman’s resignation. Yet, this was what Dalman offered. Obviously frustrated, not just by this incident but also by run-ins with Braun, Dalman insisted that he had only tried to act in the institute’s best interests and that he had at least succeeded in retaining an important sponsor. He therefore asked to be relieved of the post “that has cost me much time, work and part of my health, which nobody can compensate me for.”\textsuperscript{52} “Regretfully” the Minister accepted.

This episode, apart from ridding the Nordic Institute of its first director, also marked a turning point in the relationship between Greifswald’s scholars and the professional diplomats. Following the incident, information and requests from the Foreign Office became rarer and rarer and had almost entirely petered out by 1925. Several factors might have contributed to this break-up of connections. The Dalman-case not only illustrated that diplomats and scholars followed a different logic in their treatment of confidential information, they also had different short-term interests. Whereas Lundström’s displeasure with the all-Nordic direction of the Nordic Institute might have been a matter of pure curiosity to the German legation in Stockholm and not have warranted any immediate reaction, it was essential to the Nordic Institute and necessitated an intervention. What is more, the fact that this intervention was carried out in a rather blunt manner, might have aggravated the diplomatic service, but can hardly have caused much surprise there. After all, none of Greifswald’s personnel had any real diplomatic experience, nor did the Foreign Office seem to have any clear idea about just what the Nordic Institute could or should be used for. Most officials in the Foreign Office were entrenched in a \textit{modus operandi} in which there was little place for academic Area Studies. The experiment in using them as direct support for regular diplomatic work had obviously failed, and other ways of employing Greifswald’s expertise were not

\textsuperscript{50} Åkerlund 2011, p. 86f.

\textsuperscript{51} Prussian Minister of Culture to Dalman, 19/08/1920, UAG K630.

\textsuperscript{52} “\textit{der mich viel Zeit, viel Arbeitskraft und einen Teil meiner Gesundheit gekostet hat, die mir niemand ersetzen kann}.” – Dalman to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 28/07/1920, UAG K630.
apparent. Thus, the fault for this broken down cooperation was not only the lack of sensitivity among the scholars, but also the lack of imagination among the diplomats.

III.3 Gustav Braun vs. Paul Merker
– Follow the Money (1921–1933)

While the formation of international contacts was an important patriotic duty to upright and, all the more so in Greifswald, predominantly national-conservative professors, it was also of vital importance to the financial well-being of the Nordic Institute. For long stretches of its existence the institute was to a considerable degree dependent on Scandinavian benefactions.53 While the institute’s seed money of 10,000 Marks was rather generous, its annual budget of 500 Marks was decidedly more modest. Indeed, while this budget corresponded to that of a normal philological seminar,54 it was already tight for a full-sized institute, and for the Nordic Institute the budget never came close to being satisfactory. Already in May 1919, not even a full year after the institute’s foundation, the board of directors sent a desperate call for help to Berlin. The budget could “not even remotely satisfy the most basic needs for stationery and postage”55, all the more so since the Nordic Institute’s networks were predominantly abroad, where the university-supplied postage stamps could not be used. Consequently the institute had already managed to accrue a substantial deficit on entering its second financial year, even though part of the seed money had been poured into running expenses.56

The largest potential matter of expense was the expansion of the library. Since Kiel’s university library was responsible for collecting Scandinavian literature in Prussia, Greifswald had to establish its own stock of at least the

53 Especially Swedish contributions kept the Nordic Institute afloat during the times of hyperinflation. See Paul Merker’s report on two journeys to Denmark in the interest of the Nordic Institute in Greifswald, appendix to Merker to Prussian Minister of Culture, 04/04/1925, UAG K631.
54 Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 26/04/1924, UAG K631.
55 “dass mit dieser Summe nicht entfernt die allerdringlichsten Erfordernisse an Schreibmaterial und Versendungsgebühren gedeckt werden können” – Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 26/05/1919, UAG K630.
56 Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 26/05/1919, UAG K630.
most basic literature, which was particularly problematic because of the multitude of disciplines that needed to be covered. Furthermore, most of these books and journals would have to be bought from abroad and were, therefore, not only more expensive but also subject to shifts in exchange rates.\textsuperscript{57} It was this area, the acquisition of literature, in which the connections to Nordic academia, politics and culture were of vital importance. Members of the Nordic Institute, whenever they had the opportunity to visit Scandinavia, strove to acquire gifts of books to add to the growing library,\textsuperscript{58} and while the vast majority of the acquired books seem to have been free, even their storage and transport soon turned into a serious strain for the limited resources on the institute.\textsuperscript{59}

Even though the ministry helped out with irregular subsidies, the financial situation of the institute became increasingly dire. In December 1920 the board of directors requested an increase in the annual budget to the staggering sum of 12,000 Marks, seemingly in an attempt to force the ministry to comment on the fundamental necessity of the institute. The money was absolutely necessary to begin any real work, the board declared, since already in December – five months after the start of the academic year – the institute’s budget was entirely depleted. Not only were current activities severely curtailed by a lack of funds, even donations from Scandinavia were hampered by the poverty of the Nordic Institute, since the cost of transporting books and other donations was prohibitive. A collection of geological material had to be turned down, they wrote, since the cost of transporting it to Germany was equivalent to the annual budget, and the latest shipment from Finland had to be paid for with a loan from the Geographical Institute. Furthermore, Nordic benefactors were unlikely to help out with further financial contributions if they got the impression that the ministry shied away from these expenses themselves and they essentially were financing an endeavour that enjoyed only limited interest in Germany.\textsuperscript{60} While the ministerial response is not preserved, it is not plausible, nor does later correspondence indicate, that it could fulfil such wishes.

\textsuperscript{57} Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 26/05/1919, UAG K630.
\textsuperscript{58} As evidenced by the mentioning of this topic in nearly every travel report in UAG K630.
\textsuperscript{59} Building officer Lucht to Curator UG, 09/12/1920, UAG K630.
\textsuperscript{60} Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Minister of Culture, 23/12/1920, UAG K630.
The ministerial officer in charge of handling these complaints was, incidentally, the director of the Nordic Institute himself. German scholar Werner Richter, who had been made Direktor in early 1920, had been appointed department head in the Ministry of Culture later that year. It is to be assumed that apart from Richter’s conciliatory and diplomatic nature, his close connection to C.H. Becker was a major factor in his appointment, but it also led to Richter being called to the higher spheres of power.

Paul Merker – The Man with the Plan

When it became clear that Richter would not be returning to his chair in Greifswald, the appointment as Professor of German and Nordic Philology went to the young German scholar Paul Merker. Merker was also appointed Direktor of the Nordic Institute, even though his way there was somewhat mysterious. It was clear to everybody involved that Merker was the ministry’s choice and had a clear task of bringing a firmer organization into the institute’s work, but according to the statutes the acting director would have to be elected by the board of directors from among their number. Nevertheless, it is evident from Merker’s correspondence with the ministry that his appointment as director even preceded his co-optation into the board of directors.61 Considering that the incumbents of the Nordic and German chair had previously held the positions of permanent secretary and later acting director, the decision might have been founded in tradition more than collegial democracy, or it might have been a lone ministerial decision. Whatever the case, Merker’s arrival was not universally welcomed.

Merker felt his first loyalty to Berlin and, after a few weeks of familiarization in Greifswald, requested that his position be strengthened:

I am determined – despite certain local misgivings which can appear and will be mentioned later – to lead this institute towards a blossoming development, and help to sharpen its immanent cultural political idea. But I have to ask that the government first remove certain internal obstacles that have for years stood in the way of a fruitful development and make any confident work simply

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61 Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 21/05/1921, GStA PK I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1, fol. 2–5.
impossible. [...] Most essential seems to me a clarification and definition of my responsibilities.62

In the years of collegial home-rule, Merker complained, some of the members of the institute had retreated from the work entirely, others had pursued their own projects and one had, to all intents and purposes, taken over the institute during Richter’s absence. Indeed, Braun had covered for Richter as Direktor, which had led the already energetic Braun and his research interest, Finland, to become dominant within the institute. Consequently Merker demanded a clear mandate that would end any ambiguity about the role of the Direktor, making him

[...] not just a commissioned manager of the institute board but true head of the institute. He [the director] bears full responsibility internally and represents the institute outwardly. [...] He takes care that the development of the institute as far as possible benefits all Scandinavian countries and all areas and manifestations of their cultural life, and that its resources are employed accordingly.63

Apart from such an ambitious description of his function, Merker also insisted on being authorized to sign for the institute, receive copies of all correspondence by the members and – if need be – given all information pertaining to their Nordic activities.64

Furthermore, Merker insisted that, if the government was serious about establishing Greifswald as the German centre of Nordic studies, it would

62 “Ich bin trotz gewisser lokaler Bedenken, die aufsteigen könnten und von denen noch die Rede sein wird, fest entschlossen, dieses Institut nach Kräften einer emporblühenden Entwicklung zuzuführen und der darin liegenden kulturpolitischen Idee nach Möglichkeit zum Ausdruck zu verhelfen. Aber ich muss darum bitten, dass zuvor vonseiten der Regierung innere Hemmnisse beseitigt werden, die seit Jahren einer ersprißlichen Entfaltung im Wege stehen und eine zuversichtliche Arbeit einfach unmöglich machen. [...] Unbedingt notwendig scheint eine Klärung und Festlegung meiner Kompetenzen.” – Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 21/05/1921, GStA PK I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1, fol. 2–5.

63 “[...] ist nicht nur beauftragter Geschäftsführer des übrigen Vorstandes, sondern wirklicher Leiter des Instituts. Er trägt die volle Verantwortung nach innen und vertritt das Institut nach außen. [...] Er trägt dafür Sorge, dass die Entwicklung des Instituts nach Möglichkeit allen skandinavischen Ländern und allen Gebieten und Äußerungen ihres kulturellen Lebens zugutekommt und die vorhandenen Mittel in entsprechender Weise Verwendung finden.” – Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 21/05/1921, GStA PK I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1, fol. 2–5.

64 Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 21/05/1921, GStA PK I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1, fol. 2–5.
have to appropriate sufficient funds. Considering the peripheral geographical position of Greifswald, it would have to be able to offer a vibrant research infrastructure in order to become attractive to Scandinavian and German academics. Under prevailing circumstances this was impossible, considering that the libraries in Greifswald had little more to offer in the field of modern Scandinavian literature than any city library, and while the institute’s library was growing fast, its stock was unsystematic, since the institute was reliant on gifts and, therefore, had little influence on what exactly it received. Not even the availability of the most important contemporary Nordic writers in the original language – a minimum requirement for serious studies – had been achieved in the previous three years. Considering that there was little local industry that could step into the breach, Merker urged the government to appropriate larger funds and support the Nordic Institute to a much higher degree than had hitherto been the case.65

While Merker showed great optimism in his request for increased funding, this confidence soon eroded when it became clear that Area Studies did not enjoy the priority that Merker was hoping for. By 1924 no appreciable budget increase had happened, even after hyperinflation. Merker, who had started out so ambitiously, became increasingly frustrated. Between widespread budget cuts and a general perplexity in the state apparatus about the utility of Area Studies, securing additional funding proved difficult. While Merker had been able to keep the institute operational during hyperinflation, when small Scandinavian donations transformed into large sums of German money, the stabilization of the German currency rendered this financial instrument useless.66 In early 1924 Merker reiterated his earlier demands, pointing out that all attempts to secure external funding had failed, and that the budget of a normal seminar was utterly insufficient for a German central institute whose tasks were decidedly wider,67 and while the ministry incrementally increased the Nordic Institute’s budget to 1,800 RM until 1927, this could never keep up with demand. In 1925 the Nordic Institute overdrew its budget by 270 percent68 and in early 1926 had to proclaim itself “in financial distress”.

65 Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 21/05/1921, GStA PK I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1, fol. 2–5.
66 Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 08/04/1924, UAG K631.
67 Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 26/04/1924, UAG K631.
68 Merker to Curator UG, 29/03/1925, UAG K631. The institute had spent 1,350 RM of its budget of 500 RM.
Despite an overdrawn budget, books had to be stored on the floor because there was no money for shelves, and keeping up at least a modicum of representativeness was hard. While Merker still harboured ambitions for the work of the Nordic Institute, this was becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile with prevailing circumstances.

A Farewell-Letter

In December 1927, after six years of heading the Nordic Institute, Merker threw in the towel. In a letter filled with disappointment he complained about the “insufficient funding of the Nordic Institute and the impossibility to initiate a generous expansion with the means currently at disposal”, and gave a disappointed account of his work.

Attempts to meet the institute’s budget with external funds had mostly been fruitless. While Scandinavia provided some help during the inflation years, this was no longer an option, and in the individual Nordic countries there was little enthusiasm for an all-Nordic institute anyway. The Pomeranian hinterland was hardly able to contribute financially, the association of “Friends and Supporters of the University” (Freunde und Förderer der Universität) had contributed a one-time sum of 600 Marks and the “Emergency Association of German Science” (Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft) hardly contributed anything, despite endorsement by the ministry. Even though the budget had been increased to 1,800 RM plus 1,000 RM in extraordinary allowance, this was still insufficient for postage, phone, telegrams and bookbinding. Little was left for new acquisitions for the library and while new publications could be acquired as gifts, older literature was entirely out of reach. Merker’s idea of establishing a central library on Nordic matters in Greifswald was therefore illusory. The work of the information office and the publishing of the journal, Nordische Rundschau, was dependent on student assistants but, while there was a paid position for the planned Nordic Bibliography in Copenhagen, the highly demanding student work was remunerated with a mere 500 RM per semester. Since the assistant was also only employed in a supernumerary

69 Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 11/02/1926, UAG K631.
70 Merker’s report about two official journeys to Denmark, 04/03/1925, UAG K631
71 “unzureichende Fundierung des Nordischen Instituts und die Unmöglichkeit, mit den derzeit zur Verfügung stehenden Mitteln einen großzügigen Ausbau in die Wege zu leiten” – Curator’s copy of Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 20/12/1927, UAG K631.
position, “there were no regularly and worthily paid personnel at the direction’s disposal”.72

Consequently, students increasingly believed Nordic Studies to be an unprofitable endeavour. This, Merker remarked, despite the fact that a modest sum could bring great relief in this field, for example in the form of support for the publishing of dissertations. The same went for plans for a press clipping service that the institute was contemplating, to inform German authorities about proceedings in the North. Merker closed his letter with bitter words:

The addressee has invested six of his best years in this Sisyphus work that, despite all good will, time and again collided with hard reality, all the more so since this was also somewhat peripheral to his own research interests. Your Magnificence will therefore understand that the addressee is looking at these matters with increasing pessimism. The question can only be: either one lets the Nordic Institute die so as to employ the insufficient funds and personnel elsewhere, or one tries finally to bring the Nordic Institute to a generous and unencumbered work through funds of the state, the Reich, the city and private donors.73

Even though the ministry agreed to increase the institute’s budget by a further 1,000 RM, this was a parting gift for Merker who reported to Breslau in early 1928 to assume a new professorship.

The Energetic Mr. Braun

When Paul Merker had taken office in 1921, one of his first demands – apart from more authority and more generous funding – was a personal restructuring:

72 “[… der Institutsleitung im Grunde keinerlei feste und würdig bezahlte Kräfte zur Verfügung stehen” – Curator’s copy of Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 20/12/1927, UAG K631.

A cooperation with Professor Braun, head of the Finnish Department, seems impossible to me. It is beyond doubt that Professor Braun has, through skill and energy, won great credit by tying and expanding cultural bonds between Germany and Finland. I had hoped to find especially him a dynamic collaborator. But I can already see that a tolerable long-term relationship with him is out of the question. I may point out that the long-standing internal disturbances have time and again been caused by this person, whose autocratic attitude must derail every collegial, and especially every directorial, management.\textsuperscript{74}

The fact that, after only a month in Greifswald, Merker made Braun’s withdrawal a \textit{conditio sine qua non} for his whole directorship and could count on being backed up by many other professors, in itself speaks volumes about the atmosphere in the Nordic Institute in general and widespread opinions about Braun in particular.

Braun had indeed developed an unusual amount of activity in establishing himself and his Finnish topic within the Nordic Institute. Apart from Dalman, who did visit Sweden from time to time, Braun was the only board member of the Nordic Institute to regularly travel north,\textsuperscript{75} and while Braun’s Finnish Department within the Nordic Institute was purely nominal, he managed to anchor several significant official contacts there. The German legation in Helsinki would, for example, include Braun’s department in visa questions concerning Finnish lecturers and scholars,\textsuperscript{76} and the Reich Migration Office (\textit{Reichsweranderungsamt}) relied to a large degree on regular information from Braun for their brochures on Finland.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{74} “Nicht möglich dagegen scheint mir eine Zusammenarbeit mit Herrn Prof. Braun, dem Leiter der finnischen Abteilung. Unbestreitbar hat sich Prof. Braun durch Geschick und Tatkraft für die Anknüpfung und den Ausbau kultureller Beziehungen Deutschlands nach Finnland große Verdienste erworben. Ich hatte gehofft, gerade in ihm einen tatkräftigen Mitarbeiter zu erhalten, sehe aber bereits jetzt, dass hier auf Dauer ein erträgliches Verhältnis ausgeschlossen ist. Ich darf darauf hinweisen, dass die nun leider schon jahrelangen inneren Wirren des Instituts im Wesentlichen immer wieder auf diese Persönlichkeit zurückgingen, die mit ihrer autokratischen Einstellung im Grunde jede kollegiale, erst recht aber jede direktorale Geschäftsführung aus den Gleisen treiben muss.”
– Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 21/05/1921, GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1, fol. 2–5.

\textsuperscript{75} Correspondence about travel grants in GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58, Bd.1. Wilhelm Kaehler, for comparison, was the third most active board member and only visited Sweden once, in 1925: Kaehler to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 17/05/1925, GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. IV, Nr. 31, Bd.2, fol. 236.

\textsuperscript{76} German Legation, Helsinki to Braun, 21/10/1920, UAG K630.

\textsuperscript{77} Braun to Reich Migration Office (Reichsweranderungsamt), 09/05/1921, Reich Migration Office to Braun, 12/05/1921, and Reich Office for Emigration (Reichsstelle für das Auswanderungswesen) to Braun, 03/01/1924, UAG II F 118.
But while all these steps strengthened Greifswald’s position as a focal point for academics and officials alike, Braun had a habit of defending his territory fiercely and lashing out against all competition. When talks about plans to form an institute for Finnish Studies at Königsberg University reached Greifswald, Braun had the board of directors draft a critical letter to the ministry, requesting this endeavour be stopped short.78 The same happened in 1929, when Braun again urged the Curator to insist on his monopoly on all things Finnish. It was, he remarked, bad enough that Kiel was always interfering and dividing resources, German and Finnish alike.79

Furthermore, Braun had two personal affectations that made working with him difficult. First, he did not strictly differentiate between his private and his professional life. When, for example, applying for a travel grant to Lapland in 1925, Braun explained that one of his goals was to complement his collections of Nordic animals and ethnological objects through “hunting and fishing myself”.80 Considering that he later asked for the ministry’s help in importing five guns into Finland and Norway, it becomes clear that this was not a tedious gathering tour.81 Secondly, Braun was quarrelsome. His need to assert his will and suffer no contradiction led him to constantly be involved in a feud of one sort or other. That at least is the impression left by the large number of instances in which Braun raised complaints, mostly about subordinates in his institutes and about rather trivial matters.82 These affectations brought him into regular conflict with his colleagues and made working with or under him difficult.

78 Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 19/04/1921, UAG K630.
79 Braun to Curator UG, 24/09/1929, UAG K639.
80 “durch Selbstausübung der Jagd und Fischerei” – Braun to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 18/05/1925, GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. IV, Nr. 31, Bd.2.
81 Other incidents, such as using personnel (Nase 2014, pp. 25f) and rooms (Copy of collected correspondence between Braun and Merker, May 1921, GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1, fol. 6f) of the Geographical Institute for private means corroborate this image.
82 In 1926, for example, Braun was involved in a court case with his tenant. The matter was a triviality, but the ferocity with which Braun pursued the issue elicited comment from his colleagues. See Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture (including copy of bill of indictment), 26/03/1926; Braun to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 22/04/1926, Copy of senior public prosecutor’s parol concerning appeal, 11/07/1926, all: UAG PA 24, vol. 3.
The Institute for Finland Studies

It was understandable, therefore, that Merker was proposing to oust Braun from the Nordic Institute, preferably in a way that would still allow the latter to contribute his work. Merker had already in May 1921 presented the thought of sweetening a possible resignation by Braun with a special Finnish research department in the Geographical Institute,\footnote{Merker to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 21/05/1921, GStA PK I. HA, Tit. X, Nr. 58a, Bd. 1, fol. 2–5.} an option that was ruled out because of the obvious overlap with the task of the Nordic Institute. When Braun and Merker clashed again, only a month later, the ministry finally put its foot down.\footnote{Werner Richter (Prussian Ministry of Culture) to Gustav Braun, 05/07/1921, UAG IfF 1.} If Braun agreed to retire from the board of directors, take up an advisory role, and grant the Direktor his full support, he could have a separate institute for Finnish affairs. But this ministerial concession was delivered in tones of stern disapproval, ensuring Braun “that the ministry could not find a renewed appearance of differences within the board of the Nordic Institute tolerable.”\footnote{“dass das Ministerium ein nochmaliges Auftreten von Differenzen innerhalb des Vorstandes des Nordischen Instituts nicht erträglich finden könnte.” – Werner Richter (Prussian Ministry of Culture) to Gustav Braun, 05/07/1921, UAG IfF 1.} After having received an acrid briefing about the privileges and powers of the ministry vis-à-vis a professor, Braun submitted to Berlin’s wishes.\footnote{Braun Prussian Ministry of Culture, 06/07/1921, UAG IfF 1.}

Even though the cause of the foundation of the Institute for Finnish Studies was the problems in the integration of Gustav Braun, there were decidedly more rational reasons for the separation of Scandinavian and Finnish studies. The one that most strained the work of the Nordic Institute was the disagreement between Sweden and Finland about the Åland islands. Considering that Sweden was the traditional focal point of Greifswald’s work and the largest benefactor of the institute, following the political split between the two countries with an institutional split made diplomatic interactions easier. Furthermore, the growing importance of the Finnish language in contrast to the previously dominating Swedish made Finland a special case, not easily accessible via transfers from other Scandinavian languages.
The Gentlemen from Stettin

With the necessity of a separate Finnish Institute established, the question of how to go about it arose. While Richter could promise Braun his own institute, any future accounting for it in the budget was dependent on the treasury’s consent and, therefore, speculative.87

At the same time, in the summer of 1921, Braun had been on a fact-finding mission to Stettin to investigate the possibility of financial support from what little industry Pomerania could muster, most probably on a mission from the board of directors.88 Braun found that especially the mercantile community had a great interest in a cooperation with Greifswald. The university’s economists in particular were called upon to deal with Stettin’s questions, in general and in relation to the North. For the time being there would, Braun had to concede, only be benefactions for Finnish studies, especially in the form of rebates for ferry journeys, financial contributions and help with language courses. For the North in general, Braun referred the board to the shipping company Kunstmann and local industry, but obviously without much expectation that his colleagues would actually pick up this thread.89

There already existed a German–Finnish Association in Stettin, which had as its aim an increase in economic exchange between Stettin and Helsinki, and which formed a starting point for Braun’s endeavours to secure a foothold in the provincial capital.90 The main connection to Stettin ran through the local mercantile community, and the ship-owners in particular. Serving various routes to Finland, a country with strong economic ties to Germany and still developing into an independent state, Stettin’s ship-owners had a strong interest in cooperating with Greifswald to establish connections in Helsinki. Even so, larger sums of money were difficult to come by. Since more tangible perks were closer at hand, Braun initially attempted to institute a standing cooperation between the Nordic

87 Werner Richter (Prussian Ministry of Culture) to Gustav Braun, 05/07/1921, UAG IfF 1.
88 The phrase “Ich bin mit Ihrem Einverständnis jetzt zweimal in Stettin gewesen […]” (With your agreement I have now been in Stettin twice […] ) implies that the board was only informed about Braun’s mission, but not the initiator. On the other hand, it is clear from Braun’s report that he also inquired about Scandinavian, not just Finnish issues. Furthermore, Braun billed the board for his travel expenses. – Braun to Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute, 30/06/1921, UAG IfF 64.
89 Braun to Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute, 30/06/1921, UAG IfF 64.
90 German-Finnlandic Association (Deutsch-Finnländischer Verein) to Braun, 15/12/1920, UAG IfF 64.
Institute and some of the shipping companies. Two companies would allow lectures about Germany and Stettin to be held on their cruise ships, which would in turn pay for the passage of the lecturing scholar. By this arrangement the company could expand its on-board entertainment programme while about four, preferably younger, scholars could be sent to Finland each year. The plan fell flat when the ministry could not supply the 2,000 Marks start-up financing.  

Braun himself could not muster large funds either, considering that his newly-founded Institute for Finland Studies was without a regular budget and survived through irregular grants from the ministry. In a parallel with contemporary events in the Nordic Institute, the meagre budgetary assistance was hopelessly overshadowed by the actual demands on the institute and the first subsidy of 300 Marks did not even cover postage, while the second batch of 1,500 Marks was only sufficient to cover the transport of gifts to Greifswald, still leaving other bills of 1,500 Marks unpaid.

Under these circumstances, and with hyperinflation making all budgets absurd anyway, it was imperative to forge the irregular cooperation with Stettin’s mercantile class into a more stable partnership. In 1923 Braun started the so-called “Studik”, honestly named “*Studienreisen deutscher Industrieller und Kaufleute*” (Excursions of German Industrialists and Merchants). With a complement of select dignitaries, financiers, industrials and ship-owners, Braun embarked on a well-organized journey to Finland, where the participants were greeted everywhere as guests of the chambers of commerce and left a strong impression in the press. Braun celebrated this excursion as a big success, considering that the participants had afterwards agreed to form a “Society for the Study of Finland” (*Gesellschaft zum Studium Finnlands*) which was to financially support the Institute for Finland Studies and repeat such excursions. In fact, not only were the “Studik” continued and became an annual ritual that presented another indirect source of donations for Braun, a number of Stettin ship-owners

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91 Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 07/07/1921, UAG K630 and Prussian Ministry of Culture to Nordic Institute, no date (July 1921) UAG K630 (fol. 265).
92 Braun to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 22/06/1922, UAG K639.
93 Braun to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 11/11/1922, UAG K639.
94 Braun’s report concerning first Finland-excursion, 12/10/1923, UAG K639.
95 The meticulously planned Studik-excursions are documented in UAG IfF 85 and 88–108.
agreed to donate a sizable sum for a foundation, out of whose proceeds the Institute for Finland Studies was to be financed.96

The reliance on Stettin’s merchants brought with it its own problems, though. The Institute for Finland Studies ended up in a peculiar position between the university, which officially housed the institute, the Ministry of Culture, which regularly supported it with one-off grants, and the Stettin mercantile community, which had donated the foundation’s seed-money and helped out with money from time to time. While the records are spotty, conflicts are clear from available materials. The donors had their own administrative board, made up of merchants and dignitaries, and while they did not seem to place special demands on the work of Gustav Braun, their influence on the destiny of the Finnish Institute was precious to them. Franz Gribel, head of the Stettin shipping company of the same name, for example, protested against Braun’s mid-1923 proposal to allow representatives of Hamburg and Lübeck onto the administrative board. The president of Hamburg’s chamber of commerce and the shipping company Russ in Lübeck had donated 50,000 Marks,97 but Gribel insisted:

Never have the Lübeck- or Hamburg-based organizations asked us to become members of their board. The goal of these gentlemen is abundantly clear, namely that they intend to develop a controlling influence on the Institute for Finland Studies at Greifswald University. This would, in my opinion, be deleterious, because the institute is a specifically Pomeranian institution and should be restricted to the Pomeranian sphere. You can be sure that nothing whatsoever will come from Lübeck’s and Hamburg’s side to further Pomeranian interests. I am convinced that I am not alone in this opinion but that it is shared by all my friends in Stettin and the whole of Pomerania. If the gentlemen have an interest in Stettin they can proclaim that without being members of the board.98

96 For a list of donators and the administrative council of the Insitute for Finland Studies see Höll 1997, p. 34.
97 At that point the equivalent of less than $1 US.
98 “Noch niemals ist seitens der Lübecker oder Hamburger Organisationen ein Antrag an uns gestellt, in den Ausschuss Ihrer Organisation einzutreten. Das Ziel der Herren ist ja klar, nämlich, dass sie beabsichtigen, einen maßgebenden Einfluss auf das Institut für Finnlandkunde der Universität Greifswald zu gewinnen, was m.E. schädlich wäre, denn das Institut ist eine spezifisch pommersche Einrichtung und sollte auf die pommerschen Kreise beschränkt bleiben. Sie können ganz sicher sein, dass seitens der Lübecker und Hamburger auch nicht das Geringste geschehen wird, um die pommerschen Interessen zu fördern. Ich bin überzeugt, mit meiner Ansicht nicht allein zu stehen, sondern dass dieselbe von meinen sämtlichen Freunden in Stettin und auch im weiten Pommernlande geteilt. Wenn die Herren Interesse haben für Stettin, so können sie das auch bekunden,
Braun’s protest, that at the apex of hyperinflation he could not afford to turn down any donations and that Stettin would still have a comfortable majority, did not come through.\textsuperscript{99} Even though Gribel professed not to put too great a value on the matter, it was entirely clear from his tone that the presence of the rival merchant communities in any controlling function would be highly undesirable.

The Stettin merchants, who provided the majority of the institute’s capital, obviously began to consider the Institute for Finland Studies as “their” endeavour, as an entirely Pomeranian as well as a mercantile and private institution. While Greifswald’s Vice Chancellor and the Dean of its Philosophical Faculty were \textit{ex officio} members of the administrative board, Gribel showed the same reluctance when it came to the question if the ministry should be represented: “Whether it is necessary to involve the ministries in this organization is beyond my judgement. Much good will not come of it either way, especially if the minister is of a non-bourgeois party, since then annuity claims of one party member or another would become important.”\textsuperscript{100} In the same vein, the administrative board protested strongly when the ministry reduced the influence of the board in the appointment of a new director. Despite the fact that this was at that time an entirely theoretical concern, the board insisted that the almost entirely private funding justified a stronger role for itself.\textsuperscript{101}

While Braun could, in contrast to his colleague Paul Merker, command a sufficient budget to further his work, he was also trapped in the logic of his financial backers, which reduced his freedom. The specific background of Braun’s institute also strained his relationship with the ministry, which did not really exert itself in issuing a regular budget for the institute.\textsuperscript{102}

\textit{ohne dass sie ein Mitglied des Ausschusses sind.”} – Shipping company Gribel to Braun, 05/05/1923, UAG IfF 1.

\textsuperscript{99} Braun to Gribel, 08/05/1923, UAG IfF 1.

\textsuperscript{100} “\textit{Ob es erforderlich ist, die Ministerien bei der Organisation zuzuziehen, kann ich nicht beurteilen, viel Segen wird dabei nicht herauskommen, namentlich, wenn der Minister einer nicht bürgerlichen Partei entstammt, weil alsdann lediglich Versorgungsrücksichten für irgend ein Partei-Mitglied ausschlaggebend sind.”} – Gribel to Braun, 06/12/1923, UAG IfF 1.

\textsuperscript{101} Administrative Board of the Institute for Finland Studies to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 31/03/1924, UAG IfF 1.

\textsuperscript{102} The ministry even proposed to regularize the Institute for Finland Studies by merging it with the Nordic Institute’s budget. This was, of course, unacceptable to Merker and Braun, who both strongly rejected this idea. – Merker to Curator UG, 06/03/1926, UAG K639.
This choice of allies did reflect on the work of the Finnish Institute to a certain degree. Among the first official actions that Braun took was a series of lectures in Helsinki, “in which the importance of Stettin for the Baltic trade and shipping in particular was put into its true light.” Such obvious helping hands to the Stettin clientele were not uncommon in the future. The Geographical Institute and the Institute for Finland Studies started to develop a profile in economic geography, especially concerning the Baltic Sea. Apart from a number of brochures, several dissertations were specifically concerned with Finnish–German commercial ties and the information service that the institute provided was also mostly concerned with economic questions. Gustav Braun himself led these efforts to propagate the scientifically proven importance of sea trade on the Baltic Sea in a number of books and articles, even dedicating his 1930 inauguration speech as Vice Chancellor to the Pomeranian coast and its harbours.

The conclusion that Braun thus devoted his institute to a scholarly lobby would not be accurate, though. Most of Braun’s contributions to economic


104 E.g. Mathews, Alfred: Die Entwicklung der finnischen Seeschifffahrt und die finnische Seeschiffahrtspolitik (=Berichte aus dem Institut für Finnlandkunde, 8) Greifswald 1931; Orgies-Rutenberg, Jürgen Freiherr von: Die Metallindustrie Finnlands. Eine standortdynamische Untersuchung (=Berichte aus dem Institut für Finnlandkunde, 6) Greifswald 1926; Weisflog, Reinhold: Die Entwicklungsgeschichte der finnisch-deutschen Handelsbeziehungen (=Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Finnlandkunde der Universität Greifswald, 2) Greifswald 1925.

105 The institute received about four to five inquiries each year from different industrial enterprises all through Germany. See UAG IfF 117, passim. Indeed, the position of the Institute for Finland Studies seems to have been so prominent that one company actually considered it a state agency and asked it to relinquish export tolls: Chemische Fabrik Beiersdorf & Co., Hamburg, to Institute for Finland Studies, 19/02/1924, UAG IfF 117


geography were rather small in extent and could not, in volume or impact, compare with his work on morphology and methodology. The assessment that these essays were produced to placate the investors would be equally plausible, especially if one takes into account that, when Braun had the possibility to employ an assistant, he chose literary scholar Hans Grellmann rather than anybody with a more economic specialization. And while the “Studik”-journeys were an operation that served to gather donations and donors, they also afforded several young students and scholars the opportunity to get to Finland, which was often impossible for students of the Nordic Institute. To that extent, it would be difficult to insist that the relationship between Braun and his sponsors in Stettin was one of one-sided dependency. First and foremost, it was a way to acquire the necessary resources to continue his work, something that, as the case of Paul Merker and the Nordic Institute for the same period of time exemplifies, was becoming increasingly difficult if one relied on conventional funding.

III.4 Paul vs. Magon
– The Area and the Disciplines (1927–1933)

In light of the unsatisfactory financial situation in the Nordic Institute, the frustrated Paul Merker had by April 1928 accepted a call to Königsberg University. He was succeeded by Leopold Magon, a specialist in German–Scandinavian literary connections\(^\text{108}\) who took office in October 1928.

Leopold Magon – The Silent Academic

Magon’s administration was markedly different from that of Merker. While the ministry had increased the Nordic Institute’s budget to a more workable

level, Magon was noticeably less ambitious than Merker. Where Merker had had long-term plans to turn Greifswald into the German centre of Nordic Studies, to build up a correspondingly big library and to attract Nordic scholars, Magon showed no such ambitions. In fact, complaints or requests to the ministry by his hand are absent from the sources, and research is called for to elicit Magon’s opinion on the general precepts of the institute’s work. When asked to contribute a description of the Nordic Institute to an anthology about German research institutes, Magon was forced to explicate his concepts for the future of the Nordic Institute and it became apparent that he had none. While he quoted extensively Becker’s 1916 memorandum, stressing especially the need for coherent research and teaching, Magon did not express any conceptual plans and only mentioned the networking and information dissemination functions of the Nordic Institute in passing. While this little essay might in fact not have been the place to roll out far-reaching plans, the article reads nothing at all like Paul Merker’s prolific promotion of his institute. Where Merker had, furthermore, started a number of ambitious projects, such as the Greifswald-Lund university meetings and the Nordic Encyclopaedia, none such are known of Magon.

109 The annual budget stood at 2,800 RM when Magon took office, plus irregular grants.
110 Magon 1930.
Magon’s slightly aloof demeanour and his fondness for a rather fustian parlance seem to have made him an outsider in the university, all the more so since he was a Catholic in a predominantly Protestant university. Even though Magon’s coy nature made direct friction with his colleagues unlikely, enmity arose due to his inept handling of the diplomatic missions of the Nordic Institute. The first big event under his aegis, the tenth anniversary of the Nordic Institute, was celebrated in the presence of delegates from all the Nordic countries, yet no German government representative attended to bless the ceremony. Magon had forgotten to arrange for their presence with the Curator, an episode that allegedly raised concerns throughout the university. Whether this was the simple oversight of an inexperienced director or symptomatic of Magon’s reservations to the exposed and, in potentia, political position of the Nordic Institute, is a moot point. But Magon practically never argued any wider task that he felt the Nordic Institute to have, neither in correspondence with the ministry nor with colleagues or fellow scholars. This was in stark contrast to his predecessors, with the possible exception of Wolf von Unwerth. Where Braun and Merker had often highlighted the function of the Nordic Institute as a cultural political entity with a strong potential for influencing public opinion abroad, especially where it came to pressing the ministry for money, Magon never argued in such a way. Instead he declared that he “[...]

112 Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 12/12/1928, UAG K631.
appreciated the value of representation for an area institute, but that the workableness and scholarly impact of the institute were of supreme importance to [him].”113

Johannes Paul – The Champion of Swedishness

An alternative approach to Magon’s self-restraint was favoured by Johannes Paul, the institute’s assistant. The son of a national-conservative judge at the German Supreme Court and a Swedophile since his teenage-years, Paul had taken the position of assistant to the Nordic Institute in 1921, replacing its first incumbent, Norman Balk. During World War One he had been deployed on the Western Front but, following severe injuries, had been redeployed to Stockholm, where he assisted the German legation’s military department with political and cultural analyses. Due to his familiarity with the country, his command of the language and his experience in the field of cultural propaganda, he was probably the most qualified exponent of the Nordic Institute. Being, furthermore, married to a Swedish woman from an influential Kalmar family, he had – in contrast to his colleagues – little trouble visiting the country and was for years the only member of the Nordic Institute – apart from Braun – to show a regular presence in the North.114

Image 4: Johannes Paul in 1976

113 “Ich habe aber immer betont, zuletzt noch bei dem mir stark verübelten Umzug in die Stralsunder Straße, dass ich zwar die Bedeutung der Repräsentation für ein Auslandsinstitut wohl einzuschätzen weiß, dass mir aber in erster Linie die Arbeitsfähigkeit und die wissenschaftliche Auswirkung des Institutes steht.” – Magon to Friedrich Krüger, 15/04/1933, UAG R186.

Paul’s position within the Nordic Institute was, while decently secure, not comfortable. On the one hand, there was the financial situation he was in. The assistant’s position was supernumerary, making its salary insufficient. Despite multiple attempts, it was never made numerary, and Paul was often in financially dire straits, being forced to regularly ask his parents for money, even as a 45-year-old assistant professor. On the other hand, his prospects of ever leaving this position were slim. His specialism, Nordic History, did not recommend him strongly for chairs outside of Greifswald and Kiel, making the hazardous undertaking of an academic career even more unpredictable.

Seemingly aware of this predicament, Paul in the late 1920s increasingly shifted his attention to cultural political matters in an attempt in this way to further his otherwise unpromising career. Versed in the Swedish political system, Paul made it his duty to deliver extensive reports on all his Swedish journeys to the ministry, often adding cultural political advice of one sort or another. Paul’s other main pillar was cultural relations with Sweden, where he soon reached a supreme position in Greifswald. Paul had already devoted a considerable part of his academic work to interesting a larger lay audience in Swedish and Scandinavian matters, and could consequently use this to further his career.

The Discipline and the Region

In 1927, having finished the first volume of his *Gustavus Adolphus*-biography and supposedly feeling in control of sufficient amounts of academic capital, Paul began attempts to carve out his own realm within the Nordic Institute, beyond the confines of that of the mere assistant. While the written records are sparse for this episode, the general outline can be sketched. In late June 1927, Paul wrote to his friend Vilhelm Lundström:

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115 Evidenced by the number of requests for financial support in UAG PA 248.
116 Paul to Dean of the Philosophical Faculty UG, 14/10/1936, UAG PA 248.
118 UAG K631 and PA 248, passim.
You know that I work by inner conviction to make Sweden and the Swedish language dominant here in Greifswald. To advance this a little I have drafted a memorandum and asked the Nordic Institute’s partition into 3 resp. 4 independent institutes, i.e. that a Swedish Institute should exist here with the same independence as the Institute for Finland Studies. Once we have that, I believe it will soon become dominant. To support this Swedish Institute I have considered founding a German-Swedish Study Association which should have connections in both Germany and Sweden.

At a long board meeting, I managed to push most of this through, only the titles ‘Institut’ and ‘Direktor’ I could not get through. A certain superstructure over the otherwise entirely independent departments still seemed desirable to the gentlemen and I have to admit that certain reasons even speak for such an arrangement, but to me this is still an interim solution.

Professor Liljegren has naturally supported me very effectively by his authoritative statements about the opinion in Sweden, concerning ‘Nordic’ and ‘swedish’.119

After sharing this information, Paul swore Lundström to secrecy, since this structure would first have to be approved by the ministry. But this approval never arrived. It is not entirely clear why this was the case, since all evidence indicates that the board, or at least a majority including managing director Paul Merker, were in favour of the proposal. In late November or early December of that year, Paul Merker, Johannes Paul and Greifswald’s mayor, Max Fleischmann, had a meeting with the university’s Vice Chancellor, Eduard von der Goltz. We only know about this meeting because Gustav Braun, in a fit of typical territoriality, inquired whether this meeting was intended to further the interests of only one of the area-institutes, thereby threatening the brittle peace that Braun maintained with his colleagues.120


120 Braun to Rector UG, 06/12/1927, UAG IfF 30.
The Vice Chancellor, in his reply to Braun’s letter, was vague about the
topic of the meeting, “certain wishes of the Nordic Institute”\(^{121}\) that von der
Goltz was to present to the ministry at one time or another, but the
presence of Paul at this meeting suggests that it concerned the division of
the Nordic Institute. In early 1930, though, Paul informed Lundström that
an administrative division of the Nordic Institute had not yet been brought
about.\(^{122}\)

Considering the scarcity of sources, it is difficult to say with any certainty
who stopped the initiative but, since Merker was seemingly onboard with
the idea of four separate institutes, this only leaves the ministry or Leopold
Magon. Merker was already on his way out of the institute by the time the
briefing with the Vice Chancellor took place in late 1927, so it would also be
conceivable that the process was simply put off until the new director had
taken office, and it was sufficiently clear that the idea of dividing the Nordic
Institute found little favour with Magon. In his 1930 article, Magon also
touched on this topic:

But to reduce a Nordic Institute to only one of the Nordic countries, or con-
versely to break it down into four distinct and independent institutes, that would
mean destroying an organic unit, and that would not agree with the scholarly
disposition and objective of such an institute. The unity of the object of research
must stand above all practical and political considerations. [...]

This thought was already present with the founders of the Nordic Institute. A
report to the superordinate ministry of August 28\(^{th}\) 1919 stresses: ‘The horizontal
division by disciplines must not be entangled by vertical strokes that run through
the countries. Above the disciplinary inquiry, which forms, as it were, the pillar
of the entire construction, there must arch the idea and holistic perception of the
Nordic states.’ There is no other way – to again turn the individual experiences
of the Nordic Institute in Greifswald into the categorical – to define the research
task of any Nordic Institute.\(^{123}\)

\(^{121}\) “einige Wünsche des Nordischen Instituts” – Rector UG to Braun, 12/12/1927, UAG
Iff 30.
\(^{122}\) Paul to Lundström, 04/02/1930, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling.
\(^{123}\) “Aber ein Nordisches Institut nur auf eines der nordischen Länder festzulegen oder aber
umgekehrt es in vier verschiedene selbständige Institute zu zerlegen, das hieße, eine
organische Einheit zu zerstören, und das vertrüge sich schlecht mit der wissenschaftlichen
Haltung und Zielsetzung eines solchen Institutes, für die über alle praktischen und
politischen Rücksichten hinweg die Einheit des Forschungsobjekts maßgebend sein muss.
[…] Dieser Gedanke war schon bei den Gründern des Greifswalder Nordischen Instituts
lebendig; in einem Bericht an das übergeordnete Ministerium vom 28.August 1919 wird
Magon had made it clear that he was writing this part under special consideration of notes of board meetings past, so it is safe to assume that this was the final arbitration in a process of discussion. In a further step, Magon referred back to Becker’s memorandum and its multidisciplinary vision for Auslandsstudien:

But it would be wrong to commit a Nordic Institute to the mere fostering of philological matters because of this [head start of the philological disciplines in Area Studies], or to distribute the study of the Nordic culture area between several, disciplinarily organized Nordic Institutes. That would betray one of the most prodigious notions of the already quoted memorandum of 1917, which rightly prefers to array by cultural areas rather than by disciplines, because it counteracts a one-track specialism

If Magon did not misrepresent his intentions, his suggestion was an intellectual unity of different disciplines and of the Nordic countries. This would entail both the application of a number of different disciplines onto five different nations, all with quite different economic, historical, geographical and – at least when it came to Iceland and Finland – linguistic constellations. This was generally a correct representation of the founding task of the Nordic Institute and certainly what the institute had committed to in principle. It is difficult to see, though, how it corresponded to the experiences in Greifswald that Magon claimed. He occupied himself with all the modern continental Scandinavian literatures, but the number of qualifications necessary to describe his field of work hints at the underlying problem. Magon did not speak Finnish or any appreciable Icelandic, nor did he dabble in Old Icelandic or Old Scandinavian literature, nor did his


work on historical or geographical topics go beyond the journalistic level. The same was true of his colleagues, most of whom were not engaged in active Nordic research anyway. They stayed firmly within their disciplinary boundaries, with the possible exception of Gustav Braun and Johannes Paul. Attempts at multidisciplinarity had been made with the cooperative lectures (Sammelvorlesungen), where different scholars had covered their own discipline’s contribution and, while these lectures could cover a wide array of topics, even including music, arts, science, economy and church life, they were nevertheless punctual collaborations of little lasting value and, more importantly, they always covered a single country. It was, therefore, evident from practice that a specialization within the region was necessary to afford an adequate amount of interdisciplinarity, in defiance of what Leopold Magon professed. With Gustav Braun’s Institute for Finland Studies as a striking example, Paul and other board members could plausibly claim that this necessary sub-specialization could also necessitate an institutional separation.

Religious and Conceptual Tensions

Considering that one of Leopold Magon’s first actions in Greifswald was thus to stifle Johannes Paul’s ambitions for a separate Swedish Institute, or even just a strong dominance of Sweden as the officially primary study object in Greifswald, the relationship between the managing director of the Nordic Institute and his assistant did not start out being cordial. This was not only due to Magon’s different stance vis-à-vis the organization of the Nordic Institute, but also because of his disregard for cultural political matters. Paul had, to some degree, outgrown his position as a junior assistant, not only holding his *venia legendi* since 1921 and having established himself in the academic community with his three-volume Gustavus Adolphus biography, but also commanding a strong influence in Greifswald, based on his cultural political activities as regards Sweden. His German Association for the Study of Sweden (Deutsche Gesellschaft zum

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Studium Schwedens) gathered academics and local state and church dignitaries alike, and was publically more present than the Nordic Institute, which, under Magon’s aegis, saw its audience primarily within academia. Magon worked mainly on the Nordic Encyclopaedia and the Nordic Bibliography, two projects directly aimed at enabling more academics to join in the research on Nordic topics, while his primary periodical was the Nordische Rundschau, dedicated to scholarly articles. Paul, on the other hand, held Saint Lucia and Midsummer celebrations with his association and published the Deutsch-Swedischer Nachrichtendienst, which, by virtue of its bi-weekly interval and much more accessible choice of news from Sweden’s cultural, political and economic life, had a broader appeal. The same pattern can be extracted from Paul’s academic work, which often aimed at a wider lay audience as well.\footnote{Symptomatic is e.g. Paul, Johannes: Nordische Geschichte (=Jedermanns Bücherei, Abteilung Geschichte) Breslau 1925, which was the first book he wrote after completion of his dissertation and habilitation. His Gustavus Adolphus-biography was equally accessible to a wider audience and enjoyed corresponding popularity.}

In light of this power relationship, where Paul was nominally Magon’s assistant but in reality his rival, personal tensions naturally arose. This began as early as 1928, when Paul received the Swedish Order of the Pole Star during the celebrations for the Nordic Institute’s ten-year-anniversary. Greifswald’s English scholar, Sten Bodvar Liljegren, had purportedly suggested Paul for this honour without the latter’s prior knowledge. That the supernumerary assistant would receive such an honour while none of the ordinaries present was decorated – according to Paul – some jealousy.\footnote{Stichpunkte für Herrn Hoffmann, DHM – Dokumentensammlung – Nachlass Johannes Paul.}

As late as December 1928, Leopold Magon asked the Curator to extend Paul’s employment, even if he did so on the provision that it was impossible to find a qualified replacement for the ever-growing work of the assistant.\footnote{Magon to Curator UG, 13/12/1928, UAG K635.} But Paul, who had been appointed supernumerary extraordinary professor by February 1\textsuperscript{st} 1928\footnote{The original title is an untranslatable “nichtbeamter außerordentlicher Professor”: UAG University Calendar UG, WS 1928/29.} and was standing in for the sick Hans Glagau’s teaching load, was reorienting himself. Increasingly investing in his academic career, the number of Paul’s scholarly publications, as far as this can be traced back, went up after about 1927, especially in regard to reviews and shorter articles. This initiative even led to a number of small privileges, such
as his own column in the *Historische Vierteljahresschrift* and the ability to review a book that he had co-written to a large extent. If this increase in Paul’s academic output was the result of a conscious decision to focus on his own academic advancement or an increase of publication opportunities brought about by academic seniority is unclear, but the conflicting workloads probably led to increasing conflicts with Magon.

The final breaking point, where animosity turned into enmity, came on June 26th 1930. At a meeting of the board of the German Association for the Study of Sweden on June 12th 1929, Paul had proposed to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Gustavus Adolphus’ landing in Germany by raising a memorial stone in Peenemünde. The project found the acclaim of all present, and the stone fitted in with a number of big and small memorials that were raised in honour of the Swedish king, still revered as the saviour of German Protestantism, in the years 1930 to 1932. The *Riksförening* for example donated a Gustavus Adolphus-bust both to Stralsund and Riga, and in 1932 Greifswald also received its memorial plaque on the St. Nikolai-cathedral. In this burgeoning Gustavus Adolphus-mania the German Association for the Study of Sweden financed the acquisition, fabrication and erection of the stone with a collection they dubbed “Gustavus Adolphus-gratitude”, and on June 26th 1930 the so-called “Consecration Day of Peenemünde” took place under great pomp and circumstance.

After a divine service, in which councillor of the consistory Baumann stressed the importance of the Swedish king as saviour of the Protestant faith, Johannes Paul gave his speech. In this he expressed his thanks to all the dignitaries present, including the Swedish Military Attaché to Germany, representatives of the Swedish Church, the local county commissioner, the Vice Chancellor of Greifswald University and representatives of different church organizations, German towns and cities and religious associations, representatives of the student body and private individuals. Telegraphic

congratulations came from the Swedish Archbishop and the Swedish Minister of Culture. The one organization that was not officially represented was the Nordic Institute. Leopold Magon, who, as a Catholic, held Gustavus Adolphus “responsible for infinite bloodshed”, had flat-out refused to participate. The personal insult inherent in refusing Paul recognition by the organization that he had worked for since 1921 is obvious, and the indignation was purportedly shared by many members of the university and supposedly by many a Swede.

If the tensions between Magon and Paul had not yet lead to an utter falling out, then this was definitely the point at which no fruitful cooperation was any longer possible. Paul had already complained to Vilhelm Lundström in early 1930 that, if he were director, he “would handle various things differently”, and Magon began to complain about Paul to higher places in early 1931.

Exile in Riga

In this situation Johannes Paul received an offer from the Herder Institute in Riga to fill its chair in Modern History in May 1930. The ministry’s approval for this arrangement was quickly given and the employment of a replacement approved. The Herder Institute was a private college established by ethnic Germans in order to counteract the attraction of Latvia’s and Estonia’s state universities and preserve the cohesiveness of the ethnic German community. Lecturers from Germany would teach there, but hardly ever stay for more than two years. It is likely that Paul received his call in consideration of the extensive Volkstums work he had done in Greifswald.

136 “schuld an unendlichem Blutvergießen” – Curator UG to REM, 11/05/1933, UAG K628.
137 “I så fall skulle jag åtskilligt ordna annorlunda” – Paul to Lundström, 10/02/1930, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling.
138 Magon to Curator UG, 26/02/1931, UAG K635.
139 Prussian Ministry of Culture to Curator UG, 22/05/1930, UAG K635.
141 Paul was heading the folk-political work in his student association, where he mainly concerned himself with the “friendly” ethnicities of Flemish and Scandinavians, see “Johannes Paul zu seinem 70. Geburtstag”, in: Akademische Blätter. Zeitschrift des
Paul, who showed his typical amount of zeal and diligence in his new work, had his employment extended until September 1932, whereupon he returned to Greifswald. The conflicts he had left behind were not forgotten, though. In February 1931, when it became clear that Paul would stay in Riga for a further year, the board of directors let the Curator know that, while it accepted Paul’s further leave of absence, it had to insist that Paul had to leave the institute after the expiration of his contract by March 31st 1932. When the Curator forwarded the report to the ministry, he added that Magon had told him before that Paul was no longer performing his tasks as assistant anymore, and other members of the board had also expressed their dissatisfaction with his work. His scholarly prospects were doubtful and he had become too single-tracked through his Swedish work. The Curator advised the ministry to give Paul an ultimatum, either to reacquire the trust of the board or leave the institute’s service. The Curator’s letter to the ministry, detailing these proceedings, was drafted but not posted, probably to give Paul an opportunity to state his own case. A week later another letter was finally sent, and the Curator deemed an ultimatum no longer necessary. He considered it an open-and-shut case that Paul would leave the institute, considering that he had admitted that “he was fully aware that his position within the institute had become untenable.” His withdrawal should be smoothed by allowing Paul to transfer his *venia legendi* to Kiel and by raising his teaching salary. Even though Minister of Culture Grimme personally requested that Paul be kept on retainer for another while, Magon was compelled to state that the board had discussed the matter twice now and come to the conclusion that a change in the assistant’s position was urgently necessary:

Herr Professor Paul, after ten years as an assistant, wishes to devote himself more to his research and teaching. And it is personally understandable that he no longer gives the undivided attention to his tasks as an assistant that is necessary from the

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142 Magon to Curator UG, 26/02/1931, UAG K635.
143 Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 03/03/1931, UAG K 635.
144 Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 03/03/1931, UAG K 635.
point of view of the Nordic Institute and that one can doubtlessly expect from a younger assistant, still at the beginning of his academic work.145

Paul was substituted by younger assistants during his absence, but their tenures were short and they hardly ever stayed longer than their training period. A possible solution disappeared when Paul, who had begun to extend his research into ecclesiastical history and theology146 and had received an honorary doctorate in Theology,147 was refused the chair of Religious History in Erlangen.148

An unspecified escalation in the Nordic Institute in December 1932 had Leopold Magon write to Berlin in an urgent tone: “Recent events have made it apparent that, for the good of an orderly operation of the institute, the supernumerary assistant, Herr Prof. Dr. D. h.c. Johannes Paul, be relieved of his duty as assistant as soon as possible.”149 While not giving any indication as to the nature of these events,150 Magon made it clear that Paul was to leave. As long as Paul was still officially the assistant, no new assistant could be trained, and the substitutes had shown little interest in becoming acquainted with the extensive and complex tasks of the position. Two substitutes, Magon complained, had already been used up, and the next one

145 “Auch Herr Prof. Paul hegt nach zehnjähriger Assistententätigkeit den begreiflichen Wunsch, sich künftig stärker seiner Forscher- und Lehraufgaben zu widmen, und es ist menschlich verständlich, wenn er daher seinen Assistentenaufgaben nicht mehr jenes ungeteilte Interesse entgegenbringt, das vom Standpunkte des Nordischen Instituts aus notwendig ist und das man zweifellos von einem jüngeren, noch im Beginne der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit stehenden Assistenten wird erwarten können.” – Magon to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 29/01/1932, UAG K635.
146 Since about 1930 Paul was a member of Greifswald’s Scholarly Association for Luther Studies and Modern Intellectual History (Greifwalder gelehrte Gesellschaft für Luth erforschung und nezeitliche Geistesgeschichte) and published in the journals Luther-Jahrbuch, Diaspora and Zeitwende. See UAG University Calendar UG, WS 1928/29 and Publication List of a.o. Prof. Dr. Johannes Paul (Amendment since 1929), 12/07/1932, UAG K635.
147 Deutsch-Schwedischer Nachrichtendienst, 5:10 (1932).
148 Report of Curator UG to REM (concerning request by student corps to replace Prof. Magon in the Nordic Institute with n.b.a.o. Prof. Paul), 11/05/1933, UAG K628.
149 “Neuere Vorkommnisse lassen es im Interesse eines geordneten Dienstbetriebes dringend geboten erscheinen, dass der nichtplanmäßige Assistent des Instituts, Herr Prof. Dr. D. h.c. Johannes Paul, möglichst bald aus seiner Verpflichtung als Assistent entlassen wird.” – Magon to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 17/12/1932, UAG K635.
150 It is not implausible that this escalation was in relation to the acquisition of the von der Goltz (see chapter IV.1). Paul was staunchly anti-semitic, wherefore the fact that a Jew would provide the money for the purchase would have provided food for conflict.
would have to start in December 1932. But Berlin remained inactive, leaving Paul on hold until the spring of 1933. The reason for this holding out on Berlin’s side is unclear, but it could have one of two reasons. On the one hand, replacing Paul would have meant increasing his teaching salary to compensate for the assistant’s salary, but that would have effectively doubled the cost of the whole position until such a time as Paul would receive a call to a professorial chair. On the other hand, the new Prussian Minister for Culture was Wilhelm Kähler, who had been made minister following the “Preußenschlag”, the unconstitutional sequestration of Prussia by the the Reich-government, in September 1932. As a board member in the Nordic Institute and fellow head of the Swedish department in the Nordic Institute, it is possible that Kähler felt more loyalty towards Paul than to Magon. Whatever the case, Paul remained on leave until the Gordian knot was cut in July 1933.

III.5 At the End of Weimar

Auslandskunde, that is quite a young term in the German research community; and it is, in the cold light of day, hardly a sharply defined discipline. Auslandskunde is like a multistructured building, to which all the old and well-established disciplines have contributed, and still contribute, their very different building blocks. It is understandable therefore, that its outlines are cluttered, its structure interlaced, and the totality of it is hard to make out at a glance.152

Unbeknownst to the author of these lines, Wolf Meinhard von Staa, section head in the Prussian Ministry of Culture, his summary of the previous development of Auslandsstudien/Auslandskunde was the last to be given in the Weimar Republic. This short text, written by a senior civil servant whose responsibilities included the oversight of Area Studies, hinted at a

151 Magon to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 17/12/1932, UAG K635.
number of the challenges that Auslandskunde faced in the first 15 years of its existence. While von Staa, for example, began his article by explaining the wider pedagogical implications of interdisciplinary Area Studies in an increasingly specialized academic environment, he continued: “Looking solely at the student, his training and education, only presents one side of the matter. The other shows that support for Area Studies is of the utmost importance for the maintenance of international academic, cultural, economic and even political relations.”

This issue of the foreign political role of the Area Studies-institutes, unpredicted in the founding memoranda of 1916, was indeed the most glaring teething problem of the whole endeavour. Becker’s and Spranger’s memoranda had put Auslandsstudien squarely in the field of cultural policy, assigning it a task of national pedagogy and academic reform at the same time. But, whereas the ministerial mentors had represented Area Studies as a prerequisite for improved relations with foreign countries, in practice there was a strong temptation to give the Nordic Institute a more immediate role in foreign relations. This was all the more so, since the defeat in World War One lent a greater urgency to such efforts, and the international boycott of German academia made an academic involvement in eminently political affairs more plausible, helping to reduce reservations in the universities about locking step with the political field.

In Greifswald this re-tasking, represented first and foremost by Gustav Braun and Johannes Paul, was mainly driven by personal initiative rather than direct ministerial influence. From the outset, the ministry had difficulties in containing the local enthusiasm, where a new ministerial initiative promised ample funding and many scholars volunteered their services, regardless of competence or research interest. Nor did the ministry have to exert much influence on the Nordic Institute later on, when Gustav Braun began extending his mandate into the sphere of public diplomacy. While the Ministry of Education certainly encouraged and, to a degree, supported a more active cultural foreign political role, it neither did so to the detriment of scholarly production nor were experiences in Greifswald’s case very promising. Public diplomacy was a new concept and many of its outlines

153 “Allein vom Studenten, seiner Ausbildung und Erziehung her gesehen, bietet sich aber nur die eine Seite der Dinge dar. Die andere zeigt, dass die Förderung der auslands-kundlichen Fächer von der allergrößten Bedeutung ist für die Pflege der internationalen wissenschaftlichen, kulturellen, wirtschaftlichen, ja auch politischen Beziehungen.” – Staa 1932, p. 57.
were fuzzy, which led to inconsistent funding from the Ministry of Culture, especially once the new republic faced economic difficulties. Furthermore, the Foreign Ministry had little idea of how to make use of the new concepts and institutions that had been pushed upon it. Attempts to build a regular cooperation between the diplomatic service and the Nordic Institute fell flat after Gustaf Dalman committed a diplomatic faux pas. The incident itself was minor, but it did reveal long-standing incompatibilities between unclear expectations and different logics of operation.

In general, the Weimar years were a time of experimentation with an as yet not fully fleshed out idea. Arguably, the addition of a foreign political dimension to the concept of Area Studies was a haphazard appendix, born out of adverse conditions, but even the intellectual and organizational foundations were still a work-in-progress when the Nordic Institute was founded. This concerned questions of how to structure the new institute, with different propositions brought forward by Gustaf Dalman, Gustav Braun and Johannes Paul. The challenges that these propositions sought to address were the position of interdisciplinary Area Studies vis-à-vis the constituent disciplines and the role of the individual nations vis-à-vis the region. The first challenge had been met very early on, when the majority of the professors who made up the Nordic Institute showed a lack of energy in engaging with their Nordic research tasks, which Gustav Braun at least attested to be a function of their disciplinary loyalties. Where academic career advancement was almost exclusively tied to achievements in the respective discipline, investments in interdisciplinary studies could only come at a cost to personal advancement. The proposed organizational solutions were markedly different, but neither was particularly successful. Where Dalman proposed to lead from the front, with a core-institute of German Studies, which could inspire and support interested scholars, Braun proposed to lead from the rear, by putting otherwise passive disciplinary representatives into positions of responsibility and pressuring them to work. Genuine motivation, as both found out, was hard to generate and in tandem with the meagre and unreliable funding of the institute, there was simply not enough reward for Area Studies to justify the cost to individual careers. The second challenge, whether the region or the individual country should form the structuring element in Area Studies, was the point of contention between Paul and Magon. As a literary scholar, Leopold Magon found the original structure of the institute to be workable, since a disciplinary approach could reasonably cover a linguistically unified region. Overlooking the fact that this approach was only plausible because
the Institute for Finland Studies had already been separated from the Nordic Institute, experiences in Greifswald also showed otherwise. In teaching and research, regional totality always demanded disciplinary limitations, a fact that more sociologically interested researchers like Braun and Paul did not find satisfactory. The counter-proposal, to organize the institute along national lines, would not only facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach, but would also accommodate the public diplomacy dimension of the Nordic Institute and the pedestrian necessity of acquiring funding abroad. Such proposals, which were eminently plausible, could not, however, be realized against the resistance of Leopold Magon.

The vagueness and unfinished character of the Auslandsstudien-programme did thus lead to large amounts of improvisation and reinterpretation on the ground. Furthermore, a lot of this reinterpretation did not come through an organized process under the supervision of the ministry, but through self-serving and conditional individual initiative. The foundation of the Institute for Finland Studies under Gustav Braun was primarily due to its director’s authoritarian character, which made an organizational separation of Finnish issues the least worst option. The specific character of the institute was further shaped by its reliance on the funding of Stettin-based merchants, which reflected in a general focus on maritime and economic topics. In the same vein, Johannes Paul developed personal initiative to further his own projects, but his motivation sprang directly from the not particularly well organized integration of Area Studies into the disciplinary structure of academic careers. Being specialized on a single country, Sweden, Paul had little chance of finding a professoriate to fit his qualifications, leaving him a showcase of interdisciplinary Area Studies but with little chance of advancing in academia. Paul thus extended his field of work into the cultural political sphere to a degree that had not been seen before in Greifswald. The cultural communication of Sweden to a German audience had been implicit in Becker’s memorandum, and the creation of extensive networks in Sweden and cultural political consultancy was certainly different in scale from previous endeavours, but had in principle been condoned by the Nordic Institute and the ministry alike. The extent to which Paul developed this dimension of Area Studies was not implausible if viewed against the history of the Nordic Institute, but it is even more plausible from Paul’s individual background. As an important part of the institute’s work, the function of cultural embassy for Sweden mostly played to Paul’s forte and furthered his chances of academic advancement. His feud with Leopold Magon was also fostered by religious and character
differences, but its underlying reason was an irreconcilable disagreement about the relationship between academic research and public diplomacy.
At the beginning of 1933 the Nordic Institute was still awaiting a solution to its long-standing conflicts. Gustav Braun and his Institute for Finland Studies had achieved institutional independence in 1921, but had hitherto not achieved a regular budgetary position, relying instead on interests from a foundation of wealthy Stettin merchants. The Nordic Institute led a calm and unassuming existence under the patronage of Leopold Magon, while the majority of board members had never joined the Northern European research task in more than name. At the same time, the institute’s assistant had conjured up an entirely new project of culturally communicating Sweden in Germany, creating tension with the director. Between an institutionally unclear status and diverging notions of the task of the Nordic Institute, the situation in 1933 was marked by increasingly hostile personal relationships between the main actors.

At the same time, the Weimar Republic was on its way out. Never beloved of a majority of Germans, it was widely associated with economic woes and national humiliation. Especially after the Great Depression hit Germany, its public support crumbled, and it came under increasing attacks from the left and right of the political spectrum. By 1932 a majority of seats in parliament was held by radically anti-republican forces, National Socialists and Communists, while a moderately anti-republican government under Franz von Papen struggled to restore a monarchical order. In Prussia, where National Socialists had won the elections but could not find a partner to form a government, von Papen deposed the provisional Social Democratic government in summer 1932, and put the largest German state under direct control of the Reich. By early 1933 the crisis in government led the national-conservative government to seek the support of Adolf Hitler and his NSDAP in order to restore its legitimacy. Hitler quickly outmanœuvred his conservative allies, becoming chancellor on January 30th 1933, which in turn led the
way to a massive takeover of power of National Socialists all over the country during the course of the year.¹

IV.1 Cleansing and the Coup d’Institute (1933–1936)

Greifswald University of 1933, with its roughly 2,000 students situated in a town of 30,000, was a small social space, in which an intimate acquaintance between the academic personnel and close interaction within the social sphere of the town were much mandated by external factors. Even though a certain degree of social differentiation was available, the upper middle class was too small to allow for a retreat into anonymity, as might have been possible in larger cities. Social control, therefore, was tight, and so was the interaction and exchange between university personnel and local elites. Consequently, the high degree of conservatism common among German professors remained the norm in Greifswald,² even to the point of overriding collegial duties towards the handful of pro-republican academics, such as philologist Konrat Ziegler and jurist Fritz Klingmüller, who could not rely on support from their peers when faced with slanderous attacks by a nationalist student.³ While the majority of acting professors were national-conservative in their outlook and a number of them had exhibited National-Socialist ideologemes before 1933, “Alte Kämpfer”,⁴ such as ex-professor of Mathematics Theodor Vahlen⁵ and Lecturer in Slavic Studies Hermann Brüske, remained exceptions, likely because membership of the Nazi-party might endanger their status as public servants.⁶

² Mathiesen 2000 stresses the significance of the conservative milieu in Greifswald as the dominant political factor on a local level. Eberle 2015, pp. 34–44 and 227–230, in contrast, points out the multiplicity of political confessions and social backgrounds in the university’s teaching staff.
⁴ “Old Fighters”, a honourary term used for those who joined the NSDAP before 1933.
⁵ Vahlen joined the NSDAP in 1924 and became the first NSDAP-Gauleiter of Pomerania. Because of his public support for anti-republican student protests he was removed from his office in 1924: Stamm-Kuhlmann 2006, pp. 404f.
⁶ This is at least suggested by Eberle 2015, pp. 43f.
This distance between the national-conservative establishment and the upstart Nazis was not necessarily a matter of substance but of style. In Greifswald, as in other German universities, the NSDAP’s strongest presence was among the students. Unlike in most other German universities, the NSDAP and its student branch Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (National Socialist German Student League – NSDStB) ruled supreme on the stage of student politics in Greifswald. Already in 1924 the Deutscher Hochschulring (German Academic Ring), uniting the völkisch elements of the German Student Union and, by its own account, anathema to pacifism, Marxism, democracy and Jewry, managed to win all seats in Greifswald’s general student committee elections. Such a result could only be repeated in Rostock, Kiel and Königsberg. Since around 1930 Greifswald’s student level politics was dominated by the NSDStB, and at the dawn of 1933 it provided eight of the thirteen members in Greifswald’s Student Parliament and could staff the Student Committee at will by virtue of its 2/3rd majority. Despite a handful of times when they could actually bring pressure to bear upon individual professors, however, the National Socialist students, with a penchant for revolutionary and even anti-bourgeois lingo, had little toe-hold above the student level. It was the National Socialist takeover in Berlin, and the concurrent perception of a paradigm shift that enabled the students to project power into the wider ranks of the academic personnel.

7 Deutsche Studentenschaft, the umbrella organization of the general student committees in Germany and German-speaking universities.  
8 Grüttner, Michael: Studenten im Dritten Reich (=Sammlung Schönigh zur Geschichte und Gegenwart) Paderborn 1995, pp. 25f.  
10 Most notable would be the conflict between theology-student Lubbe and the professors Ziegler and Klingmüller: Stamm-Kuhlmann 2006, pp. 405f.  
11 Mirroring the discussions within its parent organization, anti-capitalist issues were at times prominent in the NSDStB, even though their influence was pushed back after Baldur von Schirach took over in 1928. Beyond this point in time an opening towards the more traditional clientele in the student corps took place and the NSDStB also became more compatible with the sensitivities of the professoriate. See Grüttner 1995, pp. 20–22.  
12 The dramatization of National Socialist takeover arguably did more to enable the events that are to concern us here than any conquest of “real”, i.e. bureaucratically wielded, power in Berlin. See Staudenmayer, Nancy/ Tyre, Marcie/ Perlow, Leslie: “Time to Change. Temporal Shifts as Enablers of Organizational Change”, in: Organization Science, 13:5 (2002), pp. 583–597 for just such an argument, which makes understandable the fact that student actions on the local level were already under full steam when
Resistance from the teaching staff was not to be expected, as the majority of acting professors was in general agreement with the political goals of the students, even though many were members of conservative parties and viewed the rowdy behaviour of the students with suspicion. Since the university had already proven that political sympathies would, when in doubt, override collegial duties, it is little surprise that the jolt produced by the ascent of NSDAP to the highest spheres of power created a dramatic – if not permanent\textsuperscript{14} – shift in the power relationship between students and teachers.

A Series of Scandals

When it became clear in the summer of 1932 that Professor of Theology Eduard von der Goltz was in financial trouble, this had the makings of a serious scandal. Von der Goltz was a prominent academic, an eminent member of the upper echelons of the Lutheran church in Pomerania\textsuperscript{15} and scion of a noble line of prominent Prussian officers and theologians, and his mounting debts all over town had the potential to severely damage the reputation of all of them, foremost the university’s. It was in the latter’s interest to resolve this matter quickly, and since the villa that von der Goltz inhabited was too expensive for him in the first place, the idea was forwarded to absolve him of his debts as well as his financially detrimental

the take-over in Berlin had not even been fully accomplished, as well as why this wave ran out of steam so quickly.

\textsuperscript{13} Mathiesen 2000, pp. 280f.

\textsuperscript{14} The verve, with which the NSDStB started out in the spring of 1933, deflated relatively quickly, when in time students were forced to complement their regular studies with sundry ideological and physical education courses. The resulting move of students to larger universities, where anonymity allowed a mitigation of these duties, reduced the power of the National Socialist student organization notably. See Faust, Anselm: “Überwindung des jüdischen Intellektualismus und der damit verbundenen Verfallerscheinungen im deutschen Geistesleben’ – Der Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund”, in: Scholtysek, Joachim & Studt, Christoph (eds.): Universitäten und Studenten im Dritten Reich. Bejahung, Anpassung, Widerstand. XIX. Königswinterer Tagung vom 17.-19. Februar 2006 (=Schriftenreihe der Forschungsgemeinschaft 20. Juli, 9) Berlin 2008, pp. 107–114, here: pp. 112–114.

\textsuperscript{15} Von der Goltz served as a councillor in the Protestant Consistory in Stettin (Konsistorialrat im Evangelischen Konsistorium), member of the Synod of the Pomeranian Church (Synode der pommerschen Provinzkirche), the Old-Prussian General Synod (Altpreußische Generalsynode) and the Prussian Church Senate (Preußischer Kirchen-senat): Buchholz, Werner (ed.): Lexikon Greifswalder Hochschullehrer 1775 bis 2006, vol. 3: 1907 bis 1932, Bad Honnef 2004, pp. 72f.
domicile. Combined with this was the plan to use the representative villa for the Nordic Institute, to allow it to attract more foreign visitors. Even though the Curator was not convinced that this was the entire reason for the Nordic Institute’s poor public performance, he had to admit that the house in Stralsunder Straße, which the institute had occupied since 1929, was not very presentable.\textsuperscript{16}

It is unclear who presented this idea first. Von der Goltz was on good terms with his neighbour, Johannes Paul, whose works on Gustavus Adolphus and the Reformation had made them colleagues, and von der Goltz had likely promoted Paul’s honorary doctorate in theology. It is, therefore, probable that the idea of selling the villa to the university for the benefit of the Nordic Institute was concocted by those two.\textsuperscript{17} But it was Gustav Braun whose intervention made the acquisition possible. The Curator had clearly stated that the needs of other institutes were more pressing, and that if the university bought the villa, these would have precedence. Braun then presented a different solution: One of his Stettin patrons, Arthur Kunstmann, would provide the necessary funds for the university to free von der Goltz of his debts, the villa would be used by the Nordic Institute and the Institute for Finland Studies, and the house in Stralsunder Straße would be free for whatever the Curator deemed to be the most pressing demand for rooms.\textsuperscript{18}

While the looming scandal around Eduard von der Goltz was averted, another scandal followed. To thank Kunstmann, who had helped out with the acquisition of the von der Goltz-villa, Gustav Braun proposed his promotion to honorary doctor at the Philosophical Faculty. Kunstmann, who owned Germany’s largest Baltic shipping company, had represented his country at several international conferences, and had been a long-time benefactor of Greifswald University, where he was already a Honorary Senator. The Philosophical Faculty in particular had profited from his

\textsuperscript{16} Curator of UG to Prussian Minister of Education, 28/12/1932, UAG K1707.
\textsuperscript{17} In an interview on September 22\textsuperscript{nd} 2008 Paul’s daughter recalled that von der Goltz had presented the university with the building under the condition that it be used for the Nordic Institute and that Paul be made director of it. As a family-internal story it serves well to quell the questions about how Paul really got into his position, but there might be a kernel of truth in there.
\textsuperscript{18} The house was finally bought in February 1933: Notice on Sale of House Roonstraße 26, 20/02/1933, UAG K1707.
generous contributions,\textsuperscript{19} not least the Geographical Institute and the Institute for Finnish Studies, to which he was a donor.\textsuperscript{20} His assistance in the acquisition of the von der Goltz-villa was the occasion more than the reason to honour him. The application for Honorary Graduation, defended on January 25\textsuperscript{th} by Gustav Braun and supported, among others, by Leopold Magon, passed the faculty board without objections. The formal ceremony to instate Kunstmann, planned for May 1\textsuperscript{st}, never occurred, though. A February 24\textsuperscript{th} article in the student body’s paper sharply attacked the whole occurrence, on the grounds that Kunstmann was a Jew, who had allegedly bought his way into academic honours. Although Kunstmann, for reasons unknown, forewent the formal instatement, accepting his new title via mail, Hermann Brüske and the NSDStB insisted that the honour paid to Kunstmann be revoked. The Faculty Board and the Vice Chancellor on the other hand held that they could not overturn their own decisions within a matter of days, and even the Ministry of Education publicly disapproved of the students’ advance and forbade any political pressure on university officials by “unauthorized personnel”.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} The eulogy referred to the new vessel for the Biological Research Station on Hiddensee, his support for studies in Lower German and History and the possibility for students and teachers alike to travel as far as America and the Mediterranean on his ships: Application for Honorary Graduation of Arthur Kunstmann, UAG Phil. Fak. I-378, vol. 1.

\textsuperscript{20} Höll 1997, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{21} For the Kunstmann-affair see Stamm-Kuhlmann 2006, pp. 406–409.
Even though the student body and the NSDAP had been officially rebutted, the supporters of Kunstmann’s Honorary Doctorate were now politically suspicious. In early 1933, with the political situation rapidly changing, several disenfranchised people had already begun denouncing personal enemies, and while many of these denunciations were unfounded, they soon turned into a campaign. After having aroused the National Socialist ire, Braun also became a valid target, and in March 1933 his assistants, Wilhelm Hartnack and Hans Grellmann, Lecturer Hermann Brüske and several students pressed charges against him. Braun’s imperious behaviour had made him unfavourable with his subordinates for a long time, and this was an opportunity to turn the tables. The charges, in Paul’s eloquent words “embezzlement, fraud, breach of faith, smuggling, etc.”, mostly concerned the violation of foreign currency.

23 Braun habitually appropriated his assistants’ and doctoral students’ research results and claimed them as his own, as much as he put high demands on students and auxiliary staff. On the other hand, he did support them in finding gainful employment afterwards, which had failed in the case of his assistant in the Geographical Institute, Wilhelm Hartnack: Eberle 2015, pp. 80f.
24 “undersliv, bedrägeri, förtroendebrott, smuggel m.m.” – Paul to Lundström, 26/4/1933, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling.
regulations and accepting fees from non-enrolled students without reporting them to the bursary. Braun spent more than a month in detention and it took until December 1934 before the majority of charges had been dropped and he was finally cleared of all remaining charges by the Supreme Court in Leipzig. His academic career was over, though. Since Braun had appealed to the Supreme Court and the trial dragged on, the appointment of a successor was all but impossible. The Curator thus retired him in November 1933, on the grounds of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, which allowed arbitrary retirements of undesirable personnel. Braun, who was in no way politically opposed to National Socialism, was followed in his Professoriate for Geography by his assistant Wilhelm Hartnack, while Hans Grell-

25 Allegations were also made that Braun forced non-enrolled students due for examination to attend his seminars and subscribe to journals that he edited. See UAG PA 24 vol. 3.

26 The court ruled that while Braun’s management of finances was unconventional, it was not strictly illegal. Furthermore, his mishandling of university finances would have had to be admonished by the bursary, as its intricacies could not be known to a professor. The private misuse of institute property, including the radio set and the motor boat, was considered a trivial offence by the court and not investigated further. These would have constituted grounds for a disciplinary hearing in the university, but since Braun was retired this never materialized. See UAG PA24, vol. 3 & 4.

27 The case is amply documented in UAG PA24, vol. 3 & 4.

28 A few days before his dismissal Braun wrote to his lecturer Arvi Kivimaa: “As you know, Germany, whose great revolution has indeed come to pass in great calmness, is being showered with false reports from abroad. And even if I do not believe that Finland participates in this campaign, because Germany is especially well-understood in Finland, I would like to ask you to report in the Finnish press – as a message from the Finnish Institute -, that here, and as far as I can tell, everywhere in Germany, the revolution has come about without any disturbances whatsoever. – Especially in Greifswald the scientific work continues unhindered and hopeful and we would be delighted if Finnish travelers took the opportunity to visit Greifswald and satisfy themselves about how wrong and made up all the atrocity propaganda is.” (Wie Sie wissen, wird Deutschland, dessen große Umwälzung in der Tat in aller Ruhe vor sich gegangen ist, vom Auslande her mit einer Fülle von Falschmeldungen überschüttet und wenn ich auch glaube, dass man sich in Finnland an diesen Dingen nicht beteiligt, weil man ja gerade in Finnland Deutschland besonders gut versteht, so würde ich Sie doch bitten in der finnischen Presse – als Mitteilung des Instituts für Finnlandkunde – zu berichten, dass sich hier, und soweit ich beurteile überall in Deutschland, die Umwälzung ohne irgendwelche Störungen vollzogen hat. – Gerade in Greifswald geht die wissenschaftliche Arbeit der Universität unvermindert und hoffnungsfroh weiter und wir würden uns freuen, wenn Reisende aus Finnland Gelegenheit nähmen, Greifswald zu besuchen, um sich zu überzeugen, wie falsch und erlogen, die ganze Gräuelpropaganda ist.) – Braun to Kivimaa, March 1933 (after 11th), UAG IfF 55.
mann provisionally stood in for the Institute for Finnish Studies. 29 Even though he continued his studies, Braun never returned to academia and died of a heart attack in 1940, while serving as captain in the German occupation force in Norway. 30

The same kind of unwanted attention was granted to Leopold Magon. The student body, having shown an interest in Nordic matters for a considerable time, had in the spring of 1933 established a Nordic Department of the Student Body, which had its accommodation in the attic of the Nordic Institute and even its own section in the student newspaper, called “German–Nordic Review”. 31 The Nordic Department under its head, doctoral student Günther Falk, had for a while gathered incriminating evidence against the lecturer in Swedish, Stellan Arvidson. Arvidson, who had held his position in Greifswald since 1930, was a Socialist and Member of the Clarté-association. While on leave in Sweden during the 1932/33 autumn term, he wrote several critical articles about the Nazi takeover for the journal Clarté. 32 These articles and the reaction they produced in the mainstream press were compiled by the Nordic Department and handed to Magon with a request for immediate action. Magon ordered Arvidson to declare himself, which he did by stating that he saw no further reason to continue his work in Germany. This was of no consequence, since the Ministry of Education, which had obviously received the same evidence, had already fired Arvidson. 33 But if Magon had hoped that his half-hearted assistance in the disposal of his lecturer of Swedish would save him from the fury of the students, he was mistaken. The May 10th issue of the student newspaper ran a short notice titled “What about Lecturer Arvidson?” and therein raised the question of how a Socialist and obvious “Deutschenhasser” (German hater) could receive a position at a German university in the first place. The article concluded: “We demand that never again a man work at this institute, who is incriminated so unfavourably by his political past. Since now, after the ascension to power

29 Considering the difficulties of finding any scholar familiar with Finland, Grellmann was given the promise of being made full director upon the completion of his Habilitation.
30 For the ‘Case Braun’, see also Eberle, pp. 80–83.
31 “Deutsch-Nordische Umschau” – see Greifwalder Universitätszeitung, years 1932/33. The German-Nordic Review at times made up as much as half of the issue.
32 Åkerlund 2011, pp. 113f.
of National Socialism, the Prussian Ministry of Education has taken up and concluded this issue, the way is free for a reorganization that will serve the Nordic Institute and hence the German–Nordic relations better."34 This last sentence was rather overtly aimed at Leopold Magon, who bore the ultimate responsibility for personnel decisions, and who was thereby accused of having been aware of and condoning Arvidson’s left-wing leanings. As if to underline that notion, Hermann Brüske in the meantime handed in a report in Berlin, denouncing Magon as politically unreliable.35

The Coup d’Institute

But the attack on the leadership of the Nordic Institute was almost over when the article that was intended to spearhead it went into print. The day before, May 9th, the Curator had invited Magon and the leader of the student body, Jürgen Sönke, into his office, in order to facilitate an agreement on the replacement of the Swedish lecturer. A compromise, though, was technically impossible as Magon had to report that he had telegraphically requisitioned a new lecturer the day before. Sönke was unable to add to any compromise either. He had already contacted the Ministry of Education the day before and asked that Magon be transferred to Kiel and replaced with Paul, who had just joined the SA on May 1st.36 The NSDStB was convinced “[...] that it was time to expand the activities of the Nordic Institute on the political side and believed that Professor Paul was more suited to the task than Professor Magon, also in consideration of the Catholic faith of the latter.”37 Magon’s protestations, that he was willing and able to lead the Nordic Institute on a more strongly political course if this

34 “Wir fordern, dass niemals wieder ein Mann am hiesigen Institut wirkt, der durch sein politisches Vorleben so ungünstig belastet ist. Nachdem nunmehr infolge der Machtübernahme durch den Nationalsozialismus das Preußische Kultusministerium die Angelegenheit aufgegriffen und erledigt hat, ist der Weg für eine Neuordnung frei, die dem Nordischen Institut und damit den deutsch-nordischen Beziehungen dienlicher sein wird.” – “Was ist mit Lektor Arvidson?”, in: Greifswalder Universitätszeitung, 8:3 (1933).
35 This at least is Magon’s version, who claimed that classicist Franz Egermann, who was charged with typing the report, had informed him in confidence. See Magon’s Report about his relation with the NSDAP, no date (after 16/09/1945), UAG Nachlass Magon 48.
37 “dass es an der Zeit sei, die Arbeit des Nordischen Instituts nach der politischen Seite hin auszubauen und glaube, dass Professor Paul für diese Aufgabe geeigneter sei als Professor Magon, auch mit Rücksicht auf die katholische Konfession des letzteren.” – Report by Curator UG to Prussian Prussian Ministry of Culture, 10/05/1933, UAG K628.
was Berlin’s wish, were to no avail. Sönke emphasized that Paul was the man for the job, and subsequent discussions, including one at the ministry in Berlin, led no further than to a repetition of positions.38

Another report by the Curator, sent the next day, conveyed his own opinion: The appointment of Magon had been an “incomprehensible mistake”,39 if only because he, as a Catholic, could not make use of the important Protestant connection between Germany and the Scandinavian countries. The slight at the inauguration of the Gustavus Adolphus monument was evidence of that. The Curator had also got the distinct impression that the Nordic Institute had never, in the five years of Magon’s holding office, developed any lively activity, and had always been surprisingly empty on unannounced visits. Curator Sommer pointedly summed up his assessment in one long sentence:

If the National Socialist state now assigns the universities tasks that go beyond mere scholarliness, especially if the Nordic Institute is to serve not just the anaemic communication between the silent study rooms of savants in Greifswald and its Nordic neighbours, but that rather the Director should also, in ideological community with his students, work towards the liveliest contact between the German folk life and that of its Nordic neighbours, particularly if – in the current time of growing distrust in foreign parts against the new Germany – the Institute in Greifswald should promote understanding and friendship for the New Germany among the friends that we have hitherto had in Sweden, then Professor Magon, as I could ascertain in the discussions I have had with him on the 9th and 10th of this month, is not the most suited personality for this task.40

38 Report by Curator UG to Prussian Prussian Ministry of Culture, 10/05/1933, UAG K628.
Other professors shared the Curator’s assessment, especially theologian Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, who claimed that he and others within the church had long seen Magon as a serious burden to the institute. Even though the general consensus, as far as the Curator was concerned, was that Paul was indeed the man for the job, he had to advise caution. He did not think that Magon was right in calling Jürgen Sönke the avatar of Paul, even though both had close connections, but deemed it imperative to avoid any impression of this first genuinely political change of personnel at Greifswald University being a putsch. How this could be done was discussed in another report, filed later that day: According to Beyer, Paul was fully qualified to take over a historical professoriate, which led the Curator to believe that the board of directors of the Nordic Institute had been a tad harsh in their judgement of Paul and that his academic merits were not as small as they were formerly made out to be. Nevertheless he recommended a dismissal of Magon, even though Paul was not his first choice to replace him. Instead, the Curator argued, it would be wise to look for a suitable German scholar, and only consider Paul as a temporary proxy if none was to be found. There were already four full professors in History and, if Magon was to be dismissed, another German scholar had to be appointed anyway. On the other hand, since the university was already full of historians, Paul’s appointment might be possible at a pinch, since all accusations of a politically motivated support for him could be rebuffed by pointing out that a directorship was no real help on his way to full professor.

41 Beyer was not an entirely unbiased bystander himself. As an avid champion of the German Christians and their völkisch interpretation of church history as well as a historiographer of Gustavus Adolphus, it is evident that his loyalties lay far closer to Paul than to Magon. See Garbe, Irmfried: Theologe zwischen den Weltkriegen. Hermann Wolfgang Beyer (1898–1942) Zwischen den Zeiten, Konservative Revolution, Wehrmachtsseelsorge (=Greifswalder theologische Forschungen, 9), Frankfurt am Main 2004.
42 Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture (concerning Magon), 11/05/1933, UAG K 628.
43 Sönke and Paul were in the same fraternity (Verein Deutscher Stundenten) and were both members of the Association for Germans Abroad (Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland, VDA), where Paul was the regional president and in charge of all things Nordic.
44 Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture (concerning Magon), 11/05/1933, UAG K 628.
45 This was a rather curious inference, since it pitted the opinion of a single theologian against that of an entire board, including two genuine historians.
46 Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture (concerning request by the student body to replace professor Magon in the Nordic Institute with associate professor Paul), 11/05/1933, UAG K 628.
The whole affair was resolved only when Paul was made part of the discussions. Magon, seemingly feeling how volatile his position in the university had become, was more compromising when the three met on May 15th. If Magon could not easily be got rid of and Paul had to receive a position, it was necessary to sound out the possibilities of a division of labour between them. Magon, who five days earlier had refused any such notions as completely unacceptable, was forced to give ground and basically agree to Paul’s ideas of 1928. Later that day the Curator sent a proposition to the Ministry of Education that contained the following measures: The Nordic Institute would cease to exist and be replaced by four new institutes, the Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish. Those would be combined with the Institute for Finland Studies to operate under the name of Nordic Area Institutes of Greifswald University (Nordische Auslandsinstitute der Universität Greifswald). Johannes Paul, who would resign from his position as supernumerary assistant would take over the Swedish Institute, whereas Leopold Magon would head the Danish, Icelandic and Norwegian Institutes. The Finnish Institute would continue to be provisionally headed by Hans Grellmann, an interim solution that proved to be more or less final. The director of each institute would be free to operate independently, but a managing director – chosen from the ranks of the directors and changing annually – would tend to matters concerning all five institutes and have the service of the newly freed-up assistant position. The collegially organized Board of Directors, the Curator insisted, was to disappear. It no longer fit

47 Just how hard Magon found it to come to terms with the new power structure at the university is evidenced by the response he sent to the student’s magazine concerning their May 10th article: “The Nordic Institute naturally condemns the unbelievable utterances, that Dr. Arvidson made about the New Germany, all the more so since it is clear that some of his accusations are even wrong.” (Das Nordische Institut verurteilt selbstverständlich die unbegreiflichen Äußerungen, die Dr. Arvidson über das neue Deutschland verbreitet hat, zumal feststeht, daß sie stellenweise sogar unwahre Behauptungen enthalten.) More than one student on the editorial staff must have wondered, if this was sarcasm. Of course, it never went into print: Draft for a rectification in Greifswalder Studentenzeitung, no date, UAG R1010.

48 Magon later conveyed that he had an intervention by Vice Rector Deißner to thank for his not being dismissed outright. From the present documents it is unclear, at which point during the discussions such an intervention would have made any significant difference. It seems more plausible, instead, that Deißner helped the politically inept Magon by making clear to him the severity of his situation, as well as a way out: Magon’s Report about his relation with the NSDAP, no date (after 16/09/1945), UAG Nachlass Magon 48.

49 See Proposal for reorganization of the Nordic Institute, 15/05/1933, UAG K628.
the zeitgeist and the support of colleagues could be secured without such a body, that otherwise just “served to paralyze the eagerness of the actual head of the Nordic Institute to take responsibility’.50 That Paul was eager to take the aforementioned responsibility can be seen in his demands for the financial endowment of his new institute. Rather complaisantly characterized as “immodest” by the Curator, these consisted of a solid rise of the overall budget, of which almost half was to go to Paul’s Swedish institute.51

It was not entirely surprising that the Board of Directors of the Nordic Institute would not willingly approve of their abolition at the hands of Hermann Sommer and Johannes Paul. Of the four (apart from Magon) members present at their next meeting, only Wolfgang Stammler approved of the changes.52 Not that this was of any relevance: The proposition was already on the minister’s desk, and the Curator had made it clear that he thought no kind of solution would have been possible if one had waited for the prior assent of the Board of Directors, wherefore “the gentlemen [...] have no reason to act piqued.”53 Nor did it bear waiting for Braun’s reply, the Curator smugly added.54

The New Structure of Northern European Studies

With the year 1933 the upper ranks of Nordic scholars in Greifswald were noticeably altered. Gustav Braun had been disgraced and pushed out of academia, while his assistant, Hans Grellmann, had been promoted to a directorial position. Johannes Paul had been similarly upgraded. His new institute was not only liberally equipped with funds, but also with a ministerial mandate for an offensive public diplomacy. In the same incident, Leopold Magon had been marginalized and although he was now

50 “[…] nur die Verantwortungsfreudigkeit des eigentlichen Leiters des Nordischen Instituts zu lähmen geeignet ist.” – Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture (concerning proposal for reorganization of the Nordic Institute), 15/05/1933, UAG K628.

51 The overall budget for all four institutes was 2,300 RM, of which 600 RM were dedicated to Paul. Thereupon came 350 to 400 RM specially allocated by the Ministry, an additional 700 RM for general expenses, travel funds and a typist. Accordingly both professors had around 1,700 RM to work with, while the Finnish Institute would keep its normal allocations and its extraordinary assistant, see Proposal for reorganization of the Nordic Institute, 15/05/1933, UAG K628.

52 Magon’s report about Board meeting to Curator UG, 21/06/1933, UAG K628.

53 “haben die Herren […] keinen Grund, als gekränkt zu demonstrieren.” – Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 22/06/1933, UAG K628.

54 Curator UG to Prussian Ministry of Culture, 22/06/1933, UAG K628.
the official head of three institutes – in addition to his position in the Department of German Studies – his power-base, little as it had been, was further reduced.

The rest of the board had never participated in the academic work anyway, and their protest against the abolition of the board was more about formalities than substance. Wilhelm Kähler, after having been replaced as Prussian Minister of Culture by National Socialist Bernhard Rust in February 1933, showed little activity in Greifswald anymore and died in early 1934. Wolfgang Stammler, despite his open sympathies for the new regime, was too quarrelsome a personality not to come into conflict with the powers that be and was retired in 1936.55 Hans Glagau had been in poor health before and developed a severe stomach disease in late 1933, which claimed his life soon after. Adolf Hofmeister had an irregular cooperation with Paul, as both were fellow directors in the Historical Institute after 1936, and Anglicist Sten Bodvar Liljegren was an important contact with Sweden, but in all other regards the board members had not and would not participate in the Nordic Institute’s work.

The changes of 1933 were profound in a number of ways. On an individual level, they represented a noticeable generational shift. With the established full professors displaced or marginalized by politically charged small-town intrigue, racial discrimination or natural death, a new generation of scholars came to the forefront between 1933 and 1936. Paul, who was now head of a prominent institute and inherited the chair for modern history from the late Hans Glagau in 1936, was considerably more activist than his predecessors. While he had not been a member of any party before 1938, when he joined the NSDAP, he had shown his political interest and instinct before.

55 The reasons for Stammler’s demission are somewhat confused. Stammler himself claimed it was due to his divorced half-Jewish wife, while other sources colported that disrespectful comments about the new Minister of Education were behind it, see Busch 1992, p. 119. Gerd Simon et.al. point to Stammler’s untidy finances as making him increasingly unacceptable in an academic position, see Simon, Gerd et.al.: Im Vorfeld des Massenmordes. Germanistik und Nachfahrer im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Tübingen 2009, pp. 92–94. Eberle, on the other hand, finds that all the above problems were in themselves insufficient to necessitate a demission. Stammler lived in separation from his wife and her heritage did not constitute grounds for any legal action. Denunciations about alleged comments against National Socialism and minister Rust could be refuted. And while Stammler had borrowed money from colleagues and run up debts in town, his finances had been reordered with the help of the Curator. But the ongoing hassle about these problems had reduced his credit in the Ministry of Education to zero, wherefore he was dismissed without giving reasons. See Eberle 2015, pp. 179–183.
He had acquired experience in public diplomacy in the German legation in Stockholm during World War One, and had ever since given advice on matters of public diplomacy in his travel reports. Furthermore, his academic exploits were aimed at communicating a romantic and völkisch view of Sweden to a German audience, which made him seem suitable for a role in communicating the New Germany to Sweden in a way that Leopold Magon could not. Paul’s colleague in the Institute for Finland Studies, Hans Grellmann, was less politically exposed, but he too joined the SA and showed no reservations about close contact with National Socialist ideology.56

On an institutional level, the Nordic Area Institutes had received a new mandate that the two new directors had to fulfil. During the Weimar Republic the Nordic Institute had not succeeded in creating a substantial paradigm-shift in scholarship, as the disciplinary career-structures proved a strong hindrance to personal investments into interdisciplinarity. It had tried to get involved with the work of the diplomatic service, but this too had failed. Nor had it succeeded in acquiring a strong role in public diplomacy, since there was too little funding for this task, as well as too little theoretical infrastructure and practical experience. Now, after the events of early 1933, the Swedish Institute and the Institute for Finland Studies had a mandate for a hard public diplomacy, in which they were to smooth over the “misunderstandings” of Nazi Germany in Northern Europe, and this time there was a credible promise of financial support. Furthermore, the institutional division along polity lines, which had been championed by Paul since 1927, allowed and facilitated a stronger recognition of the logic of public diplomacy.

The profiteers from the changes of 1933 were Paul and Grellmann, who used the opportunity to topple their superiors and improve their situation. Both were faced with limited prospects in academia, as their specializations made it difficult for them to advance further, and both used the opportunity to oust their masters. Grellmann is documented to have been part of the denunciation that resulted in Gustav Braun’s retirement, and Paul was very likely to have, if not orchestrated, then at least instigated the campaign against Leopold Magon. Paul had excellent connections with the leadership of the student body, being the mentor of the Nordic Office, a leading figure

56 When on a military exercise in Stettin, Grellmann’s assistant, Fritz Keese, borrowed the two most important books in his academic curriculum from his mentor, the Kalevala and Hans F. K. Günther’s Rassenkunde Europas: Keese to Grellmann, 24/01/1935, UAG IfF 25.
in the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland and even a fraternity brother of NSDStB-leader Jürgen Sönke. Furthermore, snippets from Paul’s correspondence with Vilhelm Lundström, in which he conveys that Magon was politically a dead duck before the scandal around him actually broke, further strengthen that suspicion. Nevertheless, their rapid ascension was only made possible by the denunciation campaign that washed across the university and which was carried primarily by National Socialist students. By latching on to this movement, both found an opportunity to improve their situation and settle old scores.

Territorial Conflicts

Despite the aggravation that the events of 1933 had caused, the defence of their territory still united the directors of the Nordic Area Institutes. Much like the local actors in Greifswald had seen the political shift as an opportunity to rearrange power structures in their own interest, others also attempted to extend their influence. The first step in that direction was made by the “Nordic Society” (Nordische Gesellschaft, NG) of Lübeck.

Founded in 1921 as a private enterprise for the interest of Lübeck’s merchant class, the NG aimed to revive ideas of a culturally and economically united Baltic Sea Region. Consciously using terminology reminiscent of the historical Hansa, in for example calling their local dependencies “Kontor”, the society strove to promote an economic and cultural rapprochement of Germany and the Nordic states. Its real rise to prominence only began in 1933, when Ernst Timm, founder and director of the NG, offered his services to the Nazi-party’s chief ideologue, Alfred Rosenberg. In a meeting in May 1933 the subordination of the NG under Rosenberg’s Foreign Policy Department of the NSDAP (Außenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP) was agreed upon, and the society mandated to bundle all cultural endeavours towards the North. This was successful in the case of smaller, ideologically oriented associations, but failed in the case of the universities. While generally open to the ideas of the Nordic Society, the scholars

57 E.g. “Jag blir, som du anar, antagligen ej tillfrågad av Magon; men han har f.t. ej mycket att säga [probably: säga] [...]” (I will, as you surmise, probably not be consulted by Magon, but he doesn’t have much say at the moment anyway [...].) – Paul to Lundström, 26/04/1933, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling.

guarded their territory, and so did the Ministry of Education. Requesting clarification from the ministry about advances by the Nordic Society, Paul received a curt response: “I do not plan the subordination of the Nordic Area Institutes of Greifswald University under the Nordic Society in Lübeck. Furthermore, Dr. Timm has not received any information from here that could warrant such an assumption.”\(^59\) Henceforth, relations with the Nordic Society were frosty. Since the NG held a central role in German–Nordic cultural relations, this often led to frictions, all the more so, since one of its “Kontors” was in Stettin. While in 1934/35 Hans Grellmann repeatedly sounded out possibilities for cooperation,\(^60\) by 1937 the atmosphere was one of mutual distrust. Grellmann had to explain to the Curator that a belated information about the arrival of a foreign lecturer was caused by the fact that the Nordic Society, which financed the lecture tour, was “not loyally disposed towards the Finland Institute.”\(^61\) This distrust towards the competition in Lübeck even united Magon and Paul, who were otherwise not on speaking terms. Later that year, Magon wrote to Lübeck that their offer of mutual advertisements\(^62\) had been “debated with the other gentlemen of the Nordic Area Institutes, Prof. Dr. Paul and Dr. Grellmann. Even though we have generally strong reservations about the activity of the Nordic Society, and cannot ignore that we would support your activity with the intended propaganda, we would defer our reservations if the offered reward is somewhat acceptable.”\(^63\)


\(^{60}\) Correspondence for 1934/35, UAG IfF 61.

\(^{61}\) “dem Finnlandinstitut gegenüber nicht loyal eingestellt ist.” – Grellmann to Kolbe (Curator UG), 21/01/1937, UAG K640.

\(^{62}\) The NG asked that all publications of the Nordic Area Institutes carry an addendum advising the reader to seek membership in the Nordic Society if they had a general interest in Nordic matters. In return, the NG would inform their members about publications in the Nordic Area Institutes. See Circular Letter Nordic Society (copy to Magon), 10/05/1937, attachment to: Magon to Klein (Nordic Society, Kontor Stettin), 05/07/1937, UAG IfF 61.

\(^{63}\) “Die Anfrage [...] habe ich mit den übrigen Herren der Nordischen Auslandsinstitute, Prof. Dr. Paul und Dr. Grellmann, durchgesprochen. Wenn wir auch grundsätzlich starke Bedenken gegen die Tätigkeit der Nordischen Gesellschaft haben, und auch nicht darüber hinwegsehen können, dass wir ihre Tätigkeit durch die uns zugedachte Propaganda fördern, so würden wir an sich doch diese Bedenken zurückstellen, wenn die uns angebotene Gegenleistung einigermaßen diskutabel ist.” – Magon to Klein (Nordic Society, Kontor Stettin), 05/07/1937, UAG IfF 61.
In a stroke similar to that of the Nordic Society, Rostock University also attempted to extend its influence. In 1934 it delivered a memorandum about a “Redistribution of Nordic Tasks” to the Ministry of Education, suggesting a complete restructuring of Northern European research. Its suggestion was to create a Nordic Central Institute in Rostock, where contacts with Nordic researchers were to be initiated and managed, while the three German universities with a Nordic profile – Kiel, Rostock and Greifswald – were to establish a division of labour. Kiel would accordingly handle economic research, Rostock law and history, while Greifswald would occupy itself with art and literature. The response from Greifswald showed an unusual unity. Not only did Magon, Paul and Grellmann each give their own lengthy responses with largely identical wording, they also supported Kiel’s autonomy, even though the two Northern German universities were often enough competitors otherwise.64 Personal and professional conflict quickly gave way to cooperation, where the recently won power and autonomy was threatened.

IV.2 Research and Teaching after 1933
Institutionally and financially endowed as they were, the new leaders of Northern European scholarship in Greifswald could also provide their own resources in return. The Third Reich based its political mythology on a Nordic race and its exploits, which gave teaching about Northern European affairs a new importance. In fact, the main goal of Becker’s memorandum, the political activation and schooling of young Germans, which had been neglected due to political and structural obstacles during the Weimar years, was to come to the forefront again, albeit under a different perspective.

Of Vikings and Nordic Alpha Males
– Teaching in the Nordic Area Institutes
As is often the case, any attempt to comprehend developments in the field of academic instruction is faced with a lack of suitable sources. While there is a fairly consistent documentation of the planned teaching in the form of the course books, for the most part only the titles of the teaching activities

64 The responses are documented in UAG IfF 64.
have been handed down to us. In the German tradition of highly individual lecture topics, observing changes in these can afford us insights into at least the general culture of instruction. Nevertheless, how the lecture topics were filled is mostly beyond our grasp, and the long intervals between the semester-long lectures make for a low number of cases.  

This being said, a gradual shift in teaching can be traced going by the course books alone. This comes mostly in the form of topics that, while not inconceivable before 1933, would have been at least unusual. The first indication of this shift was Johannes Paul’s lecture “Nordic Leader Personalities” (Nordische Führergestalten) in winter semester (WS) 1933/34. While, again, the actual content cannot be established anymore, such a title is indicative of a certain zeitgeist being reflected in the teaching activities. The idea of a leader in times of need had been an established trope during the Weimar Republic, and Wolfgang Stammler had already delivered a speech about the ideal of the Germanic leader in 1931, stressing its significance for the present and clamouring for a reinvigoration of the spiritual bond between leaders and followers. Paul’s teaching in that semester, including his course on Nordic Leaders, was cancelled, as the professor was travelling abroad to fulfil his public diplomacy obligations. But it was notoriously repeated, hinting at a positive reception with the audience: Summer Semester (SS) 1936 – Nordic Leader Personalities; SS 1938 – Leader Personalities in Nordic History; SS 1939 – Leader Personalities in North Germanic History. That the idea of national leader personalities became a lens through which to view Nordic History is indicative of the speed with which National Socialist ideologemes were absorbed and appeared in the teaching plan. Paul, who soon after gave “Seminaristic Exercises on the Prelude of the National Revolution” (Seminaristische Übungen zur Vorgeschichte der nationalen Revolution, WS 1933/34) was not alone in this politicization. Especially the General Studies

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65 For a list of all seminars and lectures subsumed under the Nordic Institute / Nordic Area Institute in the course books see Höll 1997, pp. 35–43. For the purposes of the present argumentation, the teaching activities of the directors in their disciplinary functions will be taken into consideration. For Paul that means his teaching in History, for Magon in German Studies. Grellmann was not affiliated to any disciplinary Institute, wherefore he only taught in the Institute for Finland Studies.

lectures (Vorlesungen für Hörer aller Fakultäten) covered explicitly political topics, while at the same time lectures about military matters boomed.67

The reason for this widespread phenomenon is probably twofold: On the one hand, many, especially younger, lecturers might have felt the need to prove their agreement with the line of the new regime, be this out of concern for their future career or a genuine consent. Another point was that, in an academic system where especially the younger lecturers were economically dependent on the income from attendance fees, there was a temptation to cash-in on the political courses that were more or less compulsory for students. Furthermore, the National Socialist students themselves demanded an extension of militarily viable teaching, so far so that they organized the services of a retired major to read about military science.68 The ministry soon felt the need to intervene, reproving the universities for overwhelming the students with too many half-baked courses that only served to bleed them dry for course fees and scare them away.69 At the same time, interest among the students in these courses dissipated, and even lectures on military matters had to be cancelled for lack of attendance.

After this short flowering of political teaching, it was the classical topics of Nordic and Imperial History that dominated Paul’s teaching, be they the Vikings and the Swedish Great Power Period or the History of the German Empire and the Confessional Age. It was not before SS 1936 that Paul began presenting course titles oriented along the lines of National Socialist jargon again, which afterwards made up a large portion of his teaching. Beginning with the aforementioned revival of “Führergestalten” and continuing through “Ethnic Germans Abroad as a Political Factor” (Auslandsdeutsch-tum als politischer Faktor) and “Colonial Policy” (Kolonialpolitik), the peak of this trend was undoubtedly the three-part lecture series, starting WS 1937/38, “Enemies of the Reich” (Feinde des Reiches), culminating in “Enemies of the Reich III: Jews and Freemasons” (Feinde des Reiches III: Juden und Freimaurer). Such auspicious titles leave little doubt about the nature of their content.

The reason for this sudden regrowth of politicized lectures, whose connection to historical scholarship one sometimes strains to imagine, can readily be explained by the rise of the National Socialist Lecturer’s Associa-

67 Eberle 2015, pp. 250f.
68 Eberle 2015, pp. 250.
69 Memorandum by Ministry of Education, 15/12/1933, UAG PhilFak I-379.
tion (*Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Dozentenbund*, NSDDB). Founded from the National Socialist Teacher’s Association (*Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Lehrerbund*) in 1935, the *Dozentenbund* managed to quickly get a hold within the universities, controlling the rise and fall especially of younger academics through a series of mandatory political and paramilitary courses and a strict observation of political suitability in promotion within the academic system. Furthermore, their influence now allowed politicized lectures to be pushed through in large number, even against the will of the more traditional ordinaries.⁷⁰

After the outbreak of the World War Two, the reticence that Paul had shown between 1933 and 1936 was no longer necessary. From here on Paul’s lectures read like an accompaniment to the ongoing war: The invasions of Poland, Denmark and Norway were flanked in the lecture halls by “Power Relationships in the Baltic Sea Region”, the Battle of Britain by a seminar on “Germany and England” (*Deutschland und England*) and the German intervention into the Italian–Greek war found its reflection in “History of the modern Greek state” (*Geschichte des neugriechischen Staates*).⁷¹ This habit of thinking his historical research and teaching in close connection with present-day political problems had long been established in Paul’s career.⁷² That such a shift in emphasis in teaching was made possible, but in no way necessitated, by the coming to power of National Socialism and the *Dozentenbund* is evidenced by a look at Leopold Magon’s lectures. The most politically charged topic that Magon taught on

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⁷¹ SS 1939: “Baltic Sea Questions of Our Day” (Ostseefragen der Gegenwart); WS 1939/40: “Encirclement Policy” (Einkreisungspolitik); 1st Trimester 1940: “The Political Power Play in Northern and Eastern Europe since the World War” (Das politische Kräftespiel in Nord- und Osteuropa seit dem Weltkrieg); 2nd Trimester 1940: “Germany and England” (Deutschland und England, together with Hermann Christern); SS 1941: “History of the modern Greek state” (Geschichte des neugriechischen Staates); WS 1941/42: “War Preparations of Our Enemies” (Kriegsvorbereitungen unserer Gegner); SS 1945: “Hotspots of Baltic Politics” (Brennpunkte der Ostseepolitik) (the last course probably failed to materialize).

⁷² During his tenure at the Herder-Institute in Riga Paul e.g. taught on topics such as the Dominium Maris Baltici, the Genesis of the German National Idea and World History of the Present since the Peace Treaties.
was Knut Hamsun (SS 1934), and even there the implications are limited. Hans Grellmann, even though he only ever taught for three semesters, showed a different profile again. His shift from his home discipline, literary studies, to a sociological viewpoint, is already evident in his teaching. In this regard, he proved probably the best disciple of Eduard Spranger, by teaching not only on general sociological overviews of his subject matter but also on the methodology of Area Studies in general.73

Hardly a surprise is the strong hold that the Germanic trope took on the lectures of the Nordic Area Institutes in the first half of the 1930s. Pre-Historian Theologian Wilhelm Koepp for example tried his hand at the topic “Nordic Belief and German Christian Belief” (Nordischer Glaube und deutscher Christenglaube) in SS 1934. In the same semester, prehistorian Wilhelm Petzsch offered “Prehistory of the Germanic Peoples” (Urgeschichte der Germanen) and “The Nordic Race as Shaper of the German Living Space” (Die nordische Rasse als Gestalter des deutschen Lebensraums) in SS 1937. Other teaching along these lines occurred rather frequently until the war cut down on the teaching staff.74 This trend, to equal-

73 SS 1942: “The Finnish culture and its problems” (Der finnische Kulturkreis und seine Probleme); “On the Method of Area Studies” (Zur Methode des auslandswissenschaftlichen Studiums); “Exercises on German-Finnish Relations” (Übungen zu den deutsch-finnischen Beziehungen) – WS 1942/43: “Introduction to Area Studies” (Einführung in die Auslandskunde); “The Baltic-Finnish Peoples” (Die ostseefinnischen Völker); “Exercises on Finland Studies” (Übungen zur Finnlandkunde) – SS 1943: “Introduction to Area Studies” (Einführung in die Auslandskunde); “Exercises on Area Studies” (Übungen zum auslandskundlichen Studium); “Finland Studies: Political, Cultural and Economical problems of the North-Eastern Region” (Finnlandkunde – politische, kulturelle und wirtschaftliche Probleme des Nordostraumes) – WS 1942/43: “Introduction to Area Studies” (Einführung in die Auslandskunde).

ize Nordic and Germanic matters, does not have the significance that one might be tempted to attribute to it at first glance, but it showcases an interesting development. First of all, the overwhelming majority of Teutontopical courses that appeared under the name of the Nordic Area Institutes were held by scholars that were in no way members of these institutes. Under the provision that any scholar in Greifswald who exhibited an interest in Nordic matters was allowed and invited to announce their lectures as part of the Nordic Area Institutes, it was common for other disciplines to participate in the overarching Nordic theme in this way. Prehistorians such as Wilhelm Petzsch had to a limited extent offered their courses in this framework before 1933. But Prehistory had been a marginal discipline in Greifswald and only experienced an expansion after having been made an independent seminar in 1936. Furthermore, it was Walter Baetke, an eminent scholar of Germanic religiosity, who contributed to the increased appearance of Teutons in the course books during his short tenure in Greifswald. This sudden predominance of Germanic matters can in this regard be considered to be more reflective of changes in other disciplines. Nevertheless this “Aufnordung” of the course books is also indicative of a different approach to Nordic studies from the one dominating within the Nordic Area Institutes. Instead of trying to prove, as Paul,


75 Hohm, Eva: Das Geschichtsstudium an der Ernst Moritz Arndt-Universität im “III. Reich”. Der Einfluss der NS-Ideologie, unpubl. civil service examination paper, Greifswald 2012, pp. 30–32. While the chapter on the Seminar and later Institute for Prehistory is not in all respects well researched, there is little else on this topic.
Magon and Grellmann did in their teaching, a historical and cultural connection between Germany and Scandinavia, the exponents of prehistory postulated an ontological sameness of Germany and Scandinavia on the grounds of a pre-modern heritage. This development indicates a different reading of the Nordic Area Institutes’ functions. Instead of educating the German populace about Nordic matters, as was Becker’s original idea, or working to produce a stronger cultural bond between Germany and the Nordic states, as was practiced since the inception of the Nordic Institute, this third approach styled the North as the better self of the Germans.

Engagement with Scandinavia here became an act of affirmative navel-gazing, a pedagogical instrument to educate a new German feeling of nationality. In a later reckoning with this intellectual current, Munich scholar Otto Höfler summed it up in the following words:

This enthusiasm for Norden was not born out of historical or psychological knowledge of Scandinavian reality, though; one hardly knew anything about that. Rather we shifted our own ideals to Northern Europe. And so this ardour was no political cognition, but rather a self-revelation of German hopes and German dreams that strove to the surface. [...] The earlier standpoint can be phrased thusly: Scandinavianness is purified Germanness or enhanced Germanness; the North is what we wanted to be or needed to become.76

Considering the prevalent zeitgeist, the success of these Nordophile lectures with the students is hardly surprising. Yet, since this development was primarily borne by scholars in Prehistory, it had little institutional impact on the Nordic Area Institutes. Nonetheless it flavoured certain activities of the Area Institutes, such as the exhibition on Swedish folk art and old Swedish farming utensils in the lounge of the Area Institutes that Paul opened in 1936, and whose blood-and-soil politainment had little to do with the social democratic Sweden of the 1930s and 1940s, but reflected the


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romantic notions of unspoilt rural life, projected into Scandinavia, which Höfler referred to.77

Flying Swedes and Church Bells – Developments in Research

An attempt to retrace the ongoing research within the Nordic Area Institutes is faced with even more obstacles than in the case of teaching. This is principally due to the war-time loss of sources. While many processes can be reconstructed using the documentation of other institutions, primarily Vice Chancellor and Curator, this is only possible to a limited degree in the case of research projects, which were not coordinated with the university management to any appreciable degree. Furthermore, the sources hint at an increased occurrence of articles and public lectures, which are difficult to track in detail.

Considering the sizable grey zone effected by the source situation, a general outline is still in evidence. It is for example easily established that the time of the existence of the Nordic Area Institutes is marked by a noticeable lack of larger publications. This is remarkable, as all three directors had proven their ability to finalize large projects before. Only Hans Grellmann managed to publish a noteworthy monograph in 1943,78 whereas his colleagues published nothing more sizable than brochures.79 By comparison, Paul managed to publish 17 monographs and edited volumes between 1920 and 1933, including his three-volume Gustavus Adolphus biography, whereas between 1933 and 1945 his only monograph was a contribution to a handbook.80

The reason for this absence is difficult to ascertain, but three explanations suggest themselves. On the one hand, there are indications that the publication activity turned increasingly towards more immediate media, such as public lectures and articles. Due to their scattered nature and the

77 “Geschenke aus dem Norden”, in: Greifswalder Zeitung, 04/01/1936.
78 Grellmann, Hans: Finnland (=Kleine Auslandskunde, 25/26), Berlin 1943.
lack of a systematic record, it is well-nigh impossible to get a general overview, but at least in the case of Paul it can be shown that his activity focussed more on these smaller products.\textsuperscript{81} Even in the case of Leopold Magon, the documents mention public lectures to a larger extent than previously. That in times of political reorientation the interest of scholars, especially in an institute charged with a political task, would go into more immediate forms of publication, such as articles and lectures, which served to take part in intra-disciplinary and political debates, as well as inform a broader, often lay, audience is at least plausible. On the other hand, much energy of the three directors would also be absorbed by activities outside their direct research interest. The administration of their respective institutions was added to by functions that stemmed from membership in NSDAP-organizations, such as SA and Dozentenbund. Furthermore and primarily, activities connected to public diplomacy became a major occupation for all three directors. Paul in particular increased the frequency of his visits in Sweden, and Magon, too, seems to have increased his communication with Scandinavia. Both now had the possibility to do so, as they were less financially constrained, but this lack of constraint came at the cost of a much increased workload.

What little research did happen was characterized by a trend towards interdisciplinary approaches. An example is given by Johannes Paul’s application for a research project in summer 1935, dubbed “How many Western Pomeranians have Swedish blood in their veins?” (\textit{Wieviel Vorpommern haben schwedisches Blut in ihren Adern?}). In agreement with Günther Just, Professor of Genetics, and Karl Kaiser, head of the Ethnological Archive of Pomerania, Paul proposed an interdisciplinary investigation into the biological heritage of the Swedish occupation of Pomerania. As a first step, he argued, a thorough sifting through of parish registers and muster rolls would be necessary, thereby establishing just how many Swedish soldiers and administrators had settled down in Pomerania after the Thirty Years War and how many of their progeny were still present. In a second step, this progeny could then be analysed along racial biological lines. Parallel to this, ethnologists could examine the specific customs of Western Pomerania in order to see which Swedish elements could still be found there. Such a research project, Paul argued, would not just be of great scholarly and scientific value but would also receive much positive attention

\textsuperscript{81} Nase 2014, pp. 155–157.
in Sweden.\textsuperscript{82} In an interview with a Swedish newspaper in 1938, Paul launched the hypothesis that Anklam’s aviation pioneer Otto Lilienthal was in fact the descendant of a Swedish soldier by the name of Liljedal.\textsuperscript{83} Whether this assumption would survive scrutiny was never revealed, though, since the Swedish Pomerania-project did not produce a tangible publication. Instead, after again exhorting the importance of Pomerania as a historical bridge between Germany and Sweden, Paul explained to another newspaper that he was currently working on a great book about the History of the Baltic Sea Region.\textsuperscript{84} The book only materialized in 1961, if at all.\textsuperscript{85} In a similar vein, Hans Grellmann’s assistant, Fritz Keese, wrote his dissertation about the Finnish peasant house, taking up inspiration from ethnological research strands,\textsuperscript{86} while Icelandic lecturer Eiður Kvaran wrote on “Old Icelandic Feelings for and Fosterage of Kinship in the light of Racial Biology”.\textsuperscript{87} The latter dissertation was written under the joint supervision of Leopold Magon and racial biologist Günther Just, who both considered it an excellent piece of work.\textsuperscript{88}

This interdisciplinary approach, which is most visible in the younger generation, can be explained with the increasing acceptability of racial thought in academic papers. This ethnified interdisciplinarity was not entirely new. Since the 1920s the Volks- und Kulturbodenforschung (Ethnic and Cultural Territory Research) had held a strong niche in German humanities, trying to scientifically prove German claims on territories that had been lost after World War One. Integrating history, ethnology and geography, this research had a strong connection with revanchist networks and thus received

\textsuperscript{82} Paul to Dean of Philosophical Faculty UG (incl. two-page synopsis), 06/06/1935, UAG PA 248, fol. 2.
\textsuperscript{84} Translation “Deutschland interessiert an einem Touristenabkommen mit Schweden. Viele schwedische Erinnerungen in Pommern”, in: Stockholmstidning/Stockholms Dagblad, 29/10/1938, UAG PA 248.
\textsuperscript{85} Assuming that Paul, Johannes: Europa im Ostseeraum, Göttingen 1961, is the eventual fruit of this endeavour.
\textsuperscript{86} Keese, Fritz: Das Bauernhaus in Finnland. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Holzbaues im Ostseeraum, Greifswald 1941.
\textsuperscript{87} Kvaran, Eiður S.: Sippengefühl und Sippenpflege im alten Island im Licht erbbiologischer Betrachtungsweise, Greifswald 1936.
\textsuperscript{88} Magon to REM, 18/02/1936, UAG K633.
Its influence in Greifswald is evident in increased efforts to institutionalize regional Pomeranian studies after 1938, but also in the dissertation of Paul’s assistant, Heinz Krüger. While not Nordic in outlook, the study of Krüger’s home village illustrates the direction this took. While leaning on economic history to trace the development of the village, the work uses every opportunity to romanticize and ethnify its topic, as this passage about the village church’s bell illustrates:

For centuries this bell let its voice of ore sound far across the land. The peasants followed its call to church, to thank their God or to solicit him. In times of war or during a conflagration its cry sounded out to the heavens to lament the misfortune; it shook up the calm, it woke the sleeper, and led them to work. It has been around it. The day’s work started with the sound of the bell and it ended with the sound of the bell. And this bell passed on during the Great War, in the World War it was broken up. It was taken out of the tower. With a blacksmith’s hammer an ore was broken and shattered, that for more than 360 years had sounded the dead to the grave, its voice crying out under the hammer for one last time. And the people who did this deed, they believed in the sacrifice they presented to the nation. This piece of metal, it had blessed the covenant of the generations, it had sounded the dead into eternal peace, this metal should now lead people into death. One will always bring these sacrifices to a nation, else one would be unworthy of belonging to it. But did this sacrifice serve its purpose if it – like so many, many more – fell into the hands of Jewish profiteers?

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90 Documented in UAG PhilFak I-406.

Paul, as assessor, particularly praised the “poetic verve” of this paragraph and, while remarking that the topic might have been a tad broad, still gave it “Very Good”. Similarly, the second assessor, Adolf Hofmeister, declared it to be an analytically devoid collection of facts, but acknowledged effort and patriotism, which made it “Very Good” as well. Krüger’s dissertation serves to illustrate the increasing influence of ethnically and romantically charged views on academic subjects.

That this trend did not reach further has a number of reasons. On the one hand is the above mentioned silence of the pens, necessitated by the high workload of the scholars. Considering that the majority of people who did write in this fashion were younger scholars, the next problem was the strain this put on academic standards. Krüger is not a singular case of sub-par dissertations suddenly becoming acceptable. A prominent case would be the dissertation of linguist, student functionary and later mass-murderer Manfred Pechau. Pechau’s thesis, concerned with the language of National Socialism, was obviously so unsystematic that historian Adolf Hofmeister insisted that he could only approve of its publication if the main supervisors attested in writing that it was in accordance with the disciplinary standards of German Studies. The second supervisor, linguist Franz Dornseiff conceded: “For a student this first attempt is very respectable”. At the same time, he pointed out glaring errors in terminology and systematic shortcomings. Only the liberal application of handwavium by Pechau’s main supervisor, Wolfgang Stammler, allowed the dissertation to pass the Board.

92 Assessment by Paul and Hofmeister about dissertation Krüger, 27/02–09/04/1937, UAG Phil. Diss. II-975.
93 Pechau had acted as Gau Student Leader since 1934 and worked in the Gau Administration at the same time. After his dissertation and civil service exam he took up different positions within Amt Rosenberg and later Reichssicherheitshauptamt. In 1941 he volunteered for front-line service and joined the Einsatzgruppen (task-forces made up of second-line troops, SS, military police and local auxiliaries for anti-partisan duties). In September 1942, he and Einsatzgruppe 2 under his command participated in anti-partisan operation “Sumpffieber” (Swamp Fever, Ague) and killed more 10.000 people in the space of two days alone, the vast majority of them being Jews. See Simon, Gerd: “NS-Sprache aus der Innensicht. Der Linguist Manfred Pechau und die Rolle seines SS-Sonderkommandos bei dem Massenmord in den Sumpfen Weißrusslands”, http://homepages.uni-tuebingen.de/gerd.simon/pechau.pdf [retrieved: 04/11/2013].
of Examiners. This type of relaxation of standards could not become standard, though. Finally and most importantly, this ethnified view, when applied to Scandinavia, did not reflect reality well. Paul had already shown his penchant for glorifying Scandinavian history as essentially German history in the 1920s, and Grellmann followed suit with his overview of Finland in 1943. Leopold Magon was less exposed in this regard, but his work too trended into the direction of underlining the ethnic-psychological relations between Germany and Scandinavia. But this hermeneutic interpretation of Scandinavian-ness, so closely connected to the demands of Eduard Spranger’s memorandum of 1917, proved lacking.

Scandinavian reactions and developments were out of synch with what Greifswald’s, and indeed the vast majority of German students of Northern Europe, would have predicted. Sympathy for National Socialist ideas was already rare in 1933, and the German invasion of Denmark and Norway in 1940 made matters worse. That research did not account for reality was a problem that was quickly perceived, and is reflected in the topics that popped up in the following years. Already in 1938 Günther Falk, then assistant to the Swedish Institute proposed his dissertation to be about the rise of National Socialism and the reaction in the Swedish press, only to discover that two doctoral students from Marburg had already chosen that topic. He instead suggested changing his source base to popular fiction, but did not finish his thesis. In a similar vein, another assistant of Paul, Rosemarie Schwarz, planned to write about the anti-German reversal of Swedish public opinion during the 1920s and 1930s, for which topic she even received a stipend. The topic was quickly thereafter changed to “The State of the Youth Question and the Youth Organizations in Sweden and their relationship with one another” (Stand der Jugendfrage und der Jugendorganisationen in Schweden und deren Beziehungen zueinander), a matter that interested Schwarz immensely because of her own experiences in the Bund Deutscher Mädel, the female offshoot of the Hitlerjugend. Heinz Krüger, when it came time to acquire his final academic qualification, was instructed to write his Habilitation on the

95 Simon: NS-Sprache aus der Innensicht, pp. 4–9. Franz Dornseiff was under eminent political pressure due to a variety of anti-Nazi comments he had passed on before 1933, and consequently had to tread very lightly in political matters.
96 Falk to Curator UG, 06/01/1939, UAG PA 44.
97 File Note Nr. 1948, 09/07/1942, BA R153/1185.
98 Krüger to NOFG, 01/08/1942, BA R153/1185.
99 Krüger to NOFG, 26/08/1943, BA R153/1185.
constitutional development of Sweden since the early modern period.¹⁰⁰ The work never saw the light of day.

What distinguishes these later research projects, apart from the fact that none of them saw publication due to competing obligations of their authors, is that they mark a gradual shift away from a romantic interpretation of Northern Europe. Previous research on Northern Europe had painted an idyllic picture that was easy to combine with National Socialist assumptions of a racially and culturally homogenous society. A revision was only necessary when the increased necessity to understand contemporary Nordic societies appeared during the war. Faced with the fact that conventional explanations failed to explain anything, different approaches were tested. The study of national character, prevalent in the work of Paul and Grellmann, did give way to more sober social scientific research. Another scholar from Greifswald, economist Peter-Heinz Seraphim,¹⁰¹ struck such notes when it came to explaining Scandinavia’s demographic weaknesses:

One can therefore conclude that the decisive factor for the negative fertility development in Northern Europe is neither the biological nor economic preconditions, and neither can the racial composition of this region be blamed, but it depends on intellectual causes and incitements: On the rationalization of the view and way of life, on the rationality of individual mentalities, the discontinuance of religious-moral-traditional ties to the past, on the particularly strong influence that social democratic ideology has had in Northern Europe and on the wish to attain or defend a high outward standard of living at the expense of foregoing offspring.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Application to PuSte, 27/02/1941, BA R153/1185.
¹⁰¹ Seraphim had a spotted career as expert for economic questions of Eastern Europe and worked in a large number of institutions. A protégé of Theodor Oberländer, he wrote his Habilitation in Greifswald in 1940 and in 1943 became director of the Oder-Danube-Institute in Stettin. The institute was affiliated to Greifswald University and liberally financed to scientifically prove the necessity of the Oder-Danube-canal, a building project that would have connected the Baltic Sea and South Eastern Europe. See Grube, Klemens: “Das Stettiner Oder-Donau-Institut im Spannungsfeld von Wirtschaftsinteresse, Wissenschaft und Krieg”, in: Alvermann, Dirk (ed.): “…die letzten Schranken fallen lassen”. Studien zur Universität Greifswald im Nationalsozialismus, Cologne 2015, pp. 202–223. Considering that the financing came from the Gau Economic Chamber in Stettin, it is possible to view Seraphim’s project as a continuation of Gustav Braun’s cooperation with Stettin’s economic circles.
¹⁰² “Man kann daher feststellen, daß die entscheidende Begründung der negativen Geburtenentwicklung im nordeuropäischen Raum nicht in den biologischen und auch nicht in den wirtschaftlichen Voraussetzungen liegt und ebensowenig der Rassenkomponenten dieses Raumes zur Last gelegt werden kann, sondern auf geistigen Ursachen und
Similarly, in what was probably a first attempt to approach the topic of his Habilitation, Heinz Krüger explored the failure of Scandinavism, the political movement to create a stronger cultural and political integration of Denmark, Sweden and Norway. In light of the Russian aggression against Finland, he argued, this movement had faltered and proven itself unable to defend Scandinavian autonomy. Instead, it had adhered to 19th century democratic ideals, which resulted in an ideological dependency on England, and an infiltration by Jews and freemasons, who had close ties with England. Only presently could one witness a revival of political forces that strove for a rapprochement with Germany as a strong bastion against the Soviet threat.\textsuperscript{103} Krüger failed to deliver any proof for either a Jewish–Masonic conspiracy or a Germanophile rethinking in Scandinavia, but his argumentation did take another turn. Where previous interpretations of a racial community had failed to account for reality, he – like Seraphim – proposed a politological explanation, even if the tenets of National Socialist ideology still coloured his assessment.

Note that Grellmann still held on to the heuristic of Finnish national psychology in his 1943 book, while his assistant wrote on an ethnological topic in 1941. This indicates that it was the shock of sudden public rejection that jolted the scholars of Scandinavia out of their complacency. The scholars of Finland – brother in arms against the Soviet Union – did not experience this culture shock to such a degree. It is again Otto Höfler to whom we can turn to illustrate this point. In the already quoted speech in the \textit{Reichssicherheitshauptamt}, Höfler declared:

\begin{quote}
The political contact with Scandinavia since 1940 has shaken the “Nordic Thought” in us Germans. The disappointment that the Scandinavians were and are more hostile towards us than Japanese, Indians and Arabs, has not only confounded the German ideal of Scandinavia, but it has in turn also affected the
\end{quote}

\textit{Triebfedern beruht: Auf der Rationalisierung der Lebensausschüttung und der Lebensäußerungen, auf der Rechenschaftigkeit der Gesinnung der einzelnen, und auf dem Fortfall der religiös-sittlich-traditionellen Bindungen der Vergangenheit, auf dem Einfluß, den die sozialdemokratische Gesinnungsweise in so besonders starkem Maße in Nordeuropa genommen hat, auf dem Wunsch, auf unter Preisgabe jeder Nachkommenschaft einen äußerlich hohen Lebensstandard zu erreichen oder zu behaupten.”} – Seraphim, Peter-Heinz: “Der Geburtenrückgang in Nordeuropa” (revised draft for “Jomsburg”), p. 14, 04.03.1943, BA R153/1583. Seraphim had previously noted that the alleged racial unity of Scandinavia was not borne by evidence, and thus could do little further understanding of current Nordic mentality.

\textsuperscript{103} Krüger, Heinz: “Der letzte skandinavistische Versuch und die Ursachen seines Versagens”, in: Jomsburg, 1/1941, pp. 102–114.
Teutonic view on our own history. The ideas of Race and Pan-Germanism, the völkisch idea itself, has become insecure, and the “Scandinavian disappointment” has possibly struck us deeper than the declaration of war from England and the USA – consciously or semi-consciously.104

The cure for this misunderstanding was thus an engagement with present-day Scandinavia and its political and cultural mechanisms. How this more sociological, present-oriented research trend would have played out is left to speculation, though, since research effectively came to a stop during the war years.105

The Will to Political Relevance – Junior Academics

The younger scholars who introduced this new paradigm were a novelty in the history of the Nordic Institute. The ascension of National Socialism and the concurrent interest in Nordic matters increased the interest in a career in Nordic Studies, but first and foremost it was the creation of actual opportunities which drew in younger scholars. Dissertations had been written on Nordic topics before 1933, but with the Nordic Institute only

104 “Durch die politische Berührung mit Skandinavien seit 1940 ist bei uns Deutschen der “nordische Gedanke” ins Wanken geraten. Die Enttäuschung darüber, daß die Skandinavier uns ablehnender gegenüberstanden und -stehen als Japaner, Inder oder Araber, hat nicht bloß das deutsche Skandinavien-Ideal verwirrt, sondern es hat auch zurückgewirkt auf die germanische Auffassung unserer eigenen Geschichte. Das völkische Denken selbst, der Rassegedanke und die gesamtgermanische Idee sind unsicher geworden, und vielleicht noch gefährlicher als die Kriegserklärung Englands und der USA ist die “skandinavische Enttäuschung” unseren eigenen germanischen Idealen ans Mark gegangen – bewußt und halbbewußt.” – Höfler, Otto: “Die Entwicklung der geistigen Lage in Skandinavien”. (Presentation on the Conference of Department III RSHA, 23/11/1942, BA BDC PA Höfler, fol. 240–274), http://homepages.uni-tuebingen.de/gerd.simon/hoeflerentwicklung.pdf [retrieved: 24/10/2013]. It is striking that Höfler, to explain the reasons for Scandinavian reticence, chose to give the assembled SS-functionaries an overview over Scandinavian constitutional development since the Napoleonic Wars. Since Krüger’s thesis was financed by the NOFG, where Höfler held a position as a leading expert on Scandinavia, it is equally possible that Krüger’s thesis about the same topic was instigated by Höfler or that Höfler received material from Greifswald. Höfler himself had been strongly Teutonic before 1940, and his speech was at least partly aimed at claiming that he had never been wrong about the political situation in the North.

105 Hans Manfred Bock traces a similar development in French studies, even though the shock of war-time contact was less pronounced, and the shift to a social scientific approach consequently took longer. See Bock, Hans Manfred: “Von der geisteswissenschaftlichen Frankreichdeutung zur sozialwissenschaftlichen Frankreichforschung”, in: Schild, Joachim (ed.): Länderforschung, Ländervergleich und Europäische Integration (=Neue Ludwigsburger Beiträge, 1) Ludwigsburg 1991, pp. 50–61.
existing as a loose association of professors, the thesis would have to be supervised by the disciplinary institutes and the following academic career, if any, would have to happen within the confines of the home discipline. As such, interdisciplinary Northern European Studies could become part of an individual profile, but it could not be a career. This changed in the years following 1933. As Figure 1 shows, the years from 1933 to 1938 saw a sharp increase in dissertations on Nordic topics. These numbers need to be taken with a grain of salt, considering first the small absolute numbers involved and second the fact that a sizable number of theses came from disciplines such as geography, palaeontology and economics, where cultural and regional aspects were of subordinate importance. Nevertheless, the year 1933 heralded many unprecedented opportunities for young scholars of Northern Europe in Greifswald.

Figure 1: Number and Discipline of Published Doctoral Theses concerning Nordic topics at Greifswald University, 1910–1945

With Paul’s tenure in Riga, the position of assistant to the Nordic Institute had become available and was filled in for by Hans Grellmann (1930/31),

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Wilhelm Heinsohn (1931/1932) and Otto Fingerhut (1933). With the establishment of the Nordic Area Institutes the assistant’s position changed its name but remained essentially the same and continued to be held by Fingerhut until he left Greifswald in early 1937. But Fingerhut’s farewell marked a shift in the character of young academics in the Nordic Area Institutes: Grellmann, Heinsohn and Fingerhut, who had all been hired under the aegis of Leopold Magon, had received their academic spurs on classically philological topics.\textsuperscript{107} While by no means averse to National Socialism and political activity, they were far from strong exponents of that movement. Fingerhut had, for example, co-authored a textbook of Icelandic together with the strongly National Socialist-leaning lecturer of Icelandic, Eiður Kvaran,\textsuperscript{108} and penned two articles for the student publication “Für den deutschen Geist” (\textit{Für den deutschen Geist}),\textsuperscript{109} a flanking event for the book burnings in Greifswald. On the other hand, he had only joined the SA in 1933 and seems not to have joined the NSDAP, at least not until 1935.\textsuperscript{110}

Beginning with Fingerhut’s successor, Günther Falk, the assistants began exhibiting a different political profile. Falk had studied in Greifswald since 1930, with stints in Lund (1932/33) and Stockholm (1934–36), and had worked as student assistant in the Swedish Institute since 1933.\textsuperscript{111} But beside his academic advancement, Falk had a second career as one of Pomerania’s most highly placed NS student functionaries. A card-holding member of NSDAP and SA since 1929, he had regularly held positions of trust within the student corps and taken over tasks on behalf of the party, even during his stays in Sweden. In the student corps, he supervised foreign affairs and worked in the Greifswald branch of the German Academic Exchange Service (\textit{Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst}). For the Party Board of

Examination for the Protection of NS Literature (Parteiamtliche Prüfungskommission zum Schutze des NS-Schrifttums) he was tasked with the observation of Scandinavian literature. From January 1937, when he took office in the Nordic Area Institutes, to October 1939 Falk also acted as Provincial Student Leader Pomerania (Gaustudentenführer Pommern) and Head of Greifswald’s student corps, a position that he inherited from the aforementioned Jürgen Sönke. It is worth noting that Falk had also headed the Nordic Department of the Student Corps and published the German–Nordic Review, which had been pivotal in ousting Stellan Arvidson and marginalizing Leopold Magon. The fact that Paul chose the enterprising and politically preoccupied Falk to be his assistant is, therefore, suspicious, all the more so since Falk was willing to admit that he was unable to focus his energies on his academic work. The workload of his political functions was not conducive to his academic advancement and, sensing this, Falk retired from his posts in 1939 to focus on his dissertation. This sacrifice was to no avail, though, as shortly afterwards Falk was involved in a severe traffic accident and the resulting injuries kept him from resuming his research until 1940, when he was called up to assist the occupation forces in Norway.

While Falk had officially held the position of Assistant of the Nordic Area Institutes, he had clearly been Paul’s favourite and primarily assisted in the Swedish Institute. Heinz Krüger, Falk’s functional successor, consequently laboured under the title of Assistant of the Swedish Institute, making the marginalization of Leopold Magon official, who had now also nominally lost his assistant. Having stood in for Falk in his capacity as student assistant in the Swedish Institute from 1937 to 1939, Krüger’s position had been officially upgraded to assistant of the Swedish Institute in 1939. Since Falk’s position was not reoccupied, that meant that to all intents and purposes Krüger became the senior assistant in the Nordic Area Institutes. Like Falk, Krüger had also held a sizable NSDAP career. He was an “Alter Kämpfer” as well, having joined the NSDStB in 1931 and the NSDAP the year after. He had mostly been active within the Hitlerjugend, advancing to Gaustellenleiter (Regional Level Department Head) before transferring to the student corps. From summer 1935 on he supervised the

112 Paul to Rector UG, 05/01/1937, UAG PA44.
113 Falk to Curator UG, 06/01/1939, UAG PA44.
114 Karl Reschke (NSDDB, Gaudozentenbundsführer) to NSDAP-Provincial Leadership Pomerania, 31/08/1939, UAG R190.
dormitory (Stammhaus) and press office of the NSDStB in Greifswald and took over the position of Regional Education Commissioner (Gauschuleitung) and Regional Director of the National Professional Competition of Students (Gauwettbewerbsleiter des Reichsberufswettbewerbes der Studenten). Krüger had long been overshadowed by Falk, who held the more prestigious NS-positions and also occupied the assistant’s position. Nevertheless, Krüger, in contrast to his predecessor, managed to finish his studies in 1935 and his dissertation in 1936.

Krüger’s successor was Rosemarie Schwarz, whose position was paid for by the Nord- und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (NOFG). While not officially an assistant of any capacity, Schwarz, about whose biography the sources are capriciously silent, began work in the Swedish Institute around 1939. She first worked as administrator in Paul’s press observation-service, but effectively took over the functions of the assistant after Krüger had left for his posting in Stockholm in 1944. Schwarz also prepared for an academic career, but her work in the institute precluded the finishing of her thesis, even though she managed to enrol in Uppsala for one semester.

The other person, apart from Krüger, to finish his dissertation in the Nordic Area Institutes was Fritz Keese, assistant to Hans Grellmann. Keese had worked in the Finnish Institute since the beginning of the 1930s, and even though the sources are sparing, seems to have taken his National Socialist duties seriously. While not as prolific an activist as Falk or Krüger he was an NSDAP-member and, as mentioned, considered the Kalevala and Hans F.K. Günther’s Racial Atlas of Europe the most important works on his literature list. Keese was a very close collaborator of his mentor and assisted in many of the projects that the Finnish Institute handled, until he was deployed to Army-service in Finland in 1941.

Looking through the assembled careers of the junior personnel in the Nordic Area Institutes shows a number of developments. First of all, and most obviously, all the assistants had a pronounced National Socialist profile. Keese, Fingerhut and Heinsohn were not averse to National Socialism, but after 1934, when Paul first became managing director and subsequently

115 This was also financially important, since Falk’s meagre salary of 150 RM was further split up to allow the employment of Krüger for 50 RM per month.
116 Krüger to NOFG, 26/08/1943, BA R153/1185. It is, on the other hand, not certain if she managed to actually study in Uppsala.
117 Personnel Sheet Fritz Keese, 04/04/1941, Phil. Diss. II-1094.
118 Grellmann to Curator UG, 22/02/1943, UAG IfF 118.
monopolized the assistant’s position for his institute, the political charge in
the institutes increased dramatically. With Günther Falk and Heinz Krüger,
Paul had two prominent NS student functionaries in Pomerania in his
employ. This reflected in the networks these political prodigies brought with
them, giving the Swedish Institute contact with a number of regional and
subordinate supra-regional NS organizations. The fact that Paul was
requested for the War Effort of the Students (Kriegseinsatz der Studenten-
schaft)\(^{119}\) and the Swedish Institute gave language courses in SS-Order
Castles\(^{120}\) was probably due to these connections.

On the other hand, the term Nordic would be expected to attract
students of a certain political conviction. It is evident that the general
interest in Nordic topics did increase, and even if the small number of cases
tends to exaggerate trends, a sudden rise in dissertation numbers between
1932 and 1936 is evident. Another noticeable trend is that this new genera-
tion of Norden-interested students brought with them a will to political
relevance. The dissertations in the Swedish Institute in particular became
increasingly involved with the ongoing public diplomacy-efforts in
Scandinavia. Krüger’s, study of the constitutional development of Sweden,
Falk’s investigation into the Swedish press and their reaction to National
Socialism and Schwarz’s foray into the Swedish youth organizations are all
directly connected to ongoing discussions within the Nord- und Ostdeutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft about their efforts to convince Sweden of
Germany’s foreign policy. Another example, though something of an out-
lier, is Wolfgang Müller. An articulated clerk, he had, like Rosemarie Schwarz,
received a scholarship by the NOFG in 1941 to research the state of Swedish
expatriates, especially in the US.\(^{121}\) His dissertation project was stopped dead
by Paul’s and Krüger’s assessment that his work, as far as it had got, was of
so low quality that it could not even be circulated within the NOFG, let
alone published. He was finally fired in the summer of 1942.\(^{122}\)

\(^{119}\) Dr. Bähr (Reichstudentenschaft) to Rector UG, 20/01/1940, UAG R988.
\(^{120}\) In 1943 Krüger had already been sent to Castle Falkenburg am Krössinsee as a
lecturer, and in 1944 the Swedish Institute held a course about Scandinavian questions
for SS-cadets there. The core of the programme was a language course, held by
Rosemarie Schwarz, while Paul and Krüger gave additional lectures. See Krüger to
Curator UG, 24/06/1943, UAG PA 4229, and Materials about Johannes Paul, compiled
by Gabriele Sokoll, UAG NEW 72.
\(^{121}\) Krüger to NOFG, 26/01/1943, BA R153/1185.
\(^{122}\) Krüger to PuSte, 01/08/1942, BA R153/1185.
This trend, that none of the politically relevant dissertations saw the light of day, is most enlightening if one holds them side by side with the dissertations that were actually finished. It cannot be said that Heinz Krüger and Fritz Keese, who finished their theses, had a smaller workload at the time of their writing. Indeed, Fritz Keese was probably buried under a mountain of work in 1940, when he finished his dissertation.\footnote{Due to the ongoing translation- and press observation-services that the Finnish Institute was doing for the Wehrmacht in 1939/40.} What differentiates Krüger’s and Keese’s dissertations from the unfinished ones is that both were strictly within the confines of a discipline. Krüger’s thesis, despite its poetic extravagance, was still an acceptable historical study, while Keese’s study of Finnish peasant houses was firmly ethnological. Consequently, the research had a terminology, theory and previous research corpus to relate to. Even Icelandic lecturer Eiður Kvaran, who had decided to establish his dissertation between literary studies and genetics, had an academic framework to anchor his work on. On the other hand, Falk and Schwarz could not formulate any such framework for their studies. None of the documents that mention the theses hints what disciplinary toolset was to be used, or what limitation or viewpoint was to be employed. In fact, Rosemarie Schwarz mentions that her investigation suffered from not finding suitable material, despite all the support she received.\footnote{Krüger to NOFG, 26/01/1943, BA R153/1185.} This would not be unexpected, since the lack of a clear disciplinary framework would have made the process of writing and analysing challenging. Questions and limitations, theory and methods would be difficult to define, and, finally, the product would be hard to accept in academia. As such, a lack of suitable sources would be an expected side-effect of an unclear disciplinary classification. Furthermore, it can be expected that the rapid political developments would have made the work of coming to useful and academically valid findings difficult, all the more so for younger scholars.

IV.3 Foreign Contacts and Public Diplomacy

The Nordic Area Institutes received a strong mandate for public diplomacy, when they were instituted in 1933. The problem, though, was that the political development in Germany was not universally appreciated in Scandinavia. While a number of intellectuals publically expressed sympathy
for the “New Germany”, the majority opinion was less favourable. Particularly among Swedish academics, who had close ties to German universities, National Socialism came as a shock. It was, wrote Lund’s lecturer in Latin, Gerhard Bendz in February 1933, “[…] disturbing to see how this wonderful people (the German), standing on the peak of what our time has to present in terms culture and science, can be so hopelessly retarded politically.”\(^{125}\) Especially Lund, which had an ongoing cooperation with Greifswald, saw a heated debate about how to interpret events on the other side of the Baltic Sea. But while some, such as literary historian Frederik Böök, took a pro-German stance and expressed fascination for its vitalism and radicalness as much as for its anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism, the majority of scholars there soon distanced themselves from National Socialism and its ideas.\(^{126}\) In other universities and the mainstream press, objections against the “New Germany” were even stronger.\(^{127}\)

Thus, the initial position for the public diplomacy of the Nordic Area Institutes was not good, as vocal pro-German or, more precisely, Pro-National Socialist Scandinavians were a minority. This presented a serious stumbling block in German–Scandinavian relationships on the one hand, but, on the other, also created an urgent need for public diplomacy efforts, especially towards Sweden.

The first sign of a growing distance of significant parts of Swedish cultural and academic life already became obvious in 1933. When Paul opened his new Swedish Institute with a ceremonial act on November 11\(^{th}\) 1933, only one Swedish representative was present, Paul’s old friend and supporter Vilhelm Lundström. Historian Sven Tunberg, who had also been invited, cancelled his participation, and Lundström too was unsure as to how his presence would

\(^{125}\) “beklämmande att behöva äse hur detta underbara folk (det tyska), som i kulturellt och vetenskapligt avseende står på höjdpunkten av vad vår tid kan prestera, i politiskt avseende är så ohjälpligt efterblivet.” – Quoted after Oredsson, Sverker: Lunds universitet under andra världskriget. Motsättningar, debatter och hjälpinsatser (=Årsbok/Lunds Universitetshistoriska Sällskap) Lund 1996, p. 23.

\(^{126}\) Oredsson 1996.

be viewed. He consequently did not partake of the preceding Lucia celebration that was supposed to herald the two “Swedish Days”¹²⁸ that Paul had planned, and gave his opening lecture not, as planned, about the Swedish academic landscape but rather about Ethnic Swedes Abroad.¹²⁹ This way he could, if need be, argue that his participation was solely in his function as head of the Riksförening. Equally, a “Baltic Week” in Stettin, which the Area Institutes had planned as a major cultural event, had to be cancelled due to bad weather and the general political situation.¹³⁰ Considering that November in Pomerania is not known for its sunshine, it is likely that the general political situation was the determining factor.¹³¹

Handing out Laurels – Academic Honours as a Foreign Cultural Political Tool

One method to hold contact with friends and sympathisers in the North was offering them possibilities to associate publicly with the Third Reich. Here again, it was Paul who developed most activity: In late 1933 he attempted to create the title of Honorary Member of the Swedish Institute. The recipients under consideration, Vilhelm Lundström¹³² and Major Max Schürer von Waldheim, had to be put off, though, because the Curator brusquely rejected Paul’s idea, obviously to draw a line against an inflationary use of academic honours.¹³³ The same went for other venues. While Paul managed, in cooperation with Adolf Hofmeister, to launch an honorary doctorate for Lund’s historian Gotfrid Carlsson,¹³⁴ who stood in an

¹²⁸ Paul to Lundström, 30/12/1933, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling.
¹²⁹ Paul to Lundström, 16/11/1933, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling.
¹³⁰ Paul to Lundström, 26/10/1933, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling, Magon to Schwarz van Berk (Editor of Pommersche Zeitung), 11/11/1933, and Schwarz van Berk to Magon, 14/11/1933, UAG K631.
¹³¹ The political situation surrounding this event was not necessarily limited to international politics. Preliminary planning for the event must have begun in 1932, when Magon was still fully in charge, and it would be unlikely that Gustav Braun and his connections to the local ship-owners were not involved as well. The changed personnel situation and the discussion around Arthur Kunstmann would have made going ahead with the plan somewhat embarrassing.
¹³² Lundström had just prior to this iteration enabled Paul’s promotion to corresponding member of Riksföreningen för Svenkshetens Bevarande i Utlandet. See Paul to Lundström, 30/12/1933, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling.
¹³³ Correspondence between Paul and REM via Curator UG, 23/11/1933 and 09/12/1933, UAG K636.
¹³⁴ Dean of Philosophical Faculty UG to REM, 09/12/1943, UAG R461.
especially exposed position due to his commitment to National Socialism, this remained a singular case. National Socialist circles had cultivated a distaste for this bourgeois mark of favour, which hindered its widespread use.\textsuperscript{135} Much easier to establish was the appointment of guest lecturers, a practice that started already in 1933. That year the Swedish military historian Major Max Schürer von Waldheim lectured on the naval military history of Gotland, a course that was seemingly well-liked by students with a military interest. For the following year Paul recruited theologian Sigfrid von Engeström and for 1935/36 art historian Helge Kjellin.\textsuperscript{136} The guest lectureships seem to have been discontinued after 1936/37, when linguist Nils Törnquist held the office.\textsuperscript{137} It is not implausible that the generous grants of 600 RM per annum that the Ministry of Education chipped in simply produced too few tangible political results. Indeed, while Schürer von Waldheim was a founding member and prominent writer for Sam-fundet Manhem (Manhem Society), a right-wing association that proposed a Gothicist reading of history, said society was deemed so amateurish even by the Nordic Society in Lübeck, that it was inconsequential to German-Swedish relations.\textsuperscript{138} Törnquist, of whom Paul reported that he was “definitely nationalist and pro-German. He hails from Småland peasant stock and should therefore be purely Aryan”,\textsuperscript{139} was similarly without political weight. Von Engeström was spokesman of the conservative Uppsala youth organization Föreningen Heimdal (Heimdal Society), but under pressure from Christian and liberal forces within the society, the leadership could not enforce a radicalization in favour of National Socialism.\textsuperscript{140} This was just as well, since Paul himself seems to have understood the function of the guest lectureships less as a propagandistic


\textsuperscript{136} Paul to REM, 01/02/1936, UAG K636.

\textsuperscript{137} Paul to REM, 10/03/1937, UAG K636.


\textsuperscript{139} “ausgeprägt nationalistisch und deutschfreundlich. Er stammt aus smäländischem Bauernblut, dürfte also rein arisch sein” – Paul to REM, 10/03/1937, UAG K636.

\textsuperscript{140} Larsmo, Ola: ”Djävulssonaten”. Ur det svenska hatets historia, Stockholm 2007.
instrument and more as a way of enhancing the scope of teaching. Schürer von Waldheim was one of the first to lecture on military studies – a long-standing demand of the students– and von Engeström was supposed to help extend the theological courses at the university. Törnquist was to enrich the planned Swedish-Pomeranian project with dialectology, for which also Waldemar Ljungman was invited. Only when Paul requested the appointment of Vilhelm Lundström in 1937 was the aim to publicly honour an old friend of the institute in the foreground.

**Guest Lectures**

While the political function of the guest lecturers was peripheral, and they were actually involved in research and teaching, this was not true of the one-time guest lectures. Being cheaper to organize and more prone to also attract a wider audience, they showed a more pronounced profile. The political developments in Germany after the National Socialist takeover had made it a litmus test for Scandinavian academics to publicly associate with a German university, and they consequently exhibited a rather reserved attitude. Especially the years up to 1935 show a marked decline in guest lectures, despite a modest increase in funds for these events.

The social pressure on academically trained Scandinavians to abstain from public association with Germany was relatively high, something that only gradually changed towards the middle of the 1930s. On the one hand, the regime in Berlin managed to establish itself as a respectable government, on the other, the political-social landscape in Scandinavia, especially Sweden, changed a little, allowing for pro-German positions to be taken without necessarily entailing ostracism. New organizations, such as

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141 Paul to Lundström, 14/04/1934, GUB Vilhelm Lundströms brevsamling.
142 See also Garberding, Petra: Vetenskap mellan diktatur och demokrati. Svensk och tysk folklivsforskning i skuggan av nazismen och kalla kriget, Malmö 2015, pp. 107–112.
143 Paul to REM, 10/03/1937, UAG K636. Lundström never received his guest lecture position, though. The project seems to have petered out before he could be appointed.
144 A complete list of guest lectures can be found in Höll 1997, pp. 44–46.
145 The development of foreign opinion, especially in the traditionally more Germany-oriented Sweden, roughly corresponds with the development of German opinion established by Aly, Götz (ed.): Volkes Stimme. Skepsis und Führervertrauen im Nationalsozialismus, Frankfurt a. M. 2006. Aly concludes that Hitler’s government enjoyed the most confidence by the German people in the years between 1935, when the regime had finished the turbulent and often violent takeover, and 1938, when more daring foreign political strokes threatened war in Europe.
the *Riksförening Sverige-Tyskland* of 1937, initiated by old friends of Johannes Paul, such as historian Gotfrid Carlsson and racial biologist Herman Lundborg, and the radicalization of older associations, such as the *Svensk-Tyska Förening*, allowed friends of National Socialism to gather and gave them a certain degree of social protection when appearing in Germany. Consequently, the following years saw a rise in Swedish and Norwegian guests. In late 1935 Paul could announce the visits of Professor Walter of *Svensk-Tyska Sällskap* in Uppsala for October 31, and only a month later the famous explorer Sven Hedin. For Hedin’s appearance in Greifswald was the only one in a small German town, underlining the importance of Paul’s connections. For the spring of 1936 Paul even planned to present Countess Fanny von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, sister of Carin Göring and, like her, an avowed National Socialist. Exponents of National Socialist and far-right movements in Sweden consequently dominated the guest list in the Swedish Institute. Explorer Count Eric von Rosen, co-founder of *Nationalsozialistiska Blocket*, Lund’s historian Gotfrid Carlsson, “the only acting Swedish academic known to me, who calls himself a National Socialist” or Erik Wellander, German scholar at Stockholm University, were the rule, from which less politically charged persons, such as runic scholar Elias Wessén, Sami-scholar Maja Wickbom or Paul’s old patron Vilhelm Lundström were the exception. A short look at Paul’s list of intended speakers for 1938, presented to the ministry, makes his methods of selection clear: All three candidates, publicist Rudger Essén, military historian Lieutenant-Colonel Torsten Wennerström and physician Torsten Sjögren, were recommended with their positive attitude towards Germany. Essén and Wennerström had been Red Cross delegates and active in Russian POW camps during World War One, whereas Sjögren received a more concrete and telling rationale:

146 For a short overview of Hedin’s propagandistic activities for Germany, see Thulstrup 1962, pp. 139–147.
148 “Sven Hedin in Greifswald”, in Pommersche Zeitung, 29.10.1935.
149 “der einzige mir bekannte aktive schwedische Hochschullehrer, der sich selbst als Nationalsozialist bezeichnet” – Paul to REM, 03/02/1936, UAG K636.
150 Wellander penned reports from Germany for Svenska Dagbladet and exhibited more than just sympathy in these articles, earning an honorary doctorate from Heidelberg University in the process.
Dr. Torsten Sjögren, leading physician from Göteborg, has been eligible as successor to famous racial biologist Prof. Lundborg in Uppsala and was considered the most competent applicant by the national camp. He was defeated by a Jewish competitor. He is considered one of Sweden’s most prominent racial biologists and I would like to give him the opportunity to speak before an audience abroad, especially since he has been pushed aside by the Jews.151

Apart from highlighting Paul’s anti-Semitic attitude, this argumentation also shows the intended function of the guest lectures. Swedes who publicly avowed themselves to National Socialist Germany were to be valorized in an intra-Swedish context, thereby breaking their isolation and increasing the chance of them continuing to work in favour of Germany.

In the long run, these measures were not successful. The report on foreign guest lecturers for 1944 affords a good look at the categories of people who followed the invitation of the Swedish Institute. First there were the old friends of Paul, whose appearance had the greatest consistency. Apart from Vilhelm Lundström, who did not appear in 1944, this would, for example, be the former Lecturer of Swedish and toponymologist, Gunnar Drougge.152 The second and most important group were National Socialists or at least people who chose to publicly support the “New Germany”. Apart from the well-known names of Sven Hedin and Frederik Böök, 1944 saw the appearance of linguist Ernst A. Meyer and Finnish writer Ellen Klatt, both avowed National Socialists. A third group that only really joined the list during the war was young Swedish academics, for whom the prestige of lecturing and even teaching at a German university outweighed the possible ostracism in Sweden, even though their internal distance from the reigning regime cannot have been prohibitively high. In 1944, archaeologist Count Erik Oxenstierna and physician Olof Ljunghusen made their appearance in Greifswald. The latter, not lecturing on a very enticing topic, had come to

152 Paul actually admitted in his report to the ministry that Drougge was no National Socialist by far, but a friend of Germany nonetheless, see Paul to Philosophical Faculty, 18/07/1944, UAG R461. Indeed, Drougge was still invited 30 years later for Paul’s 80th birthday. (Seating plan for birthday party, 1971, DHM – Document Collection – Bequest Johannes Paul).
Greifswald via the mediation of Lecturer in Swedish Åke Ohlmarks, who can be considered to fall into the same category. While Ohlmarks had expressed sympathies for National Socialism before 1945, he was less of an avid follower and more an opportunist.  

Oxenstierna, on the other hand, had been in contact with Paul and Carl Engel, fellow archaeologist and Vice Chancellor of Greifswald University, before. Oxenstierna had only moved to Greifswald after his home in Berlin had suffered bomb damage. He was not the only prominent Swede to follow Paul’s invitation to come to Greifswald. Swedish writer Clara Nordström, who published the journal of the National socialistiska Arbetareparti from Germany, moved to Greifswald in 1941 to do research for a new novel.  

The above categories can to a large degree be applied to the other Nordic countries as well. There is a limitation, though, in that not all of the guest lectures were initiated by Greifswald scholars. Sometime in 1936, the Nordic Area Institutes had lost their budget for foreign lecturers, and while universities had invited foreign scholars individually before, the Ministry of Propaganda now deemed it prudent that a) a central political background check was run on every lecturer, and b) a lecturer, once invited, would speak on different occasions to make better use of limited resources. Consequently, from 1937 onward the lecturers, even if they had been invited by the Nordic Area Institutes, had to be fed into the system of the Deutsche Kongresszentrale (German Congress Centre), which administered foreign academic contacts at the behest of the Ministry of Propaganda. The visits of Nordic speakers in particular were organized by the Nordic Society, with which cooperation was often difficult. Despite the centralized vetting, mistakes could happen. When in summer 1942 Bo Alander lic.phil. gave a lecture on a musical topic the reporting lists that were to be sent to the ministries contained the summary “scientifically insignificant lecture.

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154 Paul to Philosophical Faculty UG, 18/07/1944, UAG R461.

155 Christern (by proxy of Paul) to Rector UG, 28/05/1941, UAG R190.

156 Grellmann to Curator UG, 21/01/1937, UAG K640.

157 There is little actual research on the Kongresszentrale apart from a short chapter in Herren, Madeleine: Internationale Organisationen seit 1865. Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Organisation, Darmstadt 2010, pp. 73f.
Politically unreliable”\textsuperscript{158} including the special remark “Later ascertained that speaker is contributor of the social democratic hate sheet ‘Arbetet’ in Malmö”\textsuperscript{159} Consequently, nobody would put his name into the field marked “Has special personal contact with speaker” in the reporting list. And while the reporting sheets give us some information about the speaker, including which of the local scholars had personal relations with him or her, they do not enlighten us as to whose initiative they were invited upon. Paul’s proposals for speakers to be invited are still in existence, but Magon and Grellmann have left no such sources.

Some educated guesses can be made as to which guests were invited by the Nordic Area Institutes, though. Magon, for one, exhibited little initiative in inviting scholars or pushing for their academic honours. Danish and Norwegian scholars hardly made up half of the list of visitors, and the majority of these seems not to have been invited upon Magon’s request. Obvious Germany-friendly scholars, such as jurist Herman Harris Aall, representing Oslo University as much as the \textit{Nasjonal Samling}, or racial biologist Jon Alfred Mjöen, likewise Oslo, came at the behest of the Nordic Society in Lübeck, whereas Magon’s choice seems to have been German scholars from his own field of interest, such as linguists Arthur Arnholtz and German scholar A.C. Höjberg Christensen. And while official German interest in Finland was generally low until around 1942, Grellmann could work with the congruence of interests between Germany and Finland to promote his invitations. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the Finnish guests include in large part personalities with whom Grellmann claimed to have good personal relations, such as historian-poet Veikko Antero Koskenniemi, author Maila Talvio and mathematician Rolf Nevanlinna.

Correspondence and Visits in the North

One method to keep in touch with friends and sympathisers in the North were private contacts. These had the advantage of ensuring that Scandinavian partners were not drawn into conflicts they were not willing to fight publicly and the disadvantage of not affecting public opinion very much. How and with whom these contacts were maintained is difficult to establish.

\textsuperscript{159} “Wie nachträglich festgestellt, Mitarbeiter des soz.-dem. Hetzblattes ‘Arbetet’ in Malmö” – Reporting list on foreign speakers, re: Sweden, 06/08/1942, UAG R461.
Apart from sporadic letters that were preserved to demonstrate one or the other development in German–Scandinavian relations, none have been handed down to us. Paul alone gives us a certain overview of his contacts in the extensive travelogues that he handed in to the ministry every once in a while, even though the identities of Paul’s conversation partners are hardly ever mentioned.

Paul’s case is special in that his contacts seem primarily to have come from the conservative political field, which is why he often tended to misjudge the political opinion in Sweden. Such misjudgements, for illustration purposes, began immediately with the assumption of his new position as director of the Swedish Institute. In October 1933 he set off on a tour through Sweden, where the name “Swedish Institute” allegedly “worked like a charm”\(^\text{160}\) and Paul was showered with offers of support. *Riksföreningen, Gustaf-Adolf-minnesfond, Utrikesdepartementet, Trafikförbundet and Nordiska Museet* equipped him so handsomely that he already had to send a first box of books from Stockholm, being unable to handle all the gifts. Having thus established his position in his tale for the ministry, Paul continued with a number of foreign cultural political advices that give a hint of his view of the world. The notion that Sweden was unfit to be an ally because of the attacks by the press he refuted by pointing out “that Swedish opinion must not be judged by the press. It is partly in Jewish hands and strives to asperse every action of the New Germany.”\(^\text{161}\) Indeed, Paul continued, “I got the impression that the groundwork for National Socialism is largely already laid [in intellectual circles] and that it is only due to the hopeless party structure that it is not currently a power here.”\(^\text{162}\) Paul even offered discussion aids for the most important Swedish concerns against National Socialism, of which the first one affords an especially deep insight into Paul’s mindset:

\(^{160}\) “*wie eine Zauberformel*” – Travelogue of the Director of the Swedish Institute Prof. D. Dr. Johannes Paul, 02/11/1933, UAG K636.

\(^{161}\) “*dass man die öffentliche Meinung in Schweden nicht nur nach der Presse beurteilen darf. Diese liegt z.T. in Judenhänden und sucht, fast jede Handlung des neuen Deutschland zu verdächtigen.*” – Travelogue of the Director of the Swedish Institute Prof. Dr. Johannes Paul, 02/11/1933, UAG K636.

The main concerns people raised against German National Socialism were: 1.) Personal freedom is no longer guaranteed in Germany, if imprisonments are possible without an immediate trial. That these were measures of self-defence that were much more humane than if we had just had those people shot, was something that people here failed to understand.163

Paul also submitted such arguments to a wider audience when, at the behest of the National Socialist Student Group, he spoke in the well-filled Auditorium Maximum of Stockholm University. Proudly he reported to Berlin: “To illustrate the Jewish question I asked what Stockholmers would say if a Swedish-speaking but racially separate population – for example the Lapps – was predominant here – and then I gave the relative ratios from Berlin; this caused some amusement.”164 The local resident of the Ministry of Propaganda, who had a more sober assessment of public opinion in Sweden, was less amused. That he was right was proven when he, following Paul’s lecture, was banished under the charge of unlawful political propaganda, a fate that almost befell the resident of the German Academic Exchange Service as well.165

Paul’s attempts to redefine Greifswald University’s and his own task as that of winning over the “kinsmen” in Sweden began to radicalize over time. Even though faced with growing signs that National Socialism was not widely welcomed in Sweden, he used to defuse possible doubts by claiming that anti-German expressions were based on misunderstandings or the work of unpopular Jewish Marxists in the press.166 After more than one


165 Almgren 2005, pp. 84–86.

166 Expressed neatly in his publication offensive in Greifswald’s student newspaper, Paul, Johannes: “Schweden und das neue Deutschland!”, in Greifswalder Universitätszeitung, 8/4 (1933), and Paul, Johannes: “Begeisterung für deutsche Auslandsarbeit”, in: Greifswalder Universitätszeitung, 8/6 (1933).
embarrassing incident, the Foreign Office imposed restrictions in dealing with Swedish National Socialists, much to Paul’s dismay:

The restraint enjoined on us in intercourse with foreign National Socialists is often misunderstood. While it is generally understood that we do not wish to interfere with internal matters, it is claimed that our sharply dismissive attitude towards the Swedish National Socialists is actually damaging them, since their opponents interpret it in that way, that Swedish National Socialism is something so diminutive that not even the Germans want anything to do with it.167

Consequently Paul used informal channels increasingly during the following years. One major project that was the revival of the Greifswald–Lund University Conventions that Paul attempted in 1937. These gatherings of professors and students from both universities had been arranged with considerable success in May 1925 and April 1931. If one deduces a regular cycle, then 1937 should have been the next time and Lund the next place, but no invitation arrived from there, so Paul quietly inquired of his contacts in Lund. The year before, the university had already seen a controversy about accepting an invitation to Heidelberg’s 550th anniversary. The invitation was accepted in the end, but nobody was willing to go, until chemist Lennart Smith took pity and conceded to travel to Germany.168 This fierce debate had shown that the majority of Lund’s students and professors had little inclination to serve as decoration for Third Reich events, and consequently Gottfrid Carlsson and Theodor Walter advised Paul against making any official advance, all the more so since the designated Vice Chancellor Lövstedt was opposed to such a project. Paul instead chose to strike at a lower level and attempt to form small work groups, thus evading the need for an official placet. Paul’s assistant, Günther Falk, had in the meantime agreed to hold sports competitions in Greifswald with Lund’s student organization.169 This took the wind out of the sails of any discussion

169 Travelogue of Professor Dr.D.h.c. Johannes Paul, 27/08/1937, UAG K636.
in Lund since the gatherings were now entirely private, but then again, their propagandistic value was also diminished.

The breakdown of negotiations with Lund may have played a role in the dismissal of Paul as Director of the Nordic Area Institutes and his replacement with Magon in the following year. Although his heavy-handed approach had no direct repercussions for himself,\textsuperscript{170} Paul nevertheless received a lot of criticism from colleagues. Greifswald’s jurist George Löning summed his impressions up as follows:

Based on long observation I am very critically disposed towards the way in which foreigners are handled by the local Swedish Institute (Professor Paul). If one immediately expects every Swede to unconditionally approve of everything in Germany, and sometimes tries to force them to, then this is expecting too much and very clumsy to boot. It is not surprising that the very authoritative professor Ahnlund in Stockholm completely rejects Paul and his ways. I have also witnessed once that at a gathering of many foreigners a speech by one of the assistants of the Swedish Institute, who promoted the new German youth organization, was greeted with an icy silence and even with protests.\textsuperscript{171}

Seemingly untouched by such criticism, Paul continued to find himself frustrated by the political climate in Sweden, which reflects in his travel reports. In his last report to Berlin about a journey in early 1944, this took on bizarre forms, when Paul commented on the persecution of the Danish Jews a few months before, which had led many Jews to flee across the Öresund to Sweden.

German anti-Semitism is frowned upon for general reasons and nobody objects to mixed marriages. Nevertheless, the Jews are not popular and their growing

\textsuperscript{170} Even during the cultural boycott in 1944 Paul still managed to receive a visa. See Translation of article “Das Datum des Inkrafttretens der restriktiven Visapolitik”, in: Dagens Nyheter, 23/01/1944, UAG R387.
\textsuperscript{171} "Sehr skeptisch stehe ich auf Grund jahrelanger Beobachtungen freilich der Art gegenüber, wie vom hiesigen Schwedischen Institut (Professor Paul) aus die Ausländerbehandlung betrieben wird. Wenn man von jedem Schweden sogleich ein unbedingtes Bekenntnis zu allen Zuständen in Deutschland erwartet und manchmal beinahe zu erpressen sucht, so ist das wohl zu viel verlangt und recht ungeschickt. Es ist auch wohl nicht wunderbar, daß der nun einmal sehr maßgebende Professor Ahnlund in Stockholm Paul und seine Art vollständig ablehnt. Ich habe es auch einmal erlebt, daß auf einer Versammlung vieler Ausländer der Vortrag eines Assistenten des Schwedischen Instituts, der die neue Deutsche Jugendorganisation zur Nachahmung anpries, mit peinlichem eisigem Schweigen, ja mit Protesten quittiert wurde." – Löning to Brackmann, 07/04/1941, BA R 153/1286.
influence is registered with disfavour. But as long as Sweden is so well off economically, and as long as a food- or unemployment crisis (with the exception of Norrland, where there are hardly any Jews, though) does not exist, and as long as no further Jews come to Sweden, anti-Semitism will not become a political factor. One can bemoan in this regard that the Reich government has not accepted the Swedish government’s offer to take the Danish Jews in. One should just have connected it with the demand that Sweden accommodate a corresponding number of Polish Jews; indeed, I still consider it advisable that the German press, referencing the often exhibited philo-Semitism in the Swedish public, discuss the idea of solving the Jewish question by deporting the European Jews to the countries that have shown interest in them, the Western European Jews to England, the Eastern European Jews to Sweden – and immediately so.172

Paul’s rabid National Socialism was not the norm, though. Hans Grellmann, who had been in a similar career situation as Paul, did not exhibit the same blustering attitude. While he did find his task difficult, particularly during the period 1939 to 1941, his meagre correspondence does show a more


173 After the German declaration of war against the Soviet Union and the subsequent alliance with Finland, Grellmann wrote to Keese: “My dear Mr. Keese! I was very glad that I now received your cordial letter, from which I see that you too have been deeply moved by the proclamation of the Führer and his liberating words about the Finns. We can now look our Finnish comrades into the eyes again. Now all this talk has been dispelled, which has made our heads heavy, that we had somehow sold out the Finns in our negotiations with the Russians.” (Mein lieber Herr Keese! Ich freute mich recht sehr, als ich jetzt Ihre lieben Zeilen erhielt, aus denen hervorgeht, dass auch Sie von der Proklamation des Führers mit den erlösenden Worten über die Finnen tief ergriffen waren. Wir können doch nun wieder unseren finnischen Kameraden offen in die Augen schauen. Nun ist all das Gerede ad absurdum geführt, was uns einst doch einen
reserved and cautious approach. Then again, Grellmann’s situation was
different from the start. Finland was a German ally after 1941, which is why
explaining German foreign policy to Finns was a less daunting task than
doing the same in Sweden. Indeed, the expectations were not particularly
high either, since Finns occupied a dubious place in the racial ranking of
National Socialism,\(^\text{174}\) so that Grellmann was more concerned with explain-
ing Finland to Germans. A lot of his activity went into popularizing Finland
and the Finns in Germany, under the express orders of state agencies.
Especially the NSDAP-*Gauleitung* (Regional Leadership) made use of his
services. In 1934 the Stettin Chamber of Commerce organized contact
between the Finnish Institute and *Gauleiter* Karpenstein, who was off on a
tour of Finland.\(^\text{175}\) In the years following, Grellmann and his institute gave
regular support to NSDAP offices,\(^\text{176}\) including writing for the *Gauleitung’s*
journal, *Das Bollwerk*.\(^\text{177}\) Not all of these contacts were harmless national
communication, though. For the Pedagogic Academy Hamburg, Grellmann
gave a course in identifying Bolshevist influences in the national culture of
Finland,\(^\text{178}\) and advised the Foreign Ministry in their relations with Finland.
Especially an incident in 1937 illuminates the problems that most occupied
Grellmann. Paul had received a letter from lieutenant-colonel Wenner-
ström, to the effect that Swedes – a Germanic people – were oppressed in
Finland, and that Germany could make a lot of ground in Sweden by
supporting the Swedish minority in Finland. Paul had handed the letter on
to the Ministry of Education for circulation, and Grellmann now had to

\[^\text{174}\] Hecker-Stampehl, Jan: “Vorposten des Nordens? Finnland als Bollwerk des
Abendlandes in Veröffentlichungen aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg”, in: Suvioja,
Aleksanteri & / Teräväinen, Erkki (eds.): Kahden kulttuurin välittäjä. Hannes Saarisen
313–326.

\[^\text{175}\] Syndic of Chamber of Commerce Stettin to Grellmann, 05/05/1934, UAG IfF 64.

\[^\text{176}\] See e.g. Grellmann to Margarete Kruse-Sell (Press Officer of the NSDAP-Women’s
Organization of Pomerania), 29/06/1937, UAG IfF 118.

\[^\text{177}\] Gauschulungsamt to Grellmann, 27/02/1939, and Grellmann to Gauschulungsamt,
17/03/1939, UAG IfF 118. This included pictures of Finland for a Gau-calendar for 1943,
which unfortunately was never printed. See Correspondence Grellmann-Gaupresseamt,
24/03–11/06/1942, UAG IfF 118.

\[^\text{178}\] Student Leadership of Pedagogical Academy Hamburg (Hochschule für Lehrer-
bildung Hamburg) to Grellmann, 19/01/1939 and 17/04/1939, IfF 118. The wording
implies either a large or a longer standing cooperation.
explain that this was neither a hot nor a racial conflict. Besides combating such basic misunderstandings, Grellmann did keep in close contact with pro-German academics and cultural workers in Finland, as much as with the Foreign Office. Nationalist and anti-Russian cultural circles were his main point of reference, where he could count on implicit and often explicit support for National Socialist ideas. “The young Finland stands ready for action and sacrifice, as a bulwark for the European culture against Bolshevism”, he proudly declared, and his efforts at public diplomacy seem to have been more successful than those of the more prominent Paul. Even though there is very little detail available on his contacts, the names of those with whom he kept in touch were prominent and the assessment by his superiors were glowing.

The most difficult position in public diplomacy-efforts was certainly occupied by Leopold Magon. Not only did he have to face the same reservations about Germany’s political development as Paul, but the countries he primarily conferred with were also occupied by German forces in 1940, leading to further disapproval. Magon, at no point, gives the impression of energetically tackling this problem. His correspondence, where it is preserved, has him using a distinctly mitigated speech, never conveying much enthusiasm. Magon had been criticized for his lack of initiative before, and the Third Reich had him pay lip service to the political necessities. There is no evidence that Magon engaged with the widespread political and cultural contacts that his colleagues cultivated. Absence of proof is no proof of absence, though. Leopold Magon had the most control over the documentation of all the three directors, having been tasked with cleaning the institutes’ files in 1945, and even though he claimed to have some 1,200 items of in- and outgoing mail annually, the only preserved

179 Copies of Wennerström to Paul, 25/11/1937, Paul to REM, 02/12/1937, Järvinen to Grellmann, 14/12/1937, and Grellmann to Curator UG, 19/12/1937, all UAG IfF 55.
181 Among his contacts in Helsinki were the linguist Jooseppi Julius Mikkola and his wife, author Maila Talvio, author Veikko Antero Koskenniemi and head of the literary society Viljo Tarkiainen. See Grellmann’s report on a journey to Finland, October 1936, no date (1936) UAG K640.
182 Curator UG to REM, 21/01/1938, UAG PA 220, vol. 3.
183 Magon to Curator UG, no date (1937/38?), UAG K632.
letters of his are those that were to prove his distance from the National Socialist system.\footnote{UAG Nachlass Magon 48.}

IV.3 New Customers and Services

Among the functions of the \textit{Nordische Auslandsinstitute}, that of informing a wider audience was the vaguest and had been pursued in a variety of ways before 1933. Publications such as \textit{Nordische Rundschau}, \textit{Deutsch-Schweidische Pressekorrespondenz} and \textit{Mitteilungen aus dem Institut für Finnlandkunde} were to varying degrees addressed to an audience of lay people or at least educated amateurs. So were public presentations given by members or guests of the Nordic Institute and the Institute for Finland-Studies. The institutes at times even turned into something approximating an information bureau and helped out the authorities if need be. But while the respective assistants might have grumbled about the workload,\footnote{Translation of article “Die Lundenser nächstes Jahr als Gäste in Greifswald”, in: Svenska Dagbladet, 30/08/1924, UAG K631.} none of these activities had ever reached the point where they dominated the identity of any of the institutes. This changed during the Third Reich.

The NOFG – Scholarship and Propaganda

Information about Northern Europe had been requested in one form or the other before 1933, but with the intensifying desire for a strong public diplomacy towards \textit{Norden}, the informational demands increased in size and changed in character. This is for example evidenced by the need for Johannes Paul to begin setting up his own register card system, in which he documented public persons in Sweden, not just biographically but also in respect of their political leanings. Paul specifically argued that this had become necessary to cope with the flood of requests for information that his institute was subject to.\footnote{Paul to REM, 30/07/1936, UAG K628.}

Paul seems to have held reading courses for advanced students before, but in summer 1934 one of these turned up officially in the course books under the name “Workshop on Intellectual Life and Politics in Modern
Sweden”. The idea behind these workshops was to turn the results of those reading courses into protocols, thereby making them immediately useful for any state, military or party authority interested in up-to-date political information about Sweden. It is unclear who the original subscribers to these protocols were, but the rather unsightly little sheets – tightly machine-typed on brown pulp paper – quickly gained popularity. Circumstantial evidence, primarily Paul’s frequent remarks on military needs, makes it highly plausible that the increasing interest of the Army High Command and its attached staffs in Northern European affairs kick-started the rapid expansion of the “Swedish Protocols”, as they were commonly referred to.

Until 1939, subscription had been workable, with 30 to 40 official subscribers. But interest in the protocols increased dramatically when war broke out. By the summer of 1941, subscription had quadrupled to 160 copies. Even before the start of the war, the sheer amount of work necessary to run “a constant observation of 25 newspaper and all magazines” had severely strained the resources of the Swedish Institute: “To distribute the information from the Swedish press, so urgently desired by the military, we are currently working not just in the mornings but in the afternoon from 5 to 10, and longer if necessary.” But personnel was not the only thing in short supply. The amount of material, most notably paper and stamps, were eating up the Swedish Institute’s budget as well.

In this situation, Paul had to look for external assistance. Since the middle of the 1930s there had been a loose contact between Paul and the Nord- und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (North- and East German

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187 “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Geistiges Leben und Politik im modernen Schweden”. A short-lived “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Die Gegenwart im Spiegel der skandinavischen Presse” (Our Time as reflected by the Scandinavian Press) was held in winter 1936/37, until both workshops merged in the following year, see UG course books in UAG.

188 Some 1936 specimen can still be found in UAG Nachlass Hofmeister 13.

189 See e.g. Paul to Dean PhilFak UG, 15/02/1937, UAG PA 248, Bd. 2; Paul to Dean PhilFak UG, 20/11/1939, UAG PA 248, Bd. 2 and Paul to Curator UG, 24/04/1940, UAG PA 248, Bd.1.

190 Paul to REM, 02/07/1941, UAG K636, and Paul to Curator UG, UAG K636.

191 “This, at least, was the description of one of the several outside translators that Paul had to employ to cope with the amount of work necessary. Attorney Dr. Weiss representing Mr. Ulrich to Curator UG, 03.11.1946, UAG K636.

192 “Wir arbeiten jetzt, um die von militärischer Seite dringend erwünschten Nachrichten aus der schwedischen Presse weiterzugeben, außer in den Vormittagsstunden nachmittags von 5 Uhr ab bis 10 Uhr, wenn notwendig auch länger” – Paul to Curator UG, 05/10/1939, UAG K636.
Research Community, NOFG). The NOFG had been founded in the end of 1933 at the initiative of prominent historian Albert Brackmann, to coordinate research on ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe. Born of the political programme of völkisch historians, ethnologists and geographers, the research of the NOFG and other Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften (Ethnic German Research Associations) served to discredit the post-World War One territorial settlements and “scientifically prove” the right of Germany to any land once settled by Germans. Joined at the hips with the NOFG and, from the middle of the 1930s, so institutionally intertwined as to be indistinguishable, was the Publikationsstelle Dahlem (Publication Centre Dahlem, PuSte). Founded in 1931, again by Brackmann, the PuSte was nominally an office within the Prussian State Archive. Where the NOFG was supposed to help produce scientific proof of German claims to lands settled by ethnic Germans, the PuSte was primarily concerned with going toe to toe with Polish and other foreign research that supported competing claims. It monitored, documented and, if necessary, counteracted the cultural and scientific activities of the Eastern neighbours, and to this end maintained a press observation service not unlike Paul’s. It was in this regard that Paul first established contact with the PuSte in 1935. In exchange for his Swedish Protocolls, Paul received the Czech, Polish and Baltic press clippings, which he found “valuable [...] not just as a supplement to our observation of the Scandinavian press, but also for the volksdeutsch work that I strive towards in the Historical Seminar.” In the end of 1939 Paul tried to intensify this contact further, lamenting the lack of institutional cooperation between PuSte and Swedish Institute and asking PuSte to get in touch with him. By that time the NOFG/PuSte had long made the step from a research association to a full-fledged think tank, pooling and distributing research and so preparing it for use in practical politics. With the NOFG holding a central position in Eastern European research, the institutional resources of the PuSte (mainly in terms of personnel and printing equipment) and financial backing by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Association) the PuSte could claim a monopoly in

194 “Sie sind wertvoll für mich nicht nur als Ergänzung zu unserer Beobachtung der skandinavisches Presse, sondern auch für die volksdeutsche Arbeit, um die ich mich im Historischen Seminar bemühe.” – Paul to PuSte, 25/06/1935, BA R153/659.
195 Paul to Papritz, 08/11/1939, BA R153/1185.
scientific information about all matters ethnic German to decision-makers.\textsuperscript{196} Thus, providing means of production as well as channels of distribution, the PuSte was an auspicious partner for cooperation to Paul.

Equally auspicious was the time: With the annexation of the Sudetenland, Memel and large parts of Poland, and the return of the Baltic Germans to the Reich, the German minorities in Eastern Europe were no longer a political issue. This not only freed up resources, but also necessitated a reorientation in the work of the PuSte. Before 1939 Scandinavia had held a low priority in the PuSte. The NOFG had nominally had the German minority in Denmark in its care, but due to the low intensity of this conflict and the difficulties of bringing racist arguments to bear against Denmark, this had not been a major focus of the NOFG.\textsuperscript{197} But Northern Europe had for a long time had a special role in the work of the NOFG, being a neutral region with considerable weight in the League of Nations. Due to their high influence on international opinion, they were a prime vector for propaganda by both Poland and Germany and in 1935 the Baltic Institute in Torun set up their journal *Baltic Countries*, which presented topics with a particularly Polish spin.\textsuperscript{198} In response, the PuSte began publishing, *Jomsburg*, in 1937, which set out to present the politically charged claims of German scholarship to an international audience.\textsuperscript{199} The NOFG’s leading expert on Northern European questions, historian Otto Scheel, wrote to Albert Brackmann only a few weeks later:

\begin{quote}
The immense changes in the East will indeed shift the main focus of the NOFG towards the Baltic Sea and the Northern region. I myself find your publication centre especially necessary today [...] The relations with the North will become more important. As far as I have been able to discern, people within the Foreign Office as well as the international department in the Ministry of Science hold the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{196} An extensive analysis of “Volksbodenforschung” and the NOFG’s role in shaping German policy towards Central Eastern Europe can be found in Haar 2000.
opinion, that it is especially now that the threads that connect us with the North need to be strengthened.  

Brackmann agreed that Scandinavia should receive increased attention in Jomsburg and immediately began recruiting Northern European scholars for this purpose.  

But for the time being the treatment of Scandinavian unwillingness to enter into a Schicksalgemeinschaft with the Reich remained within an entirely academic sphere. The political imperatives of the time loomed so clear to Scheel and Brackmann that they seem to have considered any long term plans unnecessary.  

Only after the invasion of Denmark and Norway did discussions with Scandinavian scholars break down to such a degree that a long-term strategy became imperative. After discussions with Paul Ritterbusch about a possible participation in his “Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften” (Military Service of the Humanities) had seemingly led nowhere, the PuSte decided to develop their own project for a cultural foreign policy towards Scandinavia.  

The first tangible step was the Stralsund Conference in February 1941, where Brackmann gathered the experts on Northern European matters in
Germany. After a day of briefings, in which the political situations in the Scandinavian countries where discussed and all participants contributed their views, a second day was spent discussing concrete steps. Paul used the first day to elaborate on the projects his institute was already undertaking and the second day to propose that an ongoing observation of Sweden’s public opinion be established. Especially the influence of western ideas upon the Scandinavian constitutions would have to be researched more closely. Heinz Krüger added – to general agreement – that more efforts were needed to win over the youth, as earlier attempts had been unsuccessful. Considering that the Swedish Institute had hitherto not had a strong connection with Potsdam, the amount of speaking-time that Paul and his assistant were given was considerable. Paul even managed to convince the assembly to conclude the conference with a visit to the Nordic Area Institutes in Greifswald, where he bemoaned the difficulties of expanding the work of his institute further. While the work on the Swedish Protocols had been cross-financed by Supreme Headquarters of the Army in 1940, these funds had now run out. Johannes Papritz, successor to Brackmann and head of PuSte and NOFG, immediately promised to help out with funds from Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and to attempt to garner an even wider subscription. In the weeks to come, the PuSte took over the Swedish Protocols. Elin Svensson, who was responsible for the edition of the protocols and had not been paid since November 1940, was officially taken into the employ of the PuSte, which also paid the entire overhead and funded an additional secretary in the Swedish Institute.

Although Leopold Magon and Hans Grellmann were invited to the Stralsund Conference, none of them contributed anything to the discussion.

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204 Apart from representatives of the NOFG’s main financiers, the Ministry of the Interior and the Foreign Office, the select company included many historians, but also economists, agronomists and philologists. The difficulties of actually finding area experts is exemplified by the invitation of people like Hansa-historian Ahasver von Brandt and philologist Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld. The former could only muster a passing familiarity with Scandinavian matters whereas the latter’s only claim to expertise came from having worked at Turku University between 1931 and 1937. See Attachment to Invitation for NOFG Stralsund Conference, 10/01/1941, BA R153/1286.

205 Minutes of the conference in BA R153/1286.

206 Svensson left Greifswald shortly afterwards for a better position in the Foreign Office. After August 1941 Rosemarie Schwarz took over her position and responsibilities. See Krüger to PuSte, 22/07/1941, BA R153/1185.

207 Application to PuSte, 27/02/1941, and PuSte to Paul, 30/03/1941, both: BA R153/1185.
Their invitation seems to have been added later on, and only on the third day did they actually contribute by giving tours through their respective institutes. While, according to the minutes, Grellmann pointed out the importance of his institute’s library and his good relations with Finland, Magon’s contribution is not noted.208 Nor did the two make efforts to secure cooperation with the NOFG on a scale comparable to Paul’s. When asked by Johannes Papritz to this effect, Grellmann responded that his institute was not able to provide any press observation on the same level as the Swedish Institute.209 While he published the two-issue series “Das Reich und Nordeuropa” (The Reich and Northern Europe)210 together with Albert Brackmann and was called upon for translations at times, Grellmann’s cooperation with the NOFG was limited. Leopold Magon’s collaboration was even more sporadic.211

This was in notable contrast to Paul, who, two weeks after the Stralsund Conference, handed in an application to the PuSte. Dahlem supplied two scholarships for works on western influences on the Swedish constitutional development and Swedish expatriates, especially in Germany and the US. The first topic was attended to by Heinz Krüger but never finished due to his multiple competing responsibilities. The second was the responsibility of Wolfgang Müller, whose work was deemed so deficient as to be unusable.212 After Müller had been fired for ineptitude, Rosemarie Schwarz inherited the scholarship for her treatise on the Swedish youth move-

208 Minutes of the conference in BA R153/1286.
209 Grellmann could only point out that the German embassy in Helsinki produced press translation, which were unfortunately entirely political in nature and therefore of no use to the NOFG. See Memorandum for record about a conversation between Papritz and Grellmann, 04/02/1941, and Grellmann to Papritz, 08/07/1941, both: BA R153/688. The files of the Finnish Institute contain a number of shorter press reviews in UAG IfF 75. If these were made for the military or for the NOFG is not clear, though.
210 Katara, Pekka: Die nationalsprachliche Entwicklung in Finnland (=Das Reich und Nordeuropa, 1), Leipzig 1941, and Degn, Christian: Drontheim (=Das Reich und Nordeuropa, 2), Leipzig 1942.
211 In the middle of 1944 Magon supplied a list of pro-German researchers in Scandinavia, applied unsuccessfully for support in publishing two Norwegian books on toponymy and helped to organize the translation of a Norwegian book. See Papritz to Magon, 27/04/1944, BA R153/1188, Magon to Papritz, 18/04/1944, BA R153/1188 and correspondence between Magon and Papritz, 19/07–17/10/1944, BA R153/1188.
212 Krüger to NOFG, 26/01/1943, BA R153/1185.
ments.213 By 1945 none of these scholarships had led to a tangible publication, and the same went for Paul’s other projects.214

The funding allowed for a stable continuation and even expansion of the Swedish Protocols. By 1944 the protocols had changed substantially, covering not only the notable Swedish newspapers but also journals, magazines and, if need be, books. All of the articles analysed appeared in summary and were made more accessible by a glossary of the most important persons mentioned.215 But with the new financer came conflicts with various government agencies. The Swedish Institute had long had a special permit from the Ministry of Propaganda to subscribe to otherwise censored foreign press publications. The fact that the Swedish Protocols gave an extensive overview of Swedish media also meant that otherwise censored material came into widespread circulation, not least what German authorities liked to call “atrocity propaganda”. From the summer of 1941 onwards, the protocols, already stamped “Secret” and “For Official Use Only”, were only to be sent via registered mail at the behest of the Gestapo.216 Since the subscription had from there on only increased and the Swedish Institute, missing its director, did nothing to change the protocols, the Ministry of Propaganda stepped in. From February 20th 1942 on, the Swedish Protocols were officially taken out of circulation and the print run was henceforth restricted to ten copies, which were to be distributed to the Ministry of Propaganda, the PuSte and the Prussian State Archives.217 The dispute over the shape of the protocols was less one between Greifswald and Dahlem, though. The Foreign Office had made it clear before that it watched jealously over their prerogative of political information and would only tolerate the PuSte’s interference in the field of cultural foreign policy under close limitations.218 Since the PuSte had hitherto mostly worked in the East, where the Foreign Office no longer held any stakes, Dahlem and Wil-

213 Krüger to PuSte, 01/08/1942, BA R153/1185.
214 Paul had intended to continue his series “Schweden und Nordeuropa” (Sweden and Northern Europe) and start another series called “Quellen zur Geschichte des Ostseeraums” (Sources for the History of the Baltic Seas Region), see Application to PuSte, 27/02/1941, BA R153/1185. It has to be assumed that nothing came of those due to Paul’s enlistment.
216 Paul to REM, 02/07/1941, UAG K636.
217 Krüger to PuSte, 26/01/1943, BA R153/1185.
218 See e.g. Foreign Office to PuSte, 25/02/1941, BA R153/688.
helmstraße had not clashed before. But the Foreign Office was unwilling to relent more control over the political intercourse with Scandinavia.

Two developments led to the matter coming to a head in early 1944. First, Johannes Paul had been dismissed from military service, and with the return of the director there was hope in Berlin that conceptual changes to the Swedish Protocolls could be effected. Before, the work had been in the hands of Heinz Krüger, who was otherwise occupied, and Rosemarie Schwarz, who was still officially a student. Neither of them could be expected to introduce any large-scale alterations to the protocols. Secondly, the PuSte had come under new ownership. After Wilhelm Frick’s replacement as Minister of the Interior by Heinrich Himmler in the summer of 1943, the custodianship of PuSte and NOFG was transferred from Department VI in the Ministry of Interior to Department VI G in the Reichs sicherheitshauptamt (RSHA).219

Jürgen von Hehn, assistant head of Department VI G RSHA, made his objections clear in early February 1944: “They [the Swedish Protocolls] can be considered almost worthless in their current form, all the more so since their distribution is much too small.”220 Political questions, von Hehn argued, could not be adequately evaluated by personnel from the cultural political field, and political contributions from the Swedish press would be vetoed by the Ministry of Propaganda anyway. Only through a stronger focus on cultural topics could the continued press observation in Greifswald be justified.221 Von Hehn repeated these demands when the NOFG convoked another conference in Greifswald two weeks later: The information service needed to be expanded, but this was all but impossible if “atrocity propaganda” and foreign policy-related material were not left out.222

The discussion was over as quickly as it had started. Heinz Krüger’s objection that there were different interests at play, and that the military attachés and others also needed political information was to no avail. Only Walther Hoffmann, representing the Kiel Institute for World Economy, would take his side and proclaim that their Norway department was dependent on the Swedish Protocolls in their current form. Trapped be-


220 “In der vorliegenden Form können sie als nahezu wertlos erklärt werden, zumal sie eine viel zu geringe Verbreitung finden.” – von Hehn to PuSte, 10/02/1944, BA R153/1711.

221 v.Hehn to PuSte, 10/02/1944, BA R153/1711.

222 Notes on Greifwald Meeting, 28–29/02/1944, BA R153/1711.
between the Foreign Office and the RSHA, both of which had their own channels for political information and were unwilling to share, Paul and Krüger had to agree to a division of the Swedish Protocolls. One part would be concerned with information about culture and people, the other with political news.\(^{223}\)

This result of the Greifswald Meeting did not appreciably lessen the tensions, though. In the months to come, when von Hehn and the RSHA attempted to adapt the Swedish Protocolls to their needs, it became clear that the conflict was not just a personal animosity between von Hehn and Paul, even though tensions existed.\(^{224}\) Von Hehn had made his position relatively clear: He found the protocols to be valuable in principle but objected to their extensive coverage, which prohibited widespread circulation. Paul, on the other hand, had argued that in his eyes the protocols were first and foremost a tool of research and teaching.\(^{225}\) Outside interests, to him, were an afterthought with which he would comply but not with great energy:

The protocols went to a larger circle before. Consequently we have accommodated wishes that came from military, academia, business, police or other interested quarters. If the circle of recipients has become narrower, it is explicable that the wishes of this circle will come to the fore. The institute will strive to incorporate the present wishes. If those, as far as I understand, are mostly concerned with cultural political matters, then the working process of the participants will not change much. On the one hand, cultural policy cannot be viewed apart from the rest of the political life, on the other, it is the intention that the student assistants become familiar with the entirety of Swedish life, and so must also know the economic and domestic developments.\(^{226}\)

\(^{223}\) Notes on Greifwald Meeting, 28–29/02/1944, BA R153/1711.

\(^{224}\) von Hehn does not seem to have had the most cordial of opinions about Paul in the first place. He held Paul’s sometimes clumsy appearance in Sweden and Finland against him, and also that, upon returning from his stint in Helsinki, Paul took over a position in radio instead of focusing on his institute. See von Hehn to PuSte, 10/02/1944, BA R153/1711.

\(^{225}\) Notes on Greifwald Meeting, 28–29/02/1944, BA R153/1711.

\(^{226}\) "Früher gingen die Protokolle ja an einen größeren Kreis. Infolgedessen haben wir den Wünschen, die bald von militärischer, wissenschaftlicher, wirtschaftlicher, bald von polizeilicher oder sonstwie interessierter Seite hervorgebracht wurden, nachgegeben. Wenn jetzt der Bezieherkreis enger geworden ist, ist es erklärrlich, dass die Wünsche dieses Kreises in den Vordergrund treten. Das Institut wird sich bemühen, die jetzigen Wünsche zu berücksichtigen. Wenn diese, soviel ich verstehe, in erster Linie den kulturpolitischen Dingen gelten, so wird in der Arbeitsweise der Teilnehmer sich nicht viel ändern, denn einmal kann man Kulturpolitik nicht getrennt von dem übrigen politischen Leben
Cautious support came from the PuSte, where Johannes Papritz, who did not entirely condone the reduction of his office to that of a press clipping-service for the SS, still had Paul’s back. His agency was dependent on the Swedish Protocols for political information, not just about Sweden and Scandinavia but also about Baltic and Eastern European expatriate communities in the North. Otherwise he signalled satisfaction with the changes introduced to the protocols after the Greifswald Conference.\footnote{Papritz to Swedish Institute, 08/05/1944, BA R153/1194.} Even though, the Reichssicherheitshauptamt could not find it in themselves to approve of the new layout.\footnote{von Hehn to PuSte, 18/07/1944, BA R153/1194.} In June 1944 Wilhelm Koppe, editor of the Jomsburg and the PuSte’s Scandinavian expert, was sent to Greifswald to take over the production of the Swedish Protocols.\footnote{Koppe to Papritz, 23/06/1944, BA R153/1185.} These conformed closely to the demands of the RSHA and were consequently endorsed there,\footnote{von Hehn to PuSte, 19/09/1944, BA R153/1194.} but led to additional irritations. Johannes Paul spent most of his time in Königsberg on an assignment for the Ministry of Propaganda, and upon returning to Greifswald for a visit in late August 1944, found his institute empty. Two weeks before, the vast majority of personnel at Greifswald University had been mobilized for entrenching duties in Eastern Prussia, leaving nobody but Magon’s secretary in the Nordic Area Institutes.\footnote{Koppe to PuSte, 10/08/1944, BA R153/1185.} With the greatest matter-of-factness Paul immediately proclaimed that Wilhelm Koppe could now leave,\footnote{Paul to Metzner (Dean PhilFak UG), 25/09/1944, UAG PA 248, Bd. 2.} and turned to the PuSte to get his employees stamped “indispensable” and his institute re-opened.\footnote{Paul to PuSte, 24/08/1944, BA R153/1185.} But the situation was entirely different from what he had imagined. Since Greifswald had shown itself either unable or unwilling to comply with the wishes of the RSHA, it had lost its favour.

An intervention by us against the closing of the Swedish Institute in Greifswald is out of the question. No fruitful work can be expected there as long as Professor Paul is head of that institute. […] We are of the opinion that really positive Scandinavian work could rather be done within the PuSte, with some personnel commandeered from Greifswald. If it were possible to draw one or two of

\[ \text{betrachten und zum andern sollen die studentischen Mitarbeiter durch die Arbeitsgemeinschaft ja gerade mit dem Gesamtgebiet des schwedischen Lebens vertraut werden, müssen also auch über wirtschaftliche und innenpolitische Entwicklungen Bescheid wissen.} \] – Paul to PuSte, 22/07/1944, BA R153/1194.

\[ \text{227 Papritz to Swedish Institute, 08/05/1944, BA R153/1194.} \]
\[ \text{228 von Hehn to PuSte, 18/07/1944, BA R153/1194.} \]
\[ \text{229 Koppe to Papritz, 23/06/1944, BA R153/1185.} \]
\[ \text{230 von Hehn to PuSte, 19/09/1944, BA R153/1194.} \]
\[ \text{231 Koppe to PuSte, 10/08/1944, BA R153/1185.} \]
\[ \text{232 Paul to Metzner (Dean PhilFak UG), 25/09/1944, UAG PA 248, Bd. 2.} \]
\[ \text{233 Paul to PuSte, 24/08/1944, BA R153/1185.} \]
Greifswald’s ladies, and possibly even Mr. Koppe, to Bautzen, we would have a good staff there. If some people then return to Greifswald afterwards, then they will hopefully have learned so much in the PuSte that really positive work will become possible in Greifswald.234

Rosemarie Schwarz, who had been in charge of the production of the Swedish Protocolls, had already physically moved to Bautzen in Saxony, where the PuSte had now been evacuated to. This was mainly for practical reasons, as her entire staff of collaborators had been drafted and little could be done in Greifswald.235 This changed in October, when Paul and the rest of the staff returned. Paul immediately asked that his most important employee be returned and began producing press protocols in the way he thought best.236 It was at this point, that patience in the RSHA ran out:

We therefore ask explicitly, that in the planned meeting with Prof. Paul this standpoint be made absolutely clear to him: The Swedish Press Protocolls will henceforth no longer enjoy any interest, and it is therefore best that their publication be stopped immediately, before other measures become necessary to make better use of the involved resources.237

“Interested agencies”, foremost among them the Foreign Office, imposed a permanent ban on the Swedish Protocols in the form that they were made

234 “Eine Verwendung von hier die sich gegen die Schließung des Schwedischen Instituts in Greifswald wendet, kommt nicht in Frage, da eine wirklich fruchtbare Arbeit dort so lange Prof. Paul Leiter des Instituts ist, kaum zu erwarten wäre. […] Vielmehr wird hier die Ansicht vertreten, dass wirklich positive Skandinavienarbeit viel besser mit einigen aus Greifswald abzuziehenden Kräften im Rahmen der Publikationsstelle geleistet werden könnte. Falls es gelingt, ein oder zwei Greifswalder Damen und womöglich noch Herrn Koppe nach Bautzen zu ziehen, so würde dort ein guter Mitarbeiterstab für die Skandinavienarbeit vorhanden sein. Wenn dann einzelne von diesen Personen nach dem Kriege nach Greifswald zurückkehren, so ist zu hoffen, dass sie inzwischen in der Publikationsstelle so viel gelernt haben, dass nunmehr wirklich positive Arbeit in Greifswald geleistet werden wird.” – Krallert to PuSte, 03/09/1944, BA R153/1185.
235 Koppe to Papritz, 01/09/1944, BA R153/1185 and Koppe to PuSte, 08/09/1944, BA R153/1194.
236 Paul to PuSte, 30/10/1944 and Paul to NOFG, 04/10/1944, BA R153/1185.
237 “Es wird daher ausdrücklich gebeten, bei der beabsichtigten Besprechung mit Prof. Paul ihm diesen Standpunkt eindeutig klarzumachen, d.h. ihn darauf hinzuweisen, dass die schwedischen Presseprotokolle hinfert kein Interesse mehr genießen werden und dass sie daher am besten ihr Erscheinen sofort einstellen, bevor andere Maßnahmen notwendig werden, die dabei eingesetzten Kräfte besser eingesetzt […] werden.” – Kuratorium für Volkstums- und Landesforschung beim Reichsführer SS (Curator for Ethnic- and Area Studies at Reichsführer SS) to PuSte, 14/11/1944, BA R153/1185.
in Greifswald, thereby closing the chapter. Paul, as Johannes Papritz lamented in a last defiant letter, kept producing word-by-word translations of culturally important articles in Greifswald, which were then turned into short briefings in the PuSte. This was precisely as demanded by RSHA, but the use of this endeavour, as Papritz and his colleague Fritz Rörig opined, was questionable. Neither were the protocols distributed to anybody outside of PuSte or RSHA, nor could any real information be gleaned from them, considering that political information was now taboo. This was all the more problematic as the PuSte was dependent on this information for the registry they were instructed to keep on Scandinavian personalities.

The case of Paul’s cooperation with the PuSte exemplifies the inherent possibilities and dangers of a strong involvement between the academic and the political field. Starting from a project grounded in academic research and teaching, Paul was able to mobilize massive resources from the political field by offering the fruits of his labour to a political think-tank and research node. Apart from financing the Swedish Protocols, which had originally served as an educational tool as well as a support for Paul’s own research, the PuSte also allowed Paul to employ a number of young academics and thereby foster the careers of his own students. Furthermore, his involvement in larger research projects also afforded him a greater pull within the university, at least to a degree. This went rather smoothly as long as the agency on the receiving end of Paul’s activities was the PuSte, an organization born out of the academic community. With the Ministry of the Interior falling into the hands of Himmler in 1943 and the consequent change of ownership of the PuSte, the equilibrium between internal academic logic and perceived political necessities was broken. Instead of an academic institution making their results available to the political sphere, a political institution now employed researchers. It is intriguing to speculate how the cooperation between Paul and the RSHA-led PuSte would have continued, had not the end of the Third Reich cut it short. That the demands by the RSHA conflicted with the logic of knowledge production

238 Papritz to Swedish Institute, 15/12/1944, BA R153/1194.
239 "From your letter by the date of December 8th I can see, that the doubtlessly useful measures of the PuSte (e.g. press cuttings) no longer benefit scholarship at all." (Ihrem Brief vom 8.12. habe ich entnommen, daß die an sich gewiß nützlichen Maßnahmen der Publikationsstelle (z.B. Presseauszüge) der Wissenschaft eigentlich überhaupt nicht mehr zu Gute kommen.) – Fritz Rörig to Papritz, 03.01.1945, BA R153/1651.
240 Papritz to Foreign Office, Department Inland IIC and Reichsführer SS, Kuratorium für Volkstums- und Landesfragen, 22/01/1945, BA R153/1185.
that the academics were accustomed and, judging by their indignation, beholden to, was expressed often enough by Paul and, at last, by Papritz. It is not clear and, considering the different logic behind their argumentations, not very feasible, that these objections were understood by von Hehn. Nor were von Hehn’s objections intelligible to the scholars. In the polycratic structure of the Third Reich, political areas of operations were hotly contested between state agencies, and the Himmler-complex, built around the SS and police forces, but also controlling ethnic German questions, was unwilling to share their privileged access to information with others. To Paul, whose work was also inspired by patriotic fervour, these conflicts were simply not accessible, to the RSHA they were not negotiable.

IV.4 War-time scholarship (1937–1945)

The circle of subscribers to the Swedish Protocolls had from an early point on included a variety of Wehrmacht-departments, including its intelligence service, the Amt Abwehr, as well as the Foreign Ministry and branches of the SS-empire. While the press observation service was part of an advisory function in cultural political matters, the Nordic Area Institutes did also serve in more immediate roles.

Many of these auxiliary services are hard to track down, because of a loss of documents. Only the Institute for Finland Studies has been able to preserve an appreciable number of files, although the exemplary record-keeping instituted by Gustav Braun did not endure after 1933. Nevertheless a general picture also emerges from the records of Paul’s and Magon’s institutes. Since many documented developments run parallel in the five institutes, details from the Finnish Institute can be used to illustrate occurrences in the other institutes. Agencies such as the Foreign Office, which were habitually concerned with Northern European affairs, already had a cultural political apparatus in place to handle the difficulties connected with dealing with different areas of the world. This was not the case with the Wehrmacht, whose own information and intelligence service, Amt Abwehr, had little experience in dealing with Northern Europe. The same went for other agencies, such as the Ministry of Propaganda. But even the longer established authorities, such as the Gestapo and the SS-Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst der SS, SD), could not handle the expansion of their activities with the given personnel and turned to the Nordic Area Institutes for help.
Careers in Science – The Junior Academics and their War-Time Deployments

The first expert thus lost to Greifswald was German scholar Otto Fingerhut. Fingerhut, who had been Paul’s successor in the position as assistant to the Nordic Area Institutes, found that there were better positions in the world and left the institutes in January 1937. This seems to have come as a surprise even to him, considering that he gave the Curator a three-day notice.241 His new position was in the Forschungsabteilung des Reichsluftfahrtministeriums (Research Bureau of the Air Ministry). This career move is less surprising if one knows that this name concealed a signal-intercept department directly subordinate the Reich Chancellery.242 Barely a month later another one of Greifswald’s younger academics started work there. Dr. Richard Linder had been a student assistant in the Swedish Institute, but had to take a position as junior research assistant at the Historical-Geographical Institute after his graduation.243 While Fingerhut made something of a career in the Forschungsabteilung as recently declassified documents suggest,244 Linder’s tenure there was shorter. Three years later he re-appeared as an employee of a library in Gera and was recommended as a capable translator and researcher for an unnamed Army enterprise.245 In 1944 he returned to Greifswald for the NOFG conference, at which time he was stationed in Bergen.246

241 Fingerhut to Curator UG, 01/01/1937, UAG PA 46.
243 Richard Linder to Curator UG, 28/01/1937, UAG K515.
244 US Army Security Agency debriefings place specialist Dr. Fingerhut in the sections for Foreign Political Analysis, Evaluation and an ominous Reporting Centre Seifert at different times. His rank within the structure of the Bureau is unclear though, as is the exact nature of his work. See Army Security Agency: “European Axis Signal Intelligence in World War II as revealed by ‘TICOM’ Investigations and by other Prisoner of War Interrogations and captured Material, principally German, volume 7: Goering’s ‘Research’ Bureau, 01/05/1946, http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/_files/european_axis_sigint/Volume_7_goerings_research_bureau.pdf [retrieved: 09/10/2013].
245 Paul to Military District Command Greifswald, 06/02/1940, UAG K635.
246 It is unclear as to who his employer was, though. The invitation gave his name without any rank or title, wherefore it is improbable that his organizational affiliation was with Wehrmacht or SD. Considering that he was invited (and confirmed his attendance) to the NOFG Greifswald Conference it is plausible that he worked as liaison for the Civil Administration in the Reich Commissary Norway, possibly in cultural policy. See Invitation List for the NOFG Greifswald Conference, no date (1943/44), BA R153/1711.
Fingerhut’s successor in the assistant’s role, Günther Falk, did also not stay very long. From April 5th to May 10th 1940, too soon after his car accident to finish his dissertation, he was enlisted as a translator into the Abwehrstelle (regional office of Amt Abwehr) of Military District II.247 A few months after this stint, he was invited to give a series of lectures to members of Luftgaukommando Norwegen (Air District Command Norway).248 Directly after his tour with the Air Force was over in November 1940, Falk was called to Norway again. This time he was supposed to take over “national-politically very important duties in the operational area of the Head of Security Police (SD)” 249 His deployment was for six months at first, but even before his probation was over, Falk was formally enlisted in the SD and posted to Oslo.250 Evidence of his further course are scarce, but indicates a rapid career. Falk seems to have been employed as a specialist translator in the summer of 1941, before his formal introduction into the SS.251 Later on, his responsibilities expanded somewhat. A memorandum by Hans Schwalm, representative of RSHA’s Ahnenerbe in Norway, has Hauptsturmführer (Captain of the SS) Falk as Schrifttumsreferent (Policy Officer for Literature, Journalism and Publishing) of the SD in the autumn of 1942252 and Magne Skodvin’s archival inventory lists Falk as the contact for Bureau IIIc (Cultural Affairs, SD) of the Head Security Police/Security Service.253 What happened to Falk after this point is unclear. He made his last appearance in Greifswald when he attended

247 Magon to Curator UG, 01/06/1940, UAG PA 44. Military District II was Pomerania, with its headquarters in Stettin.
248 REM to Curator UG, 25/10/1940, UAG PA 44.
249 Assignment by Head of Security Police / Security Service Stettin, 26/11/1940, UAG PA 44.
250 Head of Security Police / Security Service Stettin to Falk, 09/04/1941, UAG PA 44.
252 Notes for Record on a meeting with SS-Hauptsturmführer Falk, 19/10/1942, The Pennsylvania Folklife Collection at Ursinus College, The Ahnenerbe Collection, Folder V. The same notes contain the hint that another of Paul’s former students, by the name of Bischoff, was posted with the SD in Bergen. It can be conjectured that this would be Dr. Wilhelm Bischoff, but this cannot be proven with the present material.
the NOFG Greifswald Conference in 1944, ostensibly as a representative of either the Reichskommissariat Norwegen or the SS-Ahnenerbe-organization in Norway.\footnote{No indication is given as to his organizational affiliation in the invitation list, see Invitation List for the NOFG Greifswald Conference, no date (1943/44), BA R153/1711.}

Falk’s successor, the ubiquitous Heinz Krüger, at least managed to finish his dissertation before he was called to arms. His first draft into the Air Force in November 1939 could be averted by the university with an indispensability check.\footnote{Curator UG to Heinz Krüger, 15/11/1939, UAG PA 4229.} But Krüger could not dodge the draft indefinitely. In late 1941 orders from the Head SiPo (Security Police)/SD in Stettin reached him to report for “long-term emergency service”, admittedly under the condition, that he still be able to work on the Swedish Protocolls.\footnote{“langfristige Notdienstleistung” – Head SiPo/SD Stettin to Curator UG, 11/11/1941, UAG PA 4229.} The nature of his work there is, again, uncertain.\footnote{Krüger’s previous boss in the NSDStB, Karl-Heinz Bendt had transferred to the SD in Stettin, where he rebuilt its Department II and installed a network of informants in Pomerania. Insofar Krüger must have had contact with senior personnel there before. See Mittenzwei, Jan: “‘Dem Führer entgegenarbeiten’. NSD-Studentenbund und NSD-Dozentenbund in Greifswald”, in: Alvermann, Dirk (ed.): “…die letzten Schranken fallen lassen”. Studien zur Universität Greifswald im Nationalsozialismus, Cologne 2015, pp. 90–128, here: 120.} A connection with the establishment of a permanent SD-presence in Northern Europe, which was ostensibly controlled from Stettin, is plausible but unproven. Few resilient facts are known about the work of the SD in Northern Europe. Apart from Otto Kumenius’ self-congratulatory novelizations,\footnote{Salonen, Pekka: Det spioneras i Helsingfors, Stockholm 1945 (published under pseudonym) and Kumenius, Otto: Kontraspion för fem nationer, Stockholm 1984.} most accounts are built on shaky ground. Contributions adhering to scholarly standards consequently refrain from going into details.\footnote{See e.g. McKay, C.G.: From Information to Intrigue. Studies in Secret Service based on the Swedish Experience 1939–1945, New York 1993; Beckh, Joachim: Blitz und Anker. Informationstechnik – Geschichte und Hintergründe, Norderstedt 2005; and Silvenoinen, Oula: Geheime Waffenbrüderschaft. Die sicherheitspolizeiliche Zusammenarbeit zwischen Finnland und Deutschland 1933–1944, Darmstadt 2010. The findings of Lars Westerlund on this topic are to be expected, but are not yet available as of going to press.} Nevertheless, Krüger’s presence in Stettin, diluted as it was by his duties in Greifswald, seems to have been successful enough to warrant his promotion to field service. In August 1943 he was ordered to Stockholm, where the turning tides of war supposedly made a strong foreign cultural political presence necessary. His new posi-
tion was with the German legation, where he ostensibly supervised the NSDAP-\textit{Auslandsorganisation} (NSDAP Foreign Branch) and acted as assistant to Dr. August Finke, the local representative of SD’s Department VI. It can be assumed that Krüger’s primary functions were in the cultural political observation of Swedish public life, even though the SD-branch also dealt with counter-espionage and clandestine information gathering.\footnote{McKay 1993, p. 199, and Roth 2009, pp. 31f.} After the war Krüger became an instructor in the \textit{Bereitschaftspolizei} (Riot Police) in Schleswig-Holstein,\footnote{“Wir brauchen wieder ein Schweden-Institut”, in: Ostholsteiner Anzeiger, 21/08/1956.} whose openness towards former member of the SS was an open secret.\footnote{Johannes Strobl, assistant leader of the Riot Police School in Eutin, where Krüger worked, had e.g. served as captain in an SS-Police Regiment before. The head of the Riot Department of Slesvig-Holsten’s police had been a bataillon commander in the Waffen-SS before. See Podewin, Norbert: Braunbuch. Kriegs- und Naziverbrecher in der Bundesrepublik und in Berlin (West), Berlin 1968, pp. 479f.}

### The Shooting Star – Hans Grellmann

Hans Grellmann was also unable to evade the pull exercised by the ongoing war effort. With the breakout of the Winter War at the latest, the Institute for Finland Studies was faced with a rapidly growing number of requests for assistance. Apart from losing his lecturer in Finnish, Reino Järvinen, who followed the call to arms in December 1939,\footnote{Järvinen to Rector UG, 16/12/1939, UAG R988.} Grellmann was mainly pressed for geographical material and translations. In December 1939, seemingly surprised by the need for and lack of such material, Military District Command II (Stettin) asked the Finnish Institute for maps of Finland, which Grellmann strove to acquire.\footnote{Grellmann to Major Graf Finckenstein (Executive Military District Command II), 11/12/1939 and 15/12/1939, UAG IfF 118.} From there on the Wehrmacht developed an interest in Grellmann’s institute,\footnote{Grellmann worked in his own office, but his CV gave his military status as “Special Service” (Sondereinsatz) from November 23rd 1939. See Curriculum Vitae Hans Grellmann, no date (1940?), UAG PA 220, vol. 4.} which was henceforth endowed with third-party funds. From the so-called “Finnish Fund”, probably an invoice item with Army Command II, the institute received some 460 RM between November 1939 and April 1940. That these funds were allocated for a) the overtime of the junior research assistant, b) a typist...
and c) additional subscriptions to Finnish newspapers, indicates the nature of the work.\textsuperscript{266} Other authorities, such as the Foreign Office,\textsuperscript{267} Air Ministry\textsuperscript{268} and Navy\textsuperscript{269} were also interested in maps and general area information, but only the Foreign Office established a longer-term cooperation with Greifswald. The documents are scarce again, but it seems that Grellmann mostly served with advice and contacts. He for example helped a certain Mr. von Osten, on a not entirely overt diplomatic mission to Helsinki, in finding contacts, coaching him in ways to approach Finns and avoid Russian spies.\textsuperscript{270} When asked to demonstrate the strategic value of his institute in early 1943, Grellmann proudly wrote:

\begin{quote}
The Institute for Finland Studies is the only independent Finnish area institute in Germany; its material – which also covers Eastern Karelia, Ingermanland and all of Lappland and Estonia – can nowhere else be found in this extent, comprehensiveness and accessibility. Consequently the institute has been used in covert work; first during the Finnish-Russian Winter War and the months following by the Executive District Command Stettin. During this time it has been in the service of command centres in Berlin. After the beginning of the cooperation between Germany and Finland, and especially after late autumn 1942, it is primarily the Foreign Office that cooperates with the Institute for Finland Studies. […] I myself am currently employed for covert work by two bureaus within the Foreign Office. Without the material of my institute this work would be impossible.\textsuperscript{271}
\end{quote}

Anyhow, his work proved increasingly difficult. Personnel-wise the Institute for Finland Studies had already been stripped bare as of the writing of the above report. Both Grellmann’s assistants had been drafted into the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[266] Grellmann to Curator UG, 19/06/1940, UAG IfF 118.
\item[267] Foreign Office to Grellmann, 23/05/1941, UAG IfF 118.
\item[268] Grellmann to Air Ministry, 07/05/1941, UAG IfF 118.
\item[269] Naval Observatory Greifswald to Grellmann, 30/06/1944, UAG IfF 118.
\item[270] Grellmann to von Osten (Foreign Office), 13/06/1941, UAG IfF 118.
\end{footnotes}
Wehrmacht and deployed to Finland, their replacement being a female aide without any skills in Finnish. Consequently the Foreign Office, which had increased its initially lacklustre interest in Finland after Franz Alfred Six had taken over the “Cultural Policy Department”, found that Grellmann could be more gainfully employed elsewhere. On August 16th 1943 the Foreign Office opened one of their German Academic Institutes in Helsinki (Deutsche Wissenschaftliche Institute, DWI), with Grellmann as its director. The DWIs were founded in early 1940 and were to serve as scientific centres residing in foreign capitals. Like its sister institutions in Bucharest, Paris, Sofia, Budapest, Belgrade, Copenhagen, Madrid, Athens and Brussels it was to serve as a central agency to coordinate, initiate and strengthen in situ any academic contacts between Germany and the respective country. The DWI Helsinki, over which Grellmann presided, never reached maturity, though. Grellmann had arrived in spring 1943 and immediately began building up the institute. Nevertheless, it took until August to assemble the necessary library and furnish the rooms and thereby make the institute at least partly available to the public. Only in March 1944 did the DWI receive its own rooms, which, after renovation and repair, could serve as the basis for a successful work. Since Grellmann had always argued that propaganda repelled Finns more than it attracted them, overt lecture tours were skipped in favour of academic exchange and representation. However, Grellmann did not have enough time to see any real impact of his work. When he had arrived in mid-1943, the Finns were already contemplating an exit from their increasingly awkward alliance with Germany, and on September 2nd 1944 the Finnish government declared their intent to sign a separate peace treaty with the Soviet Union. With the severance of relations between Helsinki and Berlin, the DWI lost its raison d’être and Grellmann had to leave Finland together with other German functionaries. With Finland out of the war, scholars of Finnish were no longer in high demand and Grellmann was no longer indispensable. Upon returning from Helsinki, Grellmann was drafted into the infantry, where he had already served during the Polish campaign in 1939. He was wounded during the fighting

272 Grellmann to Curator UG, 22/02/1943, UAG IfF 118.
274 CV Grellmann, no date (probably 1940), UAG PA 220, vol. 1.
around Neustettin in February, and died in a Prisoner-of-War-camp near Torun on April 8th 1945.275

The Spy who Went out into the Cold – Johannes Paul

Paul’s situation was similar. Before the start of World War Two, attention to Scandinavian matters had to be fought for, afterwards it had to be fought off. Paul’s Swedish Institute had, much like the Institute for Finland Studies, established a loose cooperation with Army departments before the war, most notably in subscription to the Swedish Protocolls. But, as in the case of the Finnish Institute, the year 1939 marked the watershed for outside claims to the work of the Swedish Institute. In contrast to Grellmann’s institute, these are only sporadically documented, though.

In the winter of 1939, Paul had to cancel his participation in a faculty board meeting, stating that his “superior military authority” had announced its visit. Cryptic references to his “current occupation” do not make the matter clearer.276 Yet, it is indicative of the relative amount of work invested by the Swedish Institute that Paul referred to the military as his new employer. Since neither Paul nor any of his employees ever referred to their “special duties” by name, their nature has to be conjectured. Considering that the majority of work was incurred between winter 1939277 and summer 1940,278 and Paul requested the release of additional personnel with Swedish language skills, a connection with “Operation Weserübung”, the German invasion of Denmark and Norway, and the preceding work around “Studie Nord” (Study North) is plausible.279 Other minor cooperation with state authorities is hinted at in the documents, but due to the short-term nature of these endeavours they are hard to identify in detail.280

275 Circular letter Rector UG and Dean of Philosophical Faculty, 01/10/1945, UAG PA 220, vol. 2.
276 Paul to Dean of Philosophical Faculty UG, 20/11/1939, UAG PA 248.
277 Marked by Paul’s enigmatic remarks in his cancellation of the Faculty Board meeting, see Paul to Dean of Philosophical Faculty UG, 20/11/1939, UAG PA 248.
278 Marked by Magon’s remark in December 1940 that Günther Falk’s enlistment was only possible, because the Nordic Area Institutes were no longer, as they were until July that year, “engaged in immediate military tasks” (durch unmittelbar militärische Aufgaben in Anspruch genommen). – Magon to Curator UG, 04/12/1940, UAG PA 44.
280 His activities seem to have actually caused apprehension as to their extent. In April 1940 Paul had to reassure the Curator that his travel expenses would of course not have
Despite these extensive services, Paul was still eligible for further calls to the flag. In the summer of 1940 Paul received, to the surprise of everybody involved, his conscription papers. But for 1940, a draft was undesirable, and an “indispensability claim” by the Curator was quick to arrive. While Paul fought off his conscription in early 1940, a more worthwhile task had been found for him a year later. On April 21st 1941 he was prompted again to report for service, this time not with the infantry but with Amt Abwehr. Under the custody of Commander Alexander Cellarius, Abwehr had established its own intelligence centre in the North in early 1941. Originally based in Stockholm and Helsinki, the Büro Cellarius bei der HAPAG (Bureau Cellarius of the HAPAG) moved to Helsinki exclusively in July 1942. From there it mostly conducted counter-espionage but would also undertake debriefing of prisoners and allegedly even attacks against the Murmansk-railway. In July 1941, at a point when Paul was already in his employ, Cellarius even commanded a full-blown triphibian operation against Russian fortifications on the Estonian island of Ösel/Saarema. Paul’s position was, as far as can be reconstructed, more humble. His tasks mainly consisted in setting up a network of German informants and agents to counter Russian attempts at infiltrating Finland and to act as a stay-behind force, should the contingency of a Finnish separate peace ever arise.
More detailed information can be gleaned from the book of the Finnish “quintuple-agent” Otto Kumenius.287 As is to be expected within the genre, much of the information is sensationalized, and further distorted by Kumenius’ need to clean up his own stained image within the intelligence community.288 Apart from that, Kumenius also uses nicknames in his 1945 book, even if the real names behind them are hard to guess. Therefore, the “Büro Hoffmann” employs a certain “Captain Peter Klein” for counter-espionage. “Klein”, a professor and doctor of theology in his civilian life, appears as a full-blown National Socialist, suspecting Jews and Freemasons behind the world’s evils.289 In general, “Klein” shows the level of suspicion necessary for a counter-spy but lacks the equally necessary judgement and sound sense.290 Kumenius conveys the episode of an explosion on a German mine-sweeper tied up in a Finnish port, upon which “Klein” flew into an imprisonment frenzy among the dock workers and could only be stopped by news that the explosion had been entirely accidental.291

Paul’s work also seems to have been somewhat less than covert. When the Foreign Ministry asked Paul to give a series of lectures in Helsinki, the German Embassy there advised against it: Paul had been there only weeks before in his function as “member of Wehrmacht in the service of Abwehr” and this was “widely known in Helsinki”.292 Constantly in his army uniform and riding in a characteristic motor launch with a large swastika-flag, Paul was a common sight in the archipelago outside Helsinki.293 The Finnish government seems to have been sufficiently convinced by Paul’s work to award him the Finnish Freedom Cross 4th Class in the spring of 1943.294

287 Published under pseudonym as Salonen.
288 Kumenius peddled his knowledge about the organization of Finnish and German intelligence to several other intelligence agencies. See Aid, Mathew: “‘Stella Polaris’ and the secret code battle in postwar Europe”, in: Intelligence and National Security, 17:3 (2002), pp. 17–86, here: pp. 42f. Consequently Kumenius spares no effort to paint his shuttling between Finnish, German, Swedish, Russian and Western Allied secret services as a patriotic duty.
289 Salonen 1945, pp. 30–32. Because of his strapping Nazi convictions, Kumenius suspects Paul to be a member of the SD. This is, like many of Kumenius’ details, wrong, but perports a general impression that is likely true.
290 Salonen 1945, p. 32.
291 Salonen 1945, pp. 40–44.
292 REM to Rector UG, 03/02/1944, UAG R387.
294 Award certificate, 10/02/1943, DHM – Document Collection – Personal Bequest Johannes Paul.
immediately reported the award as well as his new War Merit Cross 2nd Class to Greifswald, not without sending some die-hard slogans to the colleagues back home: “I use the opportunity to send my best regards to all the comrades at the university. The homeland has gotten to feel quite a bit of the war now, but that will only make it tougher, because there is no other choice now than Germany and Victory. Heil Hitler! – Johannes Paul”.

Opportunity to see them again arose quickly. In autumn 1943 Paul was given leave from the army to prepare the 25th anniversary of the Nordic Area Institutes and to supervise his doctoral students. While his leave was extended until February 28th, Paul was already discharged on February 20th, ostensibly to continue his propaganda work. Kumenius colports that Paul’s career as a spy was cut short by a triple-agent, who happened to work for American as well as Finnish money and who Paul, despite the former’s extensive criminal record, recruited. The fact that Paul then used this agent to inspect high-value installations was a blunder that Kumenius purportedly made public, whereupon Paul was politely promoted out of the organization. To what extent this episode, if at all, took place in the epic form given to it by Kumenius is non-verifiable. Nevertheless, the fact that Paul, upon being discharged from Büro Cellarius, was transferred into the infantry reserve pool lends some credence to the notion that Paul’s farewell from Amt Abwehr was on less than cordial terms.

It might be under this perceived threat of an unsatisfactory army posting that Paul decided to take on a new job. In May 1944 he accepted the post of Head of Country Group North of Radio Europe (Ländergruppe Nord beim Europasender) in Königsberg. Here he helped produce radio programs in Swedish, which were then broadcast to Sweden. Considering that there is

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296 Curator UG to Executive Army Command II, 04/10/1943, UAG PA 248.

297 Regional Military Command Greifswald to Curator UG, 26/02/1944, UAG PA 248.

298 Salonen 1945, pp. 90–97.

299 Paul to Papritz, 05/02/1944, BA R153/1711. Paul reported that he would be assigned to Landesschützen-Ersatz- und Ausbildungsbataillon (Replacement- and Training Battalion for older personnel or those unfit for front-line duty) and his military future was unclear.

300 Curator UG to Dean PhilFak UG, 25/05/1944, UAG PA 248, Bd. 2. Paul was posted on the express wish of the Ministry of Propaganda.

301 Memorandum by Curator UG, 25/05/1944, PA 248.
little existing research on Radio Europe, information about Paul’s work there is scarce. Nevertheless this posting netted a draft-exemption by the Ministry of Propaganda, which allowed Paul to return to Greifswald from time to time to uphold the function of the Swedish Institute.302

When Königsberg came under increasing pressure by advancing Red Army forces in the first months of 1945, Paul’s work there became immaterial. But even in Greifswald, where he returned to, the situation was rapidly deteriorating. Pushed out of his institute by the RSHA and with Russian forces approaching, Paul joined a hastily formed Volkssturm-unit in the last days of April.303 After the unit surrendered on Rügen Island, Paul was captured by Russian troops. After his identity had been established, he was taken to Berlin-Karlshorst, where he was interrogated by the NKVD304 before being taken to Moscow. After months of intermittent interrogations, Paul was sentenced to ten years of penal service, which he spent in prison camps in Kazakhstan.305 He returned to West Germany in 1955, by that time 64 years of age and almost blind after an altercation with a Russian inmate.306

In the end, the wartime postings of Greifswald’s scholars are similar to the findings of the previous chapter about Johannes Paul and his Swedish Protocolls. The increased political interest in Northern Europe, vague and indistinct as it may have been, led to increased opportunities and funding in academia. Nevertheless, this interest tended to override the necessities of academia. In an atmosphere of Nordic mania, the Area Institutes could not hold on to their personnel to the degree necessary to uphold research and teaching, a development that was reinforced by the war. An important factor is the peculiarity of Area Studies, in that its special knowledge was immobile. Where the sciences and engineering could conduct their work at the universities and feed their specific knowledge into the industry, in the form of processes and products, social scientists found this much more difficult. Where geographers at least could turn their knowledge into maps,

302 Checklist on present personnel in UG, 01/12/1944, BA R4901/14767.
303 Dean of Philosophical Faculty UG (Magon) to Curator UG, 03/09/1945, UAG PA 2445.
304 People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Russian police, secret police and espionage agency.
306 Siglinde Paul in an interview with the author on 22/10/2008.
area experts could at the most transform their knowledge into briefings or press observation. Given enough time, area experts could be trained, but especially under wartime-conditions this was not an option. Even then, if language skills and cultural background knowledge were to be made use of, they often demanded a physical presence. Under such circumstances, the exploits of Greifswald’s Nordic scholars meant a thorough deprivation of academia. The flip side of the attractiveness of Nordic expertise was that careers outside academia became not only enforcable by enlistment but seemingly also more attractive. It is telling that only a small number of Greifswald’s Nordic scholars remained in academia after the war.

IV.5 Loyal Opposition – Leopold Magon and the Passive Resistance of Academia

While Paul and Grellmann invested their institutes’ work in cooperation with state, army, intelligence community and party, extensive cooperation with the regime was not the only option. The following chapter will investigate alternative strategies to relate to the totalitarian claim to rights of National Socialism, by examining the development of Leopold Magon and historian Ulrich Noack. As a counterpoint to Grellmann and Paul, their cases illustrate the limits, but also the possibilities of traditional academia. It is argued that recourse to a preservation of academic autonomy was not necessarily the product of fundamental opposition towards the political system, but at least partly a strategic choice to secure individual positions. One hand, restraint in cooperation with National Socialist authorities need not necessarily reflect political distance, but can equally well be explained by personal experiences of marginalization at the hands of ambitious junior personnel. On the other hand, where academics refrained from undesired political activity and showed a degree of good conduct, their comparatively autonomous position in academia was respected. This was arguably made possible by the specifically National Socialist practice of building up scientific and scholarly institutions in competition to traditional academia.  

While this move incentivized opportunism, particularly

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from younger scholars like Grellmann and Paul, this “counter-academia” also relieved pressure from academia to conform to totalitarian demands, and gave settled professors a position where they could retain a measure of autonomy.

Leopold Magon and National Socialism

Not all objections to National Socialism were necessarily based on fundamental disagreement. The “Machtergreifung von unten” (Assumption of Power from Below), as it was carried out in Greifswald in 1933, created political divisions where they need not necessarily have existed. In the traditionally conservative town the National Socialist campaign of terror had served less to depose genuine political enemies but more to intimidate political rivals. In the town, lawyer Johannes Aumüller was arrested and taken to a concentration camp, whence he returned as a broken man of ill health. The reason for the attack against the politically inactive dignitary was denunciation from a competitor, who was in good standing with the NSDAP-Gauleiter.308 In the university as well, many attacks were motivated less by political leanings and more by opportunity. Jews, Communists, Social Democrats and Liberals were rare, and the category of “reactionary” was malleable, wherefore denunciations could hit randomly. Gustav Braun and Wolfgang Stammler were positively disposed towards National Socialism, but suffered discrimination anyway.309

Leopold Magon had previously not given indications of being fundamentally opposed to National Socialist ideologemes. Before his marginalization in the affair around Stellan Arvidson he had participated in the NSDStB’s publication “For the German Spirit” (Für den deutschen Geist). The brochure, in which the NS-students tried to set a patriotic counterpoint to the “seditious” literature they had publically burned, included articles about nationalist writers and artists, and recommended these to the reader. Magon contributed a piece about the spirit of sacrifice, in which he contrasted the specifically German mentality of the Hero with the Anglo-Saxon mentality of the Trader. While the Trader, he expounded, only asked what life could give him, the Hero asked, what he could give. The sacrifice and experience of the soldiers of World War One was thus elevated into a

greater German spirit, which found its highest expression in self-sacrifice and heroic death.310

Sharing some ideologemes with National Socialism, Magon and other professors kept their distance not only due to political disagreement, even where it existed. An equally large role was arguably played by the experience of a break-in into academia and the subsequent threat to the status of the settled academics. For Magon, who had abstained from political activity during the Weimar Republic,311 a major representation of this experience of marginalization would be the rise of his assistant, Johannes Paul. The relation between them was shattered, and even though they cooperated selectively to preserve their common autonomy against external pressure, personal animosities largely shaped the interaction between them. Correspondence addressed to Magon would sometimes end up on Paul’s desk when he was Acting Director of the Nordic Area Institutes, and Paul, at least that was what Magon lamented, would make it a habit of forwarding this mail one day before the due date.312 Grellmann, with whom Paul got along brilliantly, never filed such complaints. An incident in 1938 shows the extent of this adversity, which had permeated their families and social circles. Magon complained in writing that Paul’s wife had inquired about the religious denomination of Magon’s secretary, insinuating that Magon only ever hired Catholics. Magon consequently demanded an apology, which was sharply refuted by Paul: “To this point I remark that the denomination of an employee is so irrelevant to a National Socialist that I could not even give any specific information concerning my closest collaborators.”313 Furthermore Paul insisted that this was a malicious misunderstanding on the side of Ms. Magon, and that a retraction of the ut-

310 Eberle 2015, pp. 58f.
311 Magon’s “natural” political home would have been the Centre-Party (Zentrumspartei). From 1906 to 1934 he was a member of the “Verband katholischer Studenten” (Association of Catholic Students). Through his father-in-law he had strong connections to the Centre-Party, but membership would have constituted a hindrance for an academic career in Prussia, where the majority of universities were Protestant. In 1940 Magon joined the NSDAP, but kept his membership secret, claiming to only have been a candidate. In 1945 he joined the Christian-Democratic Union (Christdemokratische Union, CDU), whose early programme coincided largely with that of the old Centre Party. See UAG Nachlass Leopold Magon 48 and Eberle 2015, pp. 777f.
312 Magon to REM, 15/11/1937 and 13/01/1938, UAG R406.
terances concerned was an unacceptable demand that offended his honour as a German officer. If Magon insisted, Paul would have to take “appropriate steps”.314 If this was a serious invitation to a duel is left deliberately open, but this rebuttal seems to have forced Magon to give in. Paul, meanwhile, concluded his letter with the cynical words: “Maybe I will finally manage to track down those, who repeatedly try – much to my regret successfully – to poison the air between us.”315 With Paul flaunting his National Socialist backing so openly, Magon could not be expected to relate positively to the regime.

The Resistance of Academia

This feud also reflected in an institutional marginalization of Magon’s position. When Otto Fingerhut, NS-student but still ostensibly loyal to Magon,316 left the university in 1937, the decision about his successor was not taken in Magon’s favour. Since Paul had lamented about the lack of an assistant before, he had been granted one in the form of Günther Falk, who now advanced to be assistant of the Nordic Area Institutes, leaving Magon with no assistant of his own. This was aggravated by the fact that Magon had three institutes under his own directorship and was more involved in the management of the Germanic Seminar, where there were only two to three full professors. Furthermore, after Falk chose a different career path in 1939 his position was never refilled and the only full assistant’s position within the Nordic Area Institutes resided with the Swedish Institute. While Magon had at least been formally entitled to call upon the help of Falk, no such possibility was left for him now. This was not just a serious hindrance in the management of a very correspondence-heavy job, the lack of an assistant also meant that a professor was academically neutered. Without a reliable grant-system in place, the assistant was the one position with which a professor could foster young talent. Considering Magon’s position as a full

316 As evidenced by the fact that Fingerhut seemed to try his best to keep Magon abreast of the developments within the university, which Magon was seemingly unaware of, especially the gathering disfavour against him in connection with the von der Goltz-villa and Arthur Kunstmann’s honorary doctorate. See Magon to Friedrich Krüger, 15/04/1933, UAG R186.
professor and director of three university institutes this was a notable loss in station.

The channels, through which these decisions were made, were in National Socialist hands, and Paul enjoyed a better standing there. But the corporatist spirit of the established professors, who had less to gain from cooperation with the political system, still afforded Magon a degree of protection and support. In 1938 physician Karl Reschke, acting as Vice Chancellor, wrote a letter to the Ministry of Education. In agreement with his successor, art historian Kurt Wilhelm-Kästner, and the future Dean of the Philosophical Faculty, botanist Paul Metzner, he requested that Paul be replaced with Magon in the position of director of the Nordic Area Institutes:

Professor Magon has been objected to for a time on the grounds that he had supposedly worked for the Centre Party. I, too, believed that, but have, after thorough investigations, found the opposite to be true. He is indeed Catholic, but has, at the beginning of the 1930s, crushed efforts by the Catholic professors to form a Centre Association among them. I know from the Vice Chancellor of Münster that he has never abetted the Centre Party there and that he, in contrast, extracted one of his relatives from Centre circles. Magon’s character is beyond reproach. His scientific performance is superior to Paul’s.317

This was a remarkable development since only eight months before the Dozentenbund had received an unfavourable assessment of Magon from Amt Rosenberg’s cultural political supervision department. Magon was considered politically Catholic by all sources and had purportedly only gained his first professorship through the intervention of his father-in-law, Leo Schwering. Schwering had been removed from school service in 1933 because of his centrist and anti-National Socialist sentiments and maintained close contact with Catholic circles around later cardinal Josef Frings.318 In light of this assessment, it is surprising that Paul actually had to

318 Schwering later became one of the founders of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the Rhinelands in 1945. See Herbers, Winfried: “Leo Schwering (1883–1971)”,

193
hand his directorate over to Magon. The background for the decision is not documented, but the refusal by Lund University to continue the traditional inter-university conventions with Greifswald, which had just happened few months before, can have played a role in this decision, as can the mounting complaints about Paul’s behaviour abroad and domestically.

Especially Paul’s use of his National Socialist connections for his feud against Magon would have irritated the university leadership. The universities had lost a sizable degree of their autonomy to other institutions since 1933 – the ministry and other NS-organizations, chief among them the Dozentenbund, held important veto-positions in the process of appointing professors319 and even established professors were regularly relegated by the ministry. But the rectorate and the faculties had also proven willing to defend their authority, where it did not conjure up direct conflict with superordinate offices.320 That Paul had – ostensibly on more than one occasion – handed in negative assessments of colleagues to the Dozentenbund, while Hermann Brüske had denounced Magon as politically unreliable,321 was thus more than uncollegial behaviour. Circumventing the Vice Chancellor and the Dean to address superordinate offices and thereby effect personnel changes in the university was a challenge to the authority of the university leadership. Even though more than a year passed between Paul’s usolicited assessments and his removal from the post of director, it is likely that this transgression played a role in his relegation. Even though the academic field had lost much of its autonomy, the actors were still willing and able to defend their territory.


319 A 1933-reform had separated the qualification to teach (Lehrbefähigung) from the license to teach (Lehrbefugnis). The universities could now no longer appoint senior lecturers, which was the prerequisite for appoint to a professorship. Instead they awarded the Dr. hab., which attested to the academic qualification for position in higher education. The ministry and a number of other state and party organizations – seemingly including the Gestapo – judged the ideological and personal suitability of a candidate and then decided if the status of senior lecturer (Dozent) would be conferred. See Eberle 2015, pp. 205f.


321 Magon to Leick, 19/12/1936 and 13/03/1937, UAG PA 241.
The Conditional Autonomy of Academia

This was at least partially accepted by the political field. The totalitarian claim of the NS-regime was less than total, in that its intrusions into academia were designed to produce compliance, and reduce challenges and interferes from this field. The regime did have a comprehensive grip on the careers of younger academics, and it had purged the university staff and demonstrated its power in 1933. But the NS-educational policy did not threaten the established professors directly, which made an equilibrium possible. As long as academics showed outward compliance, the regime kept overt intrusions into academia to a minimum.

For Leopold Magon, the primarily example of this arrangement in the Nordic Area Institutes, this meant a number of compromises. While he did join the NSDAP in 1940, his simultaneous enlistment into Wehrmacht spared him from the obligations for extracurricular work in the party. Magon did not produce any major publication during the Third Reich, but the dissertations he supervised reflect the spirit of compromise between scholarly standards and political accommodation. Otto Fingerhut, the last assistant hired under Magon’s aegis, was a traditional literary, whose study about “Kong Olger Danskis Krønike”, a 16th century tale about a Danish prince at the court of Charlemagne, did not touch on politically relevant topics. The next doctoral student, Eiður Kvaran, was less traditional in his topic. Even though, his thesis about genetics and kinship in ancient Iceland found Magon’s approval: “It [the thesis] is characterized by a good knowledge of the eligible Ancient Norse literature and a certitude in recognizing racial biological thought pattern, and reveals an equally good education in racial biology as in literary history. That the topic in itself is important nowadays, certainly needs no further explanation.” Kvaran died from tuberculosis in 1939, so that the promised support for his further career came to nought, but the favourable assessment by Magon showcases his ability to come to terms with National Socialist ideology. That Magon, on the other hand, was not

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322 Eberle 2015, pp. 777f. Magon later claimed that by 1940 he had to join the party on pain of being removed from office. To reduce the obligations this entailed, he ostensibly pushed for his own enlistment. See UAG Nachlass Magon 48.

willing to let standards slip is evidenced by Kvaran’s friend Wolf Helmut Wolf-Rottkay. His thesis, in which he expounded on the importance of an unbroken linguistic tradition ranging back to ancient times for modern Icelandic national pride, was chided by Magon for identifying too strongly with Icelandic endeavours to promote their historical linguistic continuity and thereby accepting skewed and propagandistic views. The same criticism could have been levelled against Kvaran’s work, which had presented rather one-sided interpretations of ancient Icelandic texts. The deciding factor, it seems, was that criticizing a dissertation about racial biology would have made Magon politically vulnerable, a danger that a thesis about Icelandic language history did not present.

Another case of this conditional autonomy of academia was historian Ulrich Noack. Noack was, to all intents and purposes, a failed public intellectual, and already had a spotted career when he arrived in Greifswald in the summer of 1941. His earlier works had tackled the biographies of Otto von Bismarck and John Dalberg-Acton and had established Noack as a talented historian with a broad view and a good writing style, even if his oeuvre received mixed reviews. But Noack had also proven an eagerness to engage in political matters, which regularly led to complications. This was not because Noack was necessarily opposed to National Socialism. Noack was a liberal democrat during the Weimar Republic, but soon sought a rapprochement with National Socialism, particularly because the Dozentenbund had barred him from receiving a professorship. His attempts to express his loyalties for the National Socialist government failed quite spectacularly, though, because Noack lacked an understanding for the intricacies of realpolitik.

In 1935, while acting as Lecturer at Frankfurt University, Noack had published an article in the British journal *Spectator*, in which he proposed a large-scale reordering of colonial possessions. Unbeknownst to Noack and his friend Arnold Toynbee, who had encouraged him to publish it, the article came at a time when the NSDAP and the Foreign Office were debating the topic of colonies and Hitler had just referred all colonial

324 Wolf-Rottkay, Wolf Helmut: Das Bewusstsein einer undurchbrochenen sprachlichen Überlieferung als Ausdruck isländischen Nationalstolzes, Greifswald 1943.
policy-decisions to Joachim von Ribbentropp. That the opinion-piece was presumed by the British and French press to be an official German attempt to test the waters for colonial demands was thus highly undesirable to German authorities. With help from a friend in the Ministry of Education, Noack was taken out of the line of fire by awarding him a grant to write a history of the Nordic countries. Being married to a Norwegian woman and commanding the language, Noack’s broad historical approach and talent in writing qualified him for such a task, and in 1937 he migrated to Oslo with his family. The attempt to keep Noack out of political trouble by sending him to Norway failed, though. In 1939 the Foreign Office appointed him cultural attache due to his good relations with the local elites, and in this function Noack encouraged the leader of the Norwegian National Socialist Party, Vidkun Quisling, to travel to Berlin and present his plans for Norway’s political development. With no insight into internal discussions in Berlin and relying on official propaganda to elicit the interests of the regime, Noack had misjudged the situation again. At that point in time the German leadership did not want to interfere in Norwegian domestic politics, and the visit was thus unwelcome. In May 1940, after German forces had invaded Norway and the Norwegian government and king had fled to England, Noack committed a further error of judgement, which resulted in his expulsion from Norway. In a memorandum he proposed that Germany have the members of the parliament who still remained in Norway strip the exiled government of its powers and appoint Quisling as interim head of government. After new elections, which could be rigged, the new government could ask for the king’s return and in the case of non-compliance make their own peace treaty with Germany. Again, Noack had mistaken the official propaganda line for the actual intents of German officials, who wished neither to elevate Quisling to a position of legitimate power nor to conclude a peace treaty while Norway was needed as a base of operations against England. Noack was consequently prompted to leave the country immediately, and could only stay for a few months more because of his position at Oslo University.327

Because of Noack’s earlier aberrations, the ministry had already appointed him to Greifswald in 1939, but only in the spring of 1941 did Noack decide that he “would rather not keep the thorny post in Oslo, if it is not absolutely

necessary”, \(^{328}\) and would instead prefer to work in the Norwegian Institute in Greifswald. \(^{329}\) Noack had previously finished the first of three intended volumes of his Nordic History. \(^{330}\) The reception was good: Even though *Amt Rosenberg* indexed it as “not to be supported”, the book, which was aimed at a wider audience, sold well and received an award from the German Academy. Paul, who reviewed the book for the university leadership, found warm words, even though he mildly critized the noticeably pro-Norwegian perspective and the employment of the term “Nordic”, on the grounds that they were not fully in line with current political strategy. \(^{331}\) In so far, Noack was qualified to take over a teaching post in the Nordic Area Institute. Despite the fact that Greifswald had received negative assessments about Noack, it saw no reason to bar him entry. In light of pervasive slander, encouraged by the ideological control of the *Dozentenbund* and the competitive academic environment, conflicting assessments were not unusual. And since the nature of Noack’s faux pas was only know to a few insiders, the negative comments about Noack’s character seemed unjustified. \(^{332}\)

In Greifswald Noack’s position was sufficiently secure. The *Dozentenbund*, would still not allow him a professorship, but was seemingly content with him taking a quiet position in a peripheral university, as long as Noack stayed away from politically sensitive topics. This is evidenced in the treatment of Noack after the 1941 NOFG Stralsund Conference. Still officially in the

\(^{328}\) “[Ich] möchte den “dornigen Posten” in Olso eigentlich nicht behalten, wenn es nicht unbedingt notwendig ist.” – Noack to Papritz, 27/03/1941, BA R153/1219.

\(^{329}\) Noack to Papritz, 27/03/1941, BA R153/1219.

\(^{330}\) Noack, Ulrich: Geschichte der nordischen Völker. vol. 1: Nordische Frühgeschichte und Wikingerzeit, Munich 1941.

\(^{331}\) Eberle 2015, p. 393. Eberle’s conclusion that Paul criticized Noack for not including the Germans is difficult to follow. In his assessment for the university leadership (UAG PA 2445) Paul merely remarked that it deviated from current German usage: “One can argue if the name “Nordic” history is well-chosen. We are now wont to consciously stress that the leading people in the Nordic race is the Germans, while a conscious difference between Nordic and German is made in Scandinavia. By employing the Scandinavian terminology, which is ultimately aimed against us, we therefore support a usage that is detrimental to us.” (Man kann darüber streiten, ob der Name “nordische” Geschichte glücklich gewählt ist. Wir pflegen jetzt bewusst zu unterstreichen, dass das führende Volk der nordischen Rasse das Deutsche ist, während man in Skandinavien bewusst einen Unterschied zwischen nordisch und deutsch macht. Durch Aufnahme der in Skandinavien üblichen und letzten Endes gegen uns gemünzten Bezeichnung unterstützen wir also den uns abträglichen Sprachgebrauch.). Paul’s assessment made clear that, while he did not agree with all of Noack’s scholarship, he still found it interesting and well-done.

\(^{332}\) Eberle 2015, p. 393.
employ of the German legation in Oslo, Noack had given a report about the public opinion in Norway. His assessment was obviously pessimistic, as the report was afterwards leaked to the Dozentenbund. The affair only ended more than a year later, after Noack had had a personal interview with the SD, and he hoped not to have any further problems, especially in his appointment to professor.\textsuperscript{333} Details are scarce on the matter, but the fact that Noack subsequently focussed on revising his Nordic History and was invited to the 1944 NOFG-conference, but did not speak, suggest that he was strongly advised to abstain from overt political activity.

The success of Noack’s book and his retreat into largely unpolitical work granted him a secure position in a still relatively autonomous academic cosmos. In the wider reaches of Nordic scholarship, though, the affair around him had caused apprehension. Kiel’s historian Otto Scheel was particularly alarmed and wondered, if one would henceforth be able to mention less favourable developments in Northern Europe:

> Especially that which has supposedly happened to Noack has made me question if we – who know the North, and know it possibly better than some, who have only engaged with it for a few months or years at the most – should still speak up, and be it ever so softly and – as a matter of course – from a deep sense of responsibility for people and fatherland and for the common future, which arises from this war. I am still doubtful if it was particularly the report in Stralsund which Noack was accused of, but it seems to have played a role, if I cannot discern its extent.\textsuperscript{334}

Scheel was right in doubting the extent to which the report in Stralsund was to be blamed for Noack’s harsh treatment at the hands of the Dozentenbund. To the regime, its intrusion into academia was subject to cost calculations, and keeping Noack under supervision, ensuring his withdrawal into largely unpolitical work, was worth more than ridding itself of another qualified expert for Northern European affairs. This in mind, where scholars refrained

\textsuperscript{333} Scheel an Kohte (PuSte), 13/06/1942, BA R153/1254.

\textsuperscript{334} “Gerade das, was angeblich Noack widerfahren ist, hat mir die Frage geweckt, ob nun wirklich wir, die wir den Norden kennen, und vielleicht besser kennen als manche, die erst einige Monate, höchstens einige Jahre mit ihm sich befaßt haben, noch das Wort nehmen sollen, selbst wenn es noch so behutsam geschieht und auch, was im übrigen selbstverständlich ist, aus tiefster Verantwortung für Volk und Vaterland und auch vor der gemeinsamen, aus diesem Kriege empor steigenden Zukunft erwächst. Mir bleibt freilich zweifelhaft, ob grade der Stralsunder Bericht Noack zum Vorwurf gemacht worden ist. Immerhin scheint er aber eine, wenn auch mir nicht erkennbare Rolle gespielt zu haben.” – Scheel to Kohte (PuSte), 13/06/1942, BA R153/1254.
from rubbing against realpolitik, their withdrawal into academia was still evidently possible, and – as Magon and Noack show – this was an option where political cooperation was either impossible or had failed.

IV.6 When the Third Reich Fell

The Third Reich was a tumultuous period for the Nordic Institute. What it saw was not the first, but the first major political-academic shift in its history. The political changes of 1918 had been entirely environmental and changed the tasking of the Nordic Institute somewhat, while not touching its personnel or structure. It was different in 1933, when local politics were energized by events in Berlin, and the uproar among the predominantly National Socialist students led to the abdication of Gustav Braun and the marginalization of Leopold Magon.

Both affairs were connected with political concerns, but were ultimately individual affairs. The issues that led to the attacks against both of them had already existed as tensions before 1933, waiting to burst. In Braun’s case it was his imperious and self-serving behaviour that antagonized people around him, but while his colleagues had had the power to keep him away, junior personnel and students had built up frustration with him that was channelled into the attacks on him in early 1933. Leopold Magon, on the other hand, had frustrated some people, definitely Paul and probably the more energetic students, but he had made himself vulnerable with his inept handling of the affair around Stellan Arvidson. In both cases, the outcome was the elevation of the assistants into positions of power and responsibility. While both assistants pushed their masters when they began falling it would be wrong to attribute the events entirely to them. Instead, the process was a generational conflict in a specific historical situation, which was shaped by the burst of power that the organized students held. Habitus and cultural capital of the established full professors was for a time devalued, even though this process was partially reversed in the second half of the 1930s. Even though the political system exerted significant control over academia by controlling the advancement of younger scholars the intermittent relegation of undesirable professors, the relationship between academia and politics approached an equilibrium. The university leadership was willing and able to selectively defend its decreased autonomy, while the regime accepted this autonomy where scholars showed good conduct and refrained from openly challenging the political system.
For those who owed their elevated status to National Socialism and the political sphere, it paid to invest in transactions with the regime. The most glaring example is Johannes Paul, who made a veritable career outside the university walls. Having been swept up on the understanding of a stronger orientation of his institute to public diplomacy-tasks, Paul attempted a number of ways of working the National Socialist angle. In teaching this was easiest but still fraught with setbacks, since overtly politics-of-the-day approaches were stymied until the NSDStB took a firm hold in the universities. A similar picture presents itself in research and cultural political activities, where new forms were tested and often enough proved untenable or not yet sufficiently thought-out. The Third Reich saw the first attempt at an interdisciplinary research approach falter. National Socialist notions of “Fighting Academia” (Kämpferische Wissenschaft) and racial biology facilitated an integration of different disciplines as well as an increased concern for political utility. Nevertheless, innovation did not cover up the fact that a close association with National Socialism was not conducive to efficiency. On the one hand, many of the interdisciplinary – mostly politological – studies were never finished, either because the workload of other projects overcame or because of the difficulties of combining scholarly standards and political utility. On the other hand, the public diplomacy of the Nordic Area Institutes failed. Between incentives to demonstrate goal-oriented activity to the political system and a growing frustration over Northern European disapproval of German policy, the international contacts of the area institutes – the Swedish Institute in particular – became increasingly propagandistic. Nevertheless, the frustration of public diplomacy-approaches to the North, Sweden in particular, also functioned as a catalyst for a serious re-thinking of ethnic and romantic interpretations of Northern Europe. Even though circumstances did not allow this rethinking to develop further, it likely contributed to the surge of politological studies that appeared in Greifswald during the war years.

The greatest pay-off came from projects that directly benefitted state agencies, such as the Swedish Protocols that Johannes Paul prepared in his institute. This was so successful that Magon and Grellmann also began preparing such press clippings in their institutes, if to a much lesser extent. With the outbreak of the war, which saw some of its early hotspots in Finland, Denmark and Norway, the Swedish Protocols expanded significantly due to interest by the military, but after these hotspots had ebbed away the Swedish Institute’s budget could not handle the expansion. A cooperation with NOFG secured a steady flow of resources for Paul’s
project, but brought with it new limitations. In the polycratic structure of
the Third Reich, navigating the interests of different power conglomerates
was difficult. The Ministry of Propaganda did not tolerate “atrocity
propaganda” and severely reduced the spread of the protocols, while other
authorities watched closely over their monopolies of information. This led
to increasing demands for changes in the design of the protocols, cul-
minating in a conflict with the new patron of the NOFG, the RSHA. By
latching onto an institution in the political sphere, Paul had managed to
secure resources and – by proxy – power that were unavailable to him in an
exclusively academic setting, but he had also made his work subject to the
logic and limitations of the political sphere. By 1944 he found his project
faced with demands to reduce it to mere legwork for the Himmler-complex
and, upon showing himself unwilling to accommodate these, saw his project
seized from him.

A similar development was the acquisition of personnel from Greifswald
for the SS, Gestapo and army. While the promotion of Nordic Area experts
as valuable resources for state offices accosted scholars a considerable
number of advantages, it also meant that they became subject to direct
access by those state offices. All the Nordic Area Institutes saw a successive
appropriation of their personnel by other authorities, not only but pre-
dominantly after the outbreak of the war, which left the Nordic Area
Institutes largely defunct by 1945.
CHAPTER V
The Nordic Institute again (1945–1968)

In early 1945 the breakdown of the old order was imminently tangible. The city’s population more than doubled within a few weeks, with some 30,000 refugees coming from the already overrun parts of Pomerania and 10,500 wounded lying in the university’s hospitals. In this situation the commander of the city’s garrison, Rudolf Petershagen, was convinced by dignitaries of the city to surrender to the approaching Red Army. Together with his assistant, Max Otto Wurmbach, the university’s Vice Chancellor, Carl Engel and head of the university’s clinics, Gerhard Katsch, he conspiratorially negotiated a bloodless capitulation.¹

While this courageous act saved the city and by extension the physical aspects of the Nordic Area Institutes from destruction, the latter were still dysfunctional. For all intents and purposes they had ceased their activity in 1944. The assistants had been posted abroad or taken over by agencies elsewhere. Hans Grellmann had been drafted into the army upon returning from Finland and died in one of the last battles of the war. Johannes Paul had been working mostly in Königsberg, and, once this was no longer possible, had joined the Volkssturm for a last act of heroism. He would only return to Greifswald in 1990. The last two people at their post were Leopold Magon and his secretary, Lotte Albonico. Magon had tried to uphold normal operations as far as his military duties allowed but, with the university closed, all he could do was to keep up appearances. A headcount for the Curator, just days after the official end of hostilities, showed the malaise. Apart from Magon, who had not been detained despite being an officer, the academic personnel was limited to Reino Järvinen and Guido Schneider.² Järvinen, who had been Greifswald’s Lecturer in Finnish since 1935, had only recently returned to

² Leopold Magon to Curator UG, 17/05/1945, UAG R191.
Greifswald after his military service as a translator at Finnish Army Headquarters. Due to the general disruption of the immediate post-war era he did not actually lecture. Even though Finnish wouldn’t be taught in Greifswald for another ten years, Järvinen still stayed in Greifswald with his family and acted as a reserve lecturer. Schneider’s presence, on the other hand, was entirely accidental. A retired professor of marine biology in Dorpat, he had found himself, together with many other refugees from Germany’s eastern provinces, in Greifswald, with little in the way of options. He was appointed to the position as lecturer in Swedish in the Nordic Institute, even though no language training took place, but the position provided him with accommodation. Apart from these social reasons, Magon also kept the two inactive lecturers on the payroll in the hopes of being able to reopen the institutes, should an opportunity present itself.

V.1 “…nothing beside remains” – The long Hiatus of Northern European Studies (1945–1956)

This was not an immediate prospect, though. Following the collapse of the Third Reich, the situation in Greifswald was one of uncertainty. On the one hand, the Nordic Area Institutes had been compromised by their extensive cooperation with National Socialist agencies and vocal support for the regime by some of its exponents. Even though the personnel that remained in Greifswald was largely uninvolved in these activities – and Magon had had the opportunity to sanitize the records of the institutes – this was a stumbling block to a future reopening. On the other hand, the political and social order had largely collapsed. The German state had for all practical purposes ceased to exist and, at least in the first few months, Red Army

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4 Leopold Magon to Curator UG, 17/05/1945, UAG R 191. Documentation for this period is scarce and it is not entirely clear how and even whether the employees of the Nordic Institute were paid and what form their employment took at all.

5 Magon to Curator UG, 03/12/1945, UAG K636. This fact is only documented because a former external translator requested payment for work that had been commissioned by Paul. Magon reported that he could not reconstruct the bill as he had destroyed all files by order of Carl Engel, shortly before the surrender of the town.
troops and former forced labourers roamed the land. Rape, pillage, arson and murder were regular occurrences, and all the while Russian officers and hastily installed German communists in local administrations tried to restore public life to a semblance of order. Faced with food shortages and a quickly devaluing currency, the Soviet Military Administration in Germany kept issuing decrees and creating facts, making a predictable administrative action illusory.\(^6\)

With the majority of both academic staff and student body absent, Leopold Magon could do little but manage the now basically empty institutes. When in early 1946 the university administration decreed the von der Goltz-villa to be made ready to house refugees, Magon became seriously concerned about the long-term prospects of the Nordic Area Institutes.\(^7\) While it was probable that the institutes would stay just as defunct as the rest of the university for the time being, it seemed important that their technical working ability was not limited too far. In that case they might never be re-opened at all.

**Magon’s Campaigns**

Magon, who had been elected Dean of the Philosophical Faculty in June 1945, therefore began campaigning for a re-establishment of the Nordic Area Institutes. He petitioned the government of the newly constituted *Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* to re-open the Nordic Institute in late 1946. His memorandum was mainly a historical reckoning with the past era, and while Magon could hardly deny that “the ambition to actively engage with political events had also invaded the walls of the Nordic Area Institutes”,\(^8\) he still insisted that this fraternization with National Socialism had been an individual, not a systemic, phenomenon. Accusations of an involvement of the Nordic Area Institutes in the justification of National Socialist ideology

\(^6\) Mathiesen 2000, pp. 449–463.

\(^7\) The institutes were to be moved into the refectory, where there turned out to be very little space left. The rooms designated for the library did not have the necessary structural stability to allow for shelves to be put up. This left the institute’s library and personnel in a situation that could best be described as “storage”. See Magon to Rector UG, 20/02/1946 and Magon to Curator UG, 26/10/1946, both UAG R177.

\(^8\) “*der Ehrgeiz, aktiv in die politischen Schicksale einzugehen, auch in die Mauern der Nordischen Auslandsinstitute eingedrungen ist*” – Memorandum on the future organization and task of the Nordic Area Institutes of Greifswald University, 09/10/1946, UAG K628.
could, therefore, be turned aside with the remark that those responsible could easily be named and thereby expelled and the discipline cleansed. While Paul and Krüger, both of whom had left Greifswald and were unlikely to return anytime soon, were to be blamed for a significant number of transgressions of basic scholarly rules, Magon argued, he himself had tried as much as possible to keep himself out of NS propaganda efforts. The same was true of Grellmann, Magon continued, whose love of Finland was genuine and not characterized by political motives.9

What was true on an individual level, was true on an institutional level, he claimed. Institutions like the Nordic Society in Lübeck and the School of Politics (Hochschule für Politik) and Foreign Policy Faculty (Auslandswissenschaftliche Fakultät) in Berlin had either been brought in line with Nazi politics or been founded in their spirit in the first place. These institutions had been deeply compromised in the eyes of the Scandinavians, which was not true of the Nordic Institute. In light of its history and the widespread understanding that the Swedish Institute was not representative of the Nordic Institute, the Nordic Institute still commanded respect in the North and was considered a valuable link with Germany. With Greifswald’s unique position as the only German site of interdisciplinary and contemporary research into Scandinavian matters and its still amiable reception in the North, Magon advised a reopening of the Nordic Institute, preferably under its old name. He even went so far as to forestall the Curator’s veto by insisting on the frugality of the traditional Nordic Institute, where there were generally not too many assistant’s positions anyway.10 In this historical situation, Leopold Magon’s memorandum was less of an offensive sally to effect the reopening of the Nordic Institute and more of a defensive rejection of insinuations of too close a relationship between Northern European Studies and National Socialism, aimed at preventing the final closure of the Nordic Institute. If this push was successful is difficult to distinguish. The Nordic Institute stayed inactive, but it was not officially dismantled.

Magon had in the meantime in early 1946 managed to secure the services of Odorich de Pers to teach Swedish,11 even if the classes were held under

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9 Memorandum on the future organization and task of the Nordic Area Institutes of Greifswald University, 09/10/1946, UAG K628.
10 Memorandum on the future organization and task of the Nordic Area Institutes of Greifswald University, 09/10/1946, UAG K628.
11 UAG PA 1665.
the aegis of the Germanic Seminar. While therefore a minimum of teaching was kept up, it was clear that, for the time being, educational policy makers would not only exhibit little interest in investing resources into any Northern European research; it was also of dubious value to appeal to the Länders level. According to German constitutional tradition, the responsibility for educational matters rested with the Länders, in this case the newly created Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and its Ministry of Culture in Schwerin. Then again, the Soviet Administration had instituted a German Central Administration for the People’s Education (Deutsche Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung, DVV) in Berlin, which claimed ultimate authority in educational affairs.12

Accordingly, Magon’s next memorandum, decidedly shorter, was directed to the DVV, when an opportunity presented itself two years later. Appealing to the DVV’s own decision to allow Swedish and Danish as subsidiary subjects at universities in the Soviet Occupation Zone, Magon asked for support in the establishment of a Scandinavian Institute in Greifswald. Where Magon had two years earlier referred mainly to historical inertia and the moral obligation to re-establish contact with Scandinavia, he now argued more clearly in line with the perceived interest of the political leadership, as far as he could make them out. The establishment of a Scandinavian Institute was not advisable because of any historically accumulated capabilities or diplomatic advantages, but because it was the most efficient way of setting up language instruction. “Every study of a foreign language and literature will not be able to limit itself to language and literature. For a full understanding it will have to employ the rest of the culture of the country, including history, social conditions and even geography and nature.”13 This more extensive understanding of language training would naturally entail a more eclectic work and library stock, Magon argued, and therefore risk alienating the Nordic Department from its host institution, the Germanic Seminar. Furthermore, to go easy on the foreign exchange account, one would have to import much literature through personal

13 “Jedes Studium einer fremden Sprache und Literatur wird sich nicht auf Sprache und Literatur beschränken können, sondern zum vollen Verständnis die übrige Kultur des Landes einschl. der Geschichte, der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse, sogar der Landes- und Naturkunde, heranziehen.” – Magon to Administration for People’s Education in the Soviet Occupation Zone, 31/05/1948, UAG R177.
contacts with Scandinavian scholars and institutions, a task for which an independent institute would be eminently more suited than a mere department, since “one would need to take into account the sensibilities of the numerically smaller Scandinavian peoples, who will measure the interest shown them according to whether there is an independent institute dedicated to the study of their language, literature and culture or not.” Additional incentives, such as plans at Göttingen and Hamburg University to found a Nordic Institute, and the supposedly low costs of a Nordic Institute, were also strewn into the memorandum, most probably because Magon knew that his proposal would encounter resistance.15

Old-Boys’ Networks vs. the Party

Despite Magon’s enterprise to keep the Nordic tradition alive, he had little to show for his troubles, and it became increasingly clear that there was not much to be gained in Greifswald. Being one of the few high-profile German scholars left in the GDR, he received an offer to go to Berlin in 1950, where he enjoyed a more exposed position with resources and opportunities. But, while he was willing to take up his new, more comfortable, position in Berlin, Magon was still concerned about what he ostensibly considered his legacy in Greifswald. He had arranged that his friend, Fritz Tschirch, director of the Institute for German Studies, would provisionally head the Nordic Institute until a suitable successor could be found. Tschirch continued campaigning for its re-opening, this time with more success. By appealing to the university administration itself, he seems to have struck a nerve by painting the Nordic Institute as a major selling-point for the small

14 “Es muss durchaus mit der Empfindlichkeit der zahlenmäßig kleinen skandinavischen Völker gerechnet werden, welche das Interesse, das man ihnen entgegenbringt, daran bemessen werden, ob für das Studium ihrer Sprache, Literatur und Kultur ein eigenes Institut vorhanden ist oder nicht.” – Magon to Administration for People’s Education in the Soviet Occupation Zone, 31/05/1948, UAG R177. Note the close resemblance this argument bears to those of Johannes Paul, which Magon had strongly refuted 20 years before.
15 Magon to Administration for People’s Education in the Soviet Occupation Zone, 31/05/1948, UAG R177.
16 Magon e.g. built up a Department for Theatre Studies and, among a number of honorary and actual functions, became a director of the Department for Contemporary Literature at the German Academy.
Pomeranian university. The actual decision-making process is not documented, but in his 1953 annual report Tschirch already expressed cautious optimism that the Nordic Institute’s second coming was at hand.

The new professorship, around which the institute was to be rebuilt, came about in February 1954, when German scholar Ruth Dzulko, hitherto a lecturer in Jena, was installed. Dzulko, a pupil of Leopold Magon, took over the directorate in July and immediately began work on a thorough restitution. The situation she found was difficult: On the one hand, the long hiatus of the Nordic Institute had left its room situation chaotic. The old von der Goltz-villa housed the Department for Animal Health, and the Nordic Institute was merely tolerated in one of its rooms, which was unusable for research and teaching, due to the ever-present stench and infection-risk from animal cadavers. Major parts of the library were stored in another building, where the institute also had a small office but no rooms to work or teach. Further plans for expansion of the Department for Animal Health threatened to completely invalidate what little room the Nordic Institute had left in the Goltz-villa and leave it entirely without technical workability. This state of affairs also made receiving foreign visitors impossible.

The lack of rooms corresponded with a lack of trained personnel. In the first drafts for a study programme, Dzulko outlined a profile for the Nordic Institute that could have sprung from her mentor Leopold Magon: In contrast to other Nordic Studies programmes in Germany, Greifswald would stick to its unique tradition of contemporary literary studies, supported by some applied knowledge about the country, and while it trained its students primarily in Old Norse, Contemporary Literature and Language History, it also included some History of Northern Europe. These eclectic and contemporary studies set Greifswald apart from its competitors, and optimism ran high for a further expansion of the institute:

17 See e.g. Fritz Tschirch to Greifswald University Administration, Department H2, 03/06/1952, UAG Univ.-Verwaltung 53.
19 Magon had been the supervisor for her dissertation, Dzulko, Ruth: Studien zur isländischen Lyrik der Gegenwart, Breslau 1940, and her habilitation treatise, Dzulko, Ruth: Ibsen und die deutsche Bühne, Jena 1952.
20 Dzulko to Krause (StHF, Dept. German Studies), 24/10/1954 and Dzulko to Liewehr (Dean of Philosophical Faculty), 24/04/1956, both UAG NEW 12.
21 Draft for a Curriculum for Nordic Philology as Minor and Major Subject, no date (1954), UAG NEW 7.
For a reconstruction of the Nordic Institute the following positions are necessary, if the institute is to work fully with all departments:

1 Full Professor (manned: Dzulko)
1 Associate Professor
1 Lecturer for Danish
1 Lecturer for Finnish
1 Lecturer for Icelandic
1 Lecturer for Norwegian (manned: [Herbert] Reiher)
1 Lecturer for Swedish
1 Senior Research Assistant
1 Junior Research Assistant
1 Secretary
1 Cleaning Lady (manned: Winkler)22

While these plans were ambitious, the university administration seemed genuinely interested in supporting the Nordic Institute, and Dzulko radiated confidence. It was, therefore, all the more surprising that in the late summer of 1955 Fritz Tschirch had to resume his provisional directorate over the institute.

Ruth Dzulko had left for Western Germany in September 1955, purportedly after the Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staats sicherheit, Stasi) had suggested she work as informer within the Philosophical Faculty. Finding it impossible to reconcile this offer with her conscience – even after a delegate of the secretary of state for higher education had visited her and told her that she would not have to do this unsavoury job – she turned her back on the GDR.23 Even though Ruth Dzulko-Axmann confirmed the recruitment attempts by Stasi as the main reason for her emigration,24 bourgeois scholars also faced slander and disruptions from the SED and their followers in these years. Especially the Institute for German Studies was in the focus of these efforts, and Hildegard

22 Dzulko to Greifswald University Administration, Cadre Department K 2, 30/07/1954, UAG NEW 7.
23 As purported by Friese 1993, pp. 118f. Dzulko’s prospects in Western Germany were dismal, though. She was female – still a serious handicap in Western Germany – and represented an academic field – modern Scandinavian literature – for which there were no vacant chairs in the Federal Republic, and so her career options were limited to being a school teacher.
Emmel’s description of the attacks suggests that the pressure on Dzulko might also have come in subtler forms. Either way, with the Nordic Institute orphaned again, the university had to restart its efforts to re-establish their Nordic profile.

V.2 The Partyfication of the Nordic Institute (1957–1959)

Attempts to establish career paths outside of the classical academic advancement grades were not an entirely new phenomenon. Odorich de Pers had joined the Socialist Union Party in 1946, not necessarily with the aim of making this a career resource at that point. But after his doctoral graduation in 1948, de Pers received the lectureship for “Political and Social Problems of the Present”, an obligatory course that was to teach students the advantages of a Socialist rebuilding of Germany. While the course attracted mostly peripheral lecturers, it offered the party the possibility of getting some of their own people into the university. Having taken over this duty of honour for the party, de Pers received the offer for a course at the Party Academy (Parteihochschule) “Karl Marx” in Kleinmachnow in 1948. Because of his ongoing dissertation project, he was referred to the coming year, but had to face the repercussions of his alternate career path immediately. According to his own version at least, the “Political and Social Problems” lecture had not endeared him particularly to the older professors, who simply disregarded the standing order to keep their own lectures from overlapping with the obligatory political lecture. Those frictions increased markedly after de Pers had received his lecturer’s qualifications from Kleinmachnow in early 1950. Upon his return, if de Pers can be believed, all kinds of inconveniences were thrust upon him by the academic administration and teaching personnel. Confirmations of his acceptance as an assistant professor were denied, much like the paying of

26 Personal Questionaire Odorich Karl de Pers, 18/05/1951, UAG PA 1665.
teaching salaries and the provision of a phone extension. De Pers wrote a long letter of complaint to Kurt Hager, sometime in early 1951, to present his view on the ongoing chicanery, describing in detail all the little obstacles put in his path and the regular slandering of his person. The situation that de Pers describes is difficult to disentangle, since we only have his version of ongoing events, most of which were not recorded elsewhere. Nevertheless, it appears that de Pers had attempted to increase the importance of his own political lectures by forcing the university’s senate to comment on the disparities between Berlin’s standing orders for the realization of the “Political and Social Problems of the Present” and obvious shortcomings in their implementation in Greifswald in August 1950. With this move, though, de Pers had stepped over a line. The established professoriate could have had little interest in a lowly lecturer pushing his way up into their ranks based on a formal qualification received from a six-month course at a party college, and consequently de Pers began to encounter stronger opposition. Where he had previously been ignored, he now faced personal attacks and bureaucratic obstinacy.

This would have been a manageable situation if de Pers had not lost favour with the party at exactly the same time. After the “document exchange” 1951 he was no longer a member of the Socialist Union Party. Whether intra-party machinations had something to do with this dismissal, as de Pers insinuated, is unclear, but his personnel reviews show a person with little didactic abilities and poor academic perspectives, complacent and

29 Kurt Hager (1912–1998) had been made candidate of the Central Committee in 1950, with a specialization in cultural matters. His further career in Central Committee and Politburo led him to become the chief ideologue of the party. He and de Pers had briefly met in Kleinmachnow. The letter was seemingly delivered when Hager had a short stay as political instructor in Greifswald.
30 de Pers to Hager, no date (early 1951), UAG PA 1665.
31 de Pers to Hager, no date (early 1951), UAG PA 1665.
32 The SED re-issued new documents every 10 to 15 years and excluded or demoted passive or “opposing” members as a way of ensuring loyalty and the correct class-composition. These cleansings generally got rid of 10–25% of party members. See Hirschinger, Frank: “Gestapoagenten, Trotzkisten, Verräter”. Kommunistische Parteisäuberungen in Sachsen-Anhalt 1918–1953, Göttingen 2005. For the cleansing of 1951, where 22% of all party members were excluded, see pp. 228–245.
33 The personnel file contains a number of letters by other party members vouchsafing for de Pers and insisting that the complaints against him were easily dismissible intrigues by some party members amongst the students. See UAG PA 1665.
self-absorbed, with a rather formal and distant relationship with the party.\(^{34}\) Furthermore, he had been removed from post-doctoral studies in March 1951 on the grounds of “cadre considerations” and “essential academic shortcomings”, probably shorthand for his bourgeois background and his below-par teaching.\(^{35}\) Just at the moment when de Pers confronted the entrenched interests of Greifswald’s traditional professoriate, he lost the support of the party. While able to hibernate in the badly paid position of lecturer for Swedish, his perspectives for a further university career – without access to the support mechanisms for academic aspirants – were bland. Another attempt at an individual Habilitation failed catastrophically: On May 20\(^{th}\) 1957 the Council of the Philosophical Faculty decided unanimously to strip de Pers of his doctoral title and ban him from all further attempts at a Habilitation, of which all German and Nordic universities were officially informed.\(^{36}\) The reason for this far-reaching judgement was that de Pers had tried to pass off an old Swedish dissertation\(^{37}\) as his own.\(^{38}\) During the investigations into this academic fraud it had also been found that de Pers had abstracted the staggering number of 1,236 books from the library of the Nordic Institute and several others and destroyed their index cards in the process. Being, therefore, not only decried by academia but also facing criminal charges, de Pers left the GDR post-haste, leaving his wife behind to accept the written verdict.\(^{39}\)

**Delaying Actions**

Odorich de Pers was not the only looming threat to the interests of the established order. After Ruth Dzulko, Magon’s protégé, had so hurriedly left

\(^{34}\) Personnel Review Odorich de Pers, 19/10/1951, UAG PA 1665. De Pers was from Vienna and many of the character traits that were held against him are traditionally associated with the Viennese: Cool and distant politeness, a calm and dispassionate demeanour and a measured pace of speech. Apart from these cultural differences, which might have contributed to de Pers’ fall, his class-background as the son of a diplomat and impoverished nobleman probably did him no favour in the reviews.

\(^{35}\) Dr. Max Steinmetz (Berlin, Wilhelmstr. 68) to SED Central Committee, Dept. Propaganda, 14/07/1951, UAG PA 1665. The head of the Department of Propaganda and Party Education was Kurt Hager.

\(^{36}\) Liewehr (Dean Philosophical Faculty) to Rector EMAU, 20/05/1957, UAG Rechtsstelle 99.

\(^{37}\) Probably Öhlin, Paul: Studier över de passiva konstruktionerna i fornsvenskan, Lund 1918.

\(^{38}\) Rector EMAU to all German Universities and Academies and to all Universities in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Austria and Switzerland (Draft), 22/05/1957, UAG Rechtsstelle 99.

\(^{39}\) Rector EMAU to Odorich de Pers (registered mail), 22/05/1957, UAG Rechtsstelle 99.
the Nordic Institute in 1955, the university had to find a replacement. The idea seems to have been to establish a diarchy: Magon, who still had influence in Greifswald, had supposedly stifled advances by de Pers to obtain an associate professorship to keep all positions open for his old colleague Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld.\footnote{De Pers to Hager, no date (early 1951), UAG PA 1665.} Rosenfeld, who had acted as professor of German Studies in Greifswald between 1937 and 1945, had hibernated in a position as research leader of the Pomeranian Dictionary while being banished from university posts after the war. In contrast to Magon, he had not managed to hide the fact that he had joined the NSDAP, and even though Magon and others within the Philosophical Faculty clamoured for his return, it took until 1956 for him to be reinstated. Together with his work group for the Pomeranian Dictionary, he settled in Greifswald again, where he was granted the Chair in Modern Germanic Philology.\footnote{Rosenfeld was a victim of circumstances. The German Administration for Public Education did not hand the case on to the SMAG for fear of it being permanently rejected, while the SMAG would have been willing to accept Rosenfeld but never received an application. See Bode, Petra: "Universitätsgermanistik in der SBZ/DDR. Personalpolitik und struktureller Wandel 1945–1958", in: Bode, Petra & Rosenberg, Rainer (eds.): Deutsche Literaturwissenschaft 1945–1965. Fallstudien zu Institutionen, Diskursen, Personen (=Literaturforschung) Berlin 1997, pp. 119–149, here: 124–126.} While his Northern European expertise was limited to a lengthy stay in Turku between 1932 and 1937, he was nevertheless given the directorate of the Nordic Institute.

The other candidate for the Nordic Institute, Erich Kunze, did not come. Kunze was a more dedicated scholar of Nordic matters, studying among other things the cultural relations between Finland and Germany, especially the reception of the Nordic cultural heritage in German Studies. But even though the Vice Chancellor and the Dean of the Philosophical Faculty courted him extensively and offered favourable terms, Kunze was unwilling to exchange his comfortable position in Helsinki for one in the tumultuous GDR. He regularly stalled and inquired about job perks, payment and work load. The negotiations began in the spring of 1956 and, while Kunze was officially appointed acting director from September 1\textsuperscript{st} 1957, it was clear that he would not take up this position.\footnote{Correspondence Kunze – Liewehr (Dean Philosophical Faculty, EMAU) – Grunert (StHF), August to October 1956; Kortum (StHF) to Erna Merker, 28/06/1956; Liewehr to Erich Kunze, 07/05/1957; and StHF, Dept. Philosophical and Theological Faculties to Liewehr, 03/07/1957, all: BA DR3 1. Schicht 2947.}
At the same time, the university leadership tried to keep other contenders at bay. Since March 1955 the Ministry for Public Education, responsible for schools, had Bruno Kress’ application on their desk. Kress, at that point a teacher in a village school in Mecklenburg, asked to be redeployed to university service.\footnote{Petition by Kress to Office of Deputy Prime Minister Ulbricht, 26/07/1956, BA DR3 1. Schicht 2947.} He held a doctorate in German Studies with a specialization in Icelandic literature and had – according to his own information – worked as a teacher of German in Reykjavik before the war, thereafter to be interned in a British detention centre. That this was hardly the whole story, and the fact that he had been an NSDAP member since 1934 and had his research on Iceland financed by the SS-Ahnenerbe (with whom he actually managed to communicate during his internment), had probably contributed to his extended stay outside the limelight.\footnote{Simon, Gerd: “Bruno Schweizer und die Island-Expedition des ‘Ahnenerbes’ der SS”, http://homepages.uni-tuebingen.de/gerd.simon/island.pdf [retrieved: 12/02/2015].} But now that he had joined the SED, Kress felt that his special skills could be employed more fruitfully in academia. After the ministry had not responded, he received a nudge from Greifswald. The head of the university’s party organization advised him to apply to the Nordic Institute. This he dutifully did in July 1955, only to be told that the recently widowed institute had nobody to process his application.\footnote{Petition by Kress to Office of Deputy Prime Minister Ulbricht, 26/07/1956, BA DR3 1. Schicht 2947.} All in all, the procedure gave the impression – not just to Kress – that the Dean and Vice Chancellor were trying to forestall the influx of loyal party members into key positions until they could install their own candidates, in this case Rosenfeld and Kunze. In the summer of 1957, the Vice Chancellor finally hired Kress, if only as Kunze’s assistant.\footnote{Liewehr to StHF, 03/08/1957, UAG PA 2758.} But with Kunze failing to actually take up his post, this tipped the power relations within the Nordic Institute in the direction of the SED.

The German Question and Northern Europe

After the Allied Occupation Zones in Germany had coalesced into two states in 1949, Greifswald found itself in the German Democratic Republic. Early hopes that this would be a temporary state of affairs were dampened when the different attempts to reunite Germany increasingly turned into empty phrases during the 1950s. In 1955, when the Federal Republic of

\footnote{Petition by Kress to Office of Deputy Prime Minister Ulbricht, 26/07/1956, BA DR3 1. Schicht 2947.}
Germany joined NATO and the GDR signed the Warsaw Pact, it became clear that the division of Germany into two states was a reality that was there to stay.47

For the GDR and its foreign policy, this acceptance of the status quo led to important changes. At the point where a reunification was no longer an immediate concern, the GDR became a permanent state, which had to establish itself internationally. By joining the Eastern Bloc’s military organization, it changed its character from an occupied territory, whose statehood could be sacrificed for the political ambitions of Moscow, to a state that was formally independent to pursue its own policies, even if some of these were subject to Soviet approval. The existence of two German states, each representing one of the antagonistic political-economic systems, meant that the GDR was to be built up as the “Better Germany”. Along the lines of the doctrine of Peaceful Coexistence, it would not just serve as a staging point for a possible military escalation but also as a showcase for Socialism in a peaceful battle of ideologies.48

A challenge to this vision came in the form of the Hallstein Doctrine. The government in Bonn had long insisted on being the only legitimate German government, but in 1955, when the German question became a real and long-term problem, this claim of sole representation was reinforced. In September 1955, Konrad Adenauer proclaimed that any recognition of the GDR by a third party would be considered an “unfriendly act” by West Germany. The implied, if not always applied, consequence would be a severance of diplomatic relations. This also entailed economic repercussions for states affected by such a diplomatic retaliation, and while it was never easy to implement, the so-called Hallstein-doctrine held the majority of Western and bloc-free states in check and prevented a widespread recognition of the GDR outside of the Eastern bloc.49

Considering the symbolic importance of international recognition, not just abroad but also domestically, strategies to achieve it in spite of West German policy were developed in the Department for International Relations in the Central Committee, where the major policy decisions were

47 For a chronological overview of the GDR’s foreign policy and the contexts of its making see Scholtzysek, Joachim: Die Außenpolitik der DDR (=Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 69) München 2003, pp. 1–52.
48 Scholtzyseck 2003, pp. 5–16.
made, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten – MfAA), where the routine international relations were managed. Considering that diplomatic channels were blocked by the threat of repercussions from Bonn, alternative approaches had to be found. While in, for example, Yugoslavia and Egypt an official recognition could be achieved even against the Hallstein-policy, this was not a likely outcome in many places. Instead of risking exposing the targeted country to West German pressures, it was deemed more prudent to circumvent the diplomatic level entirely. By establishing contacts below the political threshold, for example economic, transportation, cultural and academic, a subliminal de-facto recognition was to be achieved, which could in turn be used as leverage for a de-jure recognition.50

The Warsaw Pact states unanimously recognized the GDR, whereas it was not plausible that the NATO countries could be convinced to do so. The bloc-free states were in this regard the obvious target for a charm offensive, and while most of these could be found in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Northern Europe was also a zone of interest. The Nordic states were favourably poised to influence international opinion due to their tradition of neutrality and international brokering and, apart from many historically evolved cultural and economic connections between Scandinavia and Germany, many German communists had spent at least some of the time between 1933 and 1945 in exile in the North. Common experiences, such as the fight against Nazi occupation, the participation in the Spanish Civil War and imprisonment in concentration camps provided further links, in particular with fellow communists in Scandinavia.51

Denmark and Norway, while founding members of NATO, did not enjoy a deep integration into the alliance and, in fact, the Soviet leadership even assumed that they could be lured into the Socialist camp entirely. These plans only died after the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. Nevertheless, Denmark and Norway remained on the foreign political agenda of the GDR. The same went for Iceland. Finland, on the other hand, was in the Soviet sphere of interest, and while not communist domestically,

50 Scholtyséck 2003, pp. 16–18.
was still forced to make major concessions to its big neighbour. For this reason, diplomatic initiatives here had to be coordinated with Moscow, making Finland a difficult terrain. The most important “swing-state” in the North was Sweden, which stood apart from the great military blocs. But while mildly agreeable to the East German state, Sweden followed the lead of its neighbours. On a meeting of the Scandinavian foreign ministers in Copenhagen in May 1954, they unanimously declared that the formal recognition of the GDR was not yet ripe for decision. While certainly a setback, this development also showed that the rejection was not fundamental in nature and might be changed, given time.\textsuperscript{52}

A more immediate concern for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, once the importance and general outline of the policy towards Northern Europe had been determined, was lack of information. While many communist functionaries could look back on Scandinavian experiences from their exile work, reliable, up-to-date political, economic, legal and cultural information from there was scarce, and since the foreign policy apparatus had to be rebuilt with socialist cadres, there was no system in place to acquire such data. The foundation of special task forces, for which a number of communists with Scandinavian experiences were enlisted, posed a stop-gap measure, but to inform policy decisions a longer term system had to be established.\textsuperscript{53}

**Flashing the Badge**

The years 1956/57 therefore saw the consolidation of three developments that would determine the future of the Nordic Institute: First, leading state and party institutions became increasingly interested in Northern Europe and in a way of a) providing reliable policy and economic analysis and b) a pathway to re-establish cultural and academic relations with the North to further the GDR’s recognition policy. Second, younger scholars, seeing an SED-membership and party loyalty as gateways to a career, began knocking on the doors of the institute. Third, this was complemented by a campaign of chicanery against bourgeois scholars, who had been tolerated out of expediency after the war, but who faced increasing opposition by SED-

\textsuperscript{52} Scholz 2007, pp. 18–20.

\textsuperscript{53} Scholz 2007, pp. 21f.
members who had now reached the point where they could take over the university’s higher echelon in numbers.54

In the autumn of 1956 a taskforce of three gentlemen, two from the Central Committee’s departments of “Science and Propaganda” and “Foreign Policy and International Relations” and one from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, visited Greifswald to inspect the Nordic Institute. They found the institute wanting in nearly all respects, but saw potential and promised assistance in its expansion. Apart from the housing situation, which could be solved by taking over the villa of another professor,55 this was mainly the lack of qualified and, just as importantly, politically reliable personnel. The task force suggested the concentration of party members – scholars and students alike – in the institute.56

A month after the visit of the taskforce, the interest of state and party in the Nordic Institute was reaffirmed by the highest state official. Prime Minister Otto Grothewohl, in his speech on the 500th anniversary of the university, underlined the importance of this institute:

> Ever more importance will be gained by the Nordic Institute, which incorporates the mediatory role of Greifswald between Germany and the countries of the Baltic Sea Area. The government of the German Democratic Republic will give its special attention to the development of this institute, which in the coming years will have the task of intensifying the academic relations between the democratic Germany and the peoples of the North. These relations will contribute to making the Baltic Sea a Sea of Peace. We therefore also appreciate that Professor Liljegren of Uppsala is heading the English Institute at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-University and has already contributed a great deal to spreading a realistic image of the German Democratic Republic in his home country.57

54 The atmosphere of these years is aptly described in Emmel 2002.
55 In this case English scholar Sten Bodvar Liljegren. The wording of the task force report makes it sound as if there would be subtle pressure applied. See Perspectives for the Nordic Institute in Greifswald, 25/02/1957, BA DR3 1. Schicht 2947.
56 Perspectives for the Nordic Institute in Greifswald, 25/02/1957, BA DR3 1. Schicht 2947.
57 “Eine immer größere Bedeutung wird das Nordische Institut gewinnen, in dem sich die Mittlerrolle Greifswalds zwischen Deutschland und den Ländern des Ostseeraums verkörpert. Die Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik wird der Entwicklung dieses Instituts, das in den folgenden Jahren die Aufgabe hat, die wissenschaftlichen Beziehungen zwischen dem demokratischen Deutschland und den Völkern des Nordens zu intensivieren, besondere Aufmerksamkeit widmen. Diese Beziehungen werden dazu beitragen, die Ostsee zu einem Meer des Friedens zu machen. Wir begrüßen deshalb auch, daß Herr Professor Liljegren aus Uppsala wieder an der Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität
The power relations in the Nordic Institute had reached a critical point. The combined efforts of state and party had secured the institute the services of historian Günther Politt and economist Franz Hochmann. Rosenfeld’s position, on the other hand, began to weaken. He had taken up his new tasks with notable reluctance, which did not increase his credit with the party. An internal report surmised that he was completely swamped by his positions in the Nordic Institute, the German Studies Seminar and the Pomeranian Dictionary project. His teaching was unsystematic and mostly concerned with ancient sagas, which frustrated the students. Worst of all, he attempted “to influence his colleagues in an ecclesiastical and bourgeois way”58 over coffee and cake. The party had already tried to install Kress as director of the Nordic Institute at the beginning of the 1956 academic year, to replace the unwilling Rosenfeld. Even though the cadre department and the party leadership had been in favour of the decision, it was revoked – probably by the office of the Vice Chancellor – five days later, and Rosenfeld reinstated.59

With the official hierarchy still resisting the remodelling of the university, the solution was the growing influence of the party groups. These groups, in which party members were organized on the workplace level and which had an explicit right of supervision of the “state leadership”, as the official directors were now called, began to form in all institutes. They introduced a centre of power parallel to the academic hierarchy and, with the director of the institute not even being part of this select group, this led to students and non-tenured staff wielding a disproportionate amount of power. While the details of the palace revolt in the Nordic Institute are lost, it came to pass that the first official report by Party Group Nordic Studies (Parteigruppe Nordistik) in 1958 proudly reported: “After a year’s effort, the party group finally succeeded in putting the direction of the institute into the hands of comrade Dr. Kress. Professor Rosenfeld, the former director of the institute, resigned

\[\text{das Englische Institut leitet und in seinem Heimatland schon viel dazu beigetragen hat, ein wahrheitsgetreues Bild über die Deutsche Demokratische Republik zu vermitteln.} \]


58 \[\text{“die Mitarbeiter kirchlich und bürgerlich zu beeinflussen” – Assessment of the Work at the Nordic Institute of Greifswald University (Department Agitation/Propaganda), no date (early February 1957), LAG BL IV/2/9.02 1087, fol. 1–3.}\]

59 Assessment of the Work at the Nordic Institute of Greifswald University (Department Agitation/Propaganda), no date (early February 1957), LAG BL IV/2/9.02 1087, fol. 1–3.
Rosenfeld was fully pushed out of Greifswald in the following year, after he had objected to the publication list of SED-backed German scholar Hans-Jürgen Geerdts. He chose not to return from his 1958 summer vacation and pursued a career in West Germany.61

The Tepid Communist – Bruno Kress as New Director

Bruno Kress, who had only joined the party group in late 1957,62 was more accommodating to the party’s demand.63 His judgment on Rosenfeld clearly showed Kress’ intent to streamline the Nordic Institute: “Professor Rosenfeld had no understanding for the new tasks and perspectives of the institute. He lamented the expansion of Nordistik beyond the philology, and was not in favour of heading an institute with political tasks, as if there ever was such a thing as institutes without political tasks.”64

In fact, Bruno Kress, despite or possibly because of his NS-history, went to great lengths to argue his political tasking in his exposition of the new work programme. Scholarship had never been an end in itself, he argued, and even the history of Northern European Studies was reflective of this fact. If there was, for example, such a thing as a platonic philological interest, it would be difficult to explain why the Old Icelandic manuscripts had historically been neglected for so long. No, he explained, historically the engagement with his personal subject, Old Icelandic, “always originated from the tangible interest of societal forces.”65 Be it to glorify feudalism, nationalism or racism, Northern European scholarship had always been a

60 “Nach einjähriger Bemühung gelang es der Parteigruppe auch schließlich, die Leitung des Instituts in die Hände des Gen. Dr. Kress zu legen. Prof. Rosenfeld, der ehemalige Institutsdirektor, trat freiwillig zurück.” – Account of Party Group Nordistik at the Philosophical Faculty EMAU, no date (1958), NEW 7.
62 Account of Party Group Nordistik at the Philosophical Faculty EMAU, no date (1958), NEW 7.
63 Work plan of the EMAU Party Executive Committee for 1958, no date (1957) NEW 7.
64 “Professor Rosenfeld hatte kein Verständnis für die neuen Aufgaben und Perspektiven des Instituts. Er bedauerte die Erweiterung der Nordistik über das Philologische hinaus und war nicht dafür, ein Institut mit politischen Aufgaben zu leiten, als ob es überhaupt Institute ohne politische Aufgaben gäbe.” – Kress to SED Executive Committee for the Region Rostock, 29/01/1958, UAG NEW 12.
political project in the interest of the ruling classes. Consequently, the new powers that be had their own interests.

The power of the workers and working peasants is the result of the inevitable processes of societal development. It has originated according to historical principles as the power base of the most progressive elements of society and needs no further legitimization. […] The German Democratic Republic derives its mandate for Nordistik from its policy of peace: In its field of work Nordistik is to contribute to the development and maintenance of peaceful international relations between the peoples of the North and the German Democratic Republic.

Such words could not mask the fact that Kress was a late-comer to the communist ideology and was fearful of the power relations within the Nordic Institute. His eagerness to assure the party of his unwavering loyalty can best be understood as a way of ensuring some backing from higher party offices. Kress’ own work was not as political as he himself demanded

66 Ibid.
68 Kress was seemingly aware that other members of the institute did not have faith in his political loyalty and leadership style. See Muschik 2004, pp. 36f.
it from the institute in general.\textsuperscript{69} Insofar, extending scholarly work with propaganda and societal studies was much easier than changing the character of his research. Kress’ literary studies could for example be continued as they were, as long as he would also strive to establish international contacts and present the GDR in flattering terms internationally.

V.3 From Cadre-Factory to Research Centre (1958–1962)

With Kress at the helm of the Nordic Institute, its direction was now clear. Kress had officially and audibly acknowledged the leading role of the party and further “misunderstandings” between Berlin and Greifswald were not to be expected. Thus the institute could turn its undivided attention towards the goals set for it by the party and state bureaucracy.

Training the Diplomatic Corps

The most important objective was the training of the future cadres for German–Nordic interstate service. The demands put upon the Nordic Institute in this regard had been unambiguously expressed in the earliest curriculum in 1956, still under Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld’s supervision. The Nordistik programme consisted of two branches, major (Hauptfach) and minor (Nebenfach). Students taking a major in Nordistik were earmarked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for International Trade and Intra-German Commerce (Ministerium für Aussenhandel und Innerdeutschen Handel). The major students would also represent the pool of talent from which the academic system was to replenish itself. The minor students, who had to choose a further discipline to complement their education, were primarily allotted to services within the GDR, such as the Society of Cultural Connections Abroad (Gesellschaft für kulturelle Verbindungen mit dem Ausland), libraries, publishing houses, international traffic or broadcasting agencies.\textsuperscript{70} Apart from these classic academic studies, the Nordic Institute also trained a smaller number of direct vocational

\textsuperscript{69} Kress began his career with studies in phonetics, only after World War Two changing into literary studies, later to become the leading translator of Icelandic Nobel Prize laureate Haldór Laxness.

\textsuperscript{70} Degree Programme Nordistik, 1956, UAG NEW 7.
students to be interpreters, lecturers in German for service in the North, and Swedish language teachers.

This outline, which formed the basis for all further curricula, already contained a number of peculiarities. While a strong orientation on vocational demands in education was rhetorically established and in principle hard to refuse, in its specifics it constituted a number of breaks with established procedure that would mark the training in the Nordic Institute for years to come. First of all was the earmarking of students for specific fields of employment. In principle, it was easy to receive fairly general statements on the probable needs of the ministries in question and then train an appropriate number of students. But, the numbers in themselves, where they were forthcoming, only told half the story. Problems with this approach were predictable during the first student batch, as Rosenfeld had remarked when the programme had only just started: “Regarding the classification of students from the start it can be pointed out that of the current class of major students all but one wished to be employed abroad. Will that be possible for all of them in the end? Hardly, I say.” 71 This problem became even more evident when the institute established direct contact with the ministries concerned. Already in 1958 the Ministry for International and Intra-German Commerce admonished that, for their concerns, the cultural focus of the current curriculum was not particularly useful, since “cultural political advisor” was not a job description they advertised often. 72 “Absolventenlenkung”, the steering of graduates, consequently became an issue, when it turned out that the vague guidelines given to the institute were insufficient to produce form-fitting area experts. The first batch of graduates, becoming available in 1962, led to a veritable chaos in distribution, as Kress had to admit that “the target figures do not necessarily correspond with the qualification of the graduates.” 73 While the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had been promised three graduates, only one


72 Ministry for International and Intra-German Commerce, Department for Cadre and Training, to SED Central Committee, Department for Sciences, 16/06/1958, UAG NEW 7.

73 “Die Planzahlen korrespondieren nicht notwendigerweise mit der Qualifikation der Absolventen.” – Kress to StHF, 15/01/1962, UAG NEW 98.
could be provided. None of the others fulfilled cadre-requirements, either because of a less-than-perfect political record or because they were female, which barred them from a number of career-paths in diplomatic service.\textsuperscript{74} The responsible officer in the Ministry of Culture, on the other hand, was entirely unaware that they had even registered a cadre demand of three graduates, but could when pressed at least offer one position in the state broadcasting agency. The party headquarters in Rostock had registered a demand for one graduate, but had in the meantime filled the position with somebody else, and the Society for Cultural Connections Abroad could not keep its promises of employment due to downsizing measures.\textsuperscript{75} By the autumn of 1962 a number of graduates were still without employment, and none of them had actually been accepted by the primary recipients, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Intra-German and International Commerce or the Economic Council (\textit{Volkswirtschaftsrat}).\textsuperscript{76}

All in all, the first experiences were sobering, and in the years following this problem became so grave that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs asked the Nordic Institute to temporarily provide a number of their own assistants as cultural attachés.\textsuperscript{77} While scantily camouflaged as a method of providing the teaching staff with practical experience in the field, it was a stop-gap measure, all the more clearly so as the Nordic Institute was already short on personnel. On the one hand, the ministries drafted personnel from the Nordic Institute to fill their most pressing needs, on the other hand, the actual graduates could not be placed. The delay between the enrolment of the students and their actually becoming available, as well as the imponderability of a young person’s development during their formative years, made matching the “needs of Socialist praxis” and the output of the Nordic Institute a difficult endeavour. A thorough vetting process before

\textsuperscript{74} Kress to StHF, 15/01/1962, UAG NEW 98. See also the institute’s annual report 1957, in which Kress publicly pointed out that “\textit{In light of the demands of their future employment in the praxis, the relative number of male students was too low.”} (“In Hinblick auf die Erfordernisse der späteren beruflichen Praxis war die verhältnismäßige Anzahl der männlichen Studenten zu gering.”) – Kress, Bruno: “Nordisches Institut. Jahresbericht 1957”, in: Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe, VII (1957), pp. 252f.

\textsuperscript{75} Kress to StHF, 15/01/1962, UAG NEW 98.

\textsuperscript{76} Kress to Dean Philosophical Faculty UG (Prof. Liewehr), 01/09/1962, UAG NEW 1.

\textsuperscript{77} Minutes of meeting with Comrade Bick (MfAA), 20/04/1964, UAG NEW 28.
enrolment, as was instituted in the middle of the 1960s, only marginally rectified the problems inherent in this system.\textsuperscript{78}

Further complications resulted from the difficulty of using a still mostly philologically oriented study programme as basis for the vocational training of diplomats and international traders. This included the need to equip the future international cadres with a proficiency in English. The first study programme required the graduates to demonstrate English skills at the end of their studies, leaving this point up to the initiative of the students. Rosenfeld had pointed out that this obstacle could serve to determine who among the students was best suited to act in responsible positions later on,\textsuperscript{79} but it was clear that this was merely to cover up for the fact that the different demands were hard to press into the confines of an academic study programme. After the State Secretariat for Higher Education (\textit{Staatssekretariat für das Hoch- und Fachschulwesen} – StHF) had made a coupling of \textit{Nordistik} with English Studies obligatory,\textsuperscript{80} the students began groaning under the workload, and the Nordic Institute had to ask that the decision be reversed.\textsuperscript{81} While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry for International and Intra-German Commerce demanded training in a number of skills, including cultural and linguistic familiarity with the chosen Scandinavian countries, English and basics in law and economics – skills that the Nordic Institute could only provide by enlisting the help of other institutes – the Central Committee’s Department for Arts and Sciences still requested that the usual thoroughness of the academic training be upheld.\textsuperscript{82}

That Berlin insisted on a regular academic study programme, with all its idiosyncrasies, that was at the same time a vocational training coupled with another, smaller, studies programme, proved to be more than the Nordic Institute could reliably deliver. In light of this, Bruno Kress went so far as to declare that “[t]he notions of the comrades in the State Secretariat for Universities and the Department for Sciences in the Central Committee are alarmingly close to the traditional bourgeois notion of Nordistik, which has at that time never been considered an independently sufficient studies

\textsuperscript{78} Minutes of Institute direction meeting, 01/07/1966, UAG NEW 14.
\textsuperscript{79} Rosenfeld to State Secretariat of Universities, 05/02/1957, UAG NEW 7.
\textsuperscript{80} State Secretariat for Universities to Nordic Institute, 15/10/1957, UAG NEW 7.
\textsuperscript{81} Nordic Institute (Rosenfeld) to SED Central Committee, Dept. Sciences (Börner), 11/12/1957, UAG NEW 7.
\textsuperscript{82} State Secretariat for Universities, Dept. Philosophical Faculties, to Nordic Institute, 14/03/1958, UAG NEW 7.
programme.”83 Kress had to point out that introducing the students to three completely new languages and cultures – two Nordic languages and English – was impossible, whereas focussing on one Nordic country, as the state department had proposed, would undermine the entire point of taking up area studies in the first place.84 The Gordian knot in instruction was only cut when the intensified cooperation with the state agencies following 1962 led to a complete revision of the study programme.

A further problem stemming from the introduction of a praxis-oriented training programme was the changing relationship between the teaching staff and the students. Whereas the traditional relation with the student body was one of benign disinterest, the new political realities, beginning around the middle of the 1950s, facilitated a stronger interest in the everyday life, studies and political opinions of the students. Even though these were already screened for ideological concerns before they took up their studies in general, not all of them were of the cadre-quality demanded by the Nordic Institute’s recipients. Especially the first batch of 1956/57, which had been inducted under the supervision of Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld, was found to be wanting. The number of female students was too high and the number of party members too low.85 The bourgeois element in the student body was doubly disconcerting: On the one hand was the notion that personnel trained for state service was to be loyal and educated in the ways of socialism. The Nordic Institute had devoted itself to this task via the mission statement: “Through the educational work of the teaching staff we train socialist members of the intelligentsia who are loyal to the power of the workers and peasants and work for its ascent.”86 On the other hand

83 “Die Auffassung der Genossen im Staatssekretariat für Hochschulwesen und in der Abteilung Wissenschaften des Zentralkomitees nähert sich bedenklich der herkömmlichen bürgerlichen Auffassung von der Nordistik, die damals nie als selbständiges ausreichendes Studium angesehen wurde.” – Kress to SED Regional Leadership Rostock (Holtzmacher), 27/03/1958, UAG NEW 7.

84 Kress to State Secretariat for Universities, Dept. Philosophical Faculties, 27/03/1958, UAG NEW 7.


stood the SED’s general mission of “breaking the bourgeois educational privilege” (Brechung des bürgerlichen Bildungsprivilegs). This call was primarily taken up by the Party Organization, which acted as an enforcer of party discipline. The Party Group Nordistik (later Nordistik-Slawistik) used its short communication paths to the state secretariat in Berlin, the party district headquarters in Rostock and not least the central Party Organization of the university, to exert social control over students and staff alike. Especially through the Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend, FDJ), the party group had influence on matters such as student accommodation or organized social activities. Students were encouraged to become party members in the first place, whereupon they were further encouraged to take part in party activities, such as taking offices and responsibilities or participating in voluntary work during the harvest. Part of the responsibilities that party students were requested to take over was the conversion of their non-party peers, with failure to make a good contact with the non-affiliated students resulting in public criticism. In a small organization like the Nordic Institute, with few students, this kind of social control was probably easy to apply. It is unclear from present material just how far the arsenal of sanctions that the party group could command extended, but at least one case of “probation in production” as a consequence for repeated absence-without-leave is documented.

While several students showed enthusiasm for their political tasks, “study discipline”, a catch-all term that amalgamated such diverse concepts as speedy academic advancement, voluntary work in the party and its organizations as well as general political standpoint, remained a matter of contention.

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87 See e.g. Statement of Accounts of Party Group Nordistik at the Philosophical Faculty EMAU, (1958) NEW 7, in which all of these matters are present.
88 Bewährung in der Produktion, a sentence in which especially members of the intelligentsia were relocated into low-skilled occupations, such as gardener, miner or factory worker, ostensibly to re-establish their connection with the working classes but effectively constituting an occupational ban and social isolation. See Schroeter, Sabine: Die Sprache der DDR im Spiegel ihrerLiteratur. Studien zum DDR-typischen Wortschatz (=Sprache, Politik, Öffentlichkeit, 2) Berlin 1994, pp. 186–188.
89 Minutes of the FDJ-group Nordistik, 09/03/1959, UAG NEW 98, in which a tribunal is held over student and party-member Inge Schröder for going to Leipzig with a Danish friend without awaiting the permission of the institute’s leadership.
90 Report on Norway-journey of Ursula Malinowsky, 25/10/1959, and Assessment of Norway-journey Rosemarie Ruge, no date (1959), UAG NEW 98. The overzealous proselytizing by the two students has to be taken cum grano salis, though, as the fact that both were allowed abroad constituted a major selection factor, requiring the agreement of both the university’s leadership and Stasi.
This was probably more so than in other institutes, as the Nordic Institute had to deliver its graduates to prominent state agencies. To prevent having to deal with ideologically fragile or even downright bourgeois students as well as with those who were blatantly unsuited for its demanding programme, the institute created a strict selection procedure for students. Their suitability as cadres would have to be proven, they would have to exhibit above average language skills and have a familiarity with present-day problems and international affairs. Consequently, the grooming process was envisaged to start at the age of 16.\footnote{Minutes of institute’s directorate meeting, 16/07/1965, UAG NEW 14.} Nevertheless, as late as 1968 the then director Herbert Joachimi concluded: “There are still certain shortcomings in the class standpoint of individual students. Our task is to uncover them and eradicate them.”\footnote{“Im Klassenstandpunkt einzelner Studenten gibt es gewisse Mängel. Unsere Aufgabe besteht darin, diese aufzudecken und zu beseitigen.” – Minutes of institute’s directorate meeting, 03/04/1968, UAG NEW 14.} By the same time, though, the institute’s leadership and its parallel party structures had developed a system of close control over the student body as an organization and each student as an individual, going so far as to keep a personality file on each student, which formed the basis of ongoing development meetings with the teaching staff.\footnote{Minutes of institute’s directorate meeting, 03/04/1968, UAG NEW 14.}

A New Generation of Scholars

A similar level of social control was developed vis-à-vis the research staff. In the years up to 1960 most of the old staff that had still worked with Leopold Magon, had left the Nordic Institute, either voluntarily or under pressure. In most cases this coincided with an abandonment of the GDR. Literary scholar Klaus Erdmenger, for example, who had, “with his deficient views on literature, art, party discipline etc. found a fertile soil among the German scholars”,\footnote{“Die Genossen schlossen sich eng zusammen bis auf den Genossen Erdmenger, der mit seinen labilen Anschauungen betr. Literatur, Kunst, Parteidisziplin etc. einen günstigen Boden unter den Germanisten fand.” – Annual Report by the Party Group Nordistik in the Philosophical Faculty EMAU, no date (1958), UAG NEW 7.} defected from the GDR in September 1957, not long after Odorich de Pers.\footnote{Annual Report by the Party Group Nordistik in the Philosophical Faculty EMAU, no date (1958), NEW 7.} While the new institute leadership did not mourn the departure of the mostly non-Marxist scholars, suitable replacements were difficult to come by. In the case of Wilhelm Friese, who was the last bour-
geois scholar to leave the services of the Nordic Institute in early 1958, Kress even tried to stall his departure by offering him the position of senior assistant, realizing that the ongoing brain drain threatened the ability of the Nordic Institute to function.\textsuperscript{96}

Only a few scholars with the appropriate party loyalty and academic qualification were available. With Horst Bien, who arrived in 1957, the institute could secure the services of a talented literary scholar, who covered Norway and modern Scandinavian literature.\textsuperscript{97} One year later, contemporary historian Günther Politt and economist Willy Stern joined the institute, widening its disciplinary horizon. Stern, whose previous position as personal assistant to the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Social Sciences at the university in Berlin had exposed him politically, had been sent into the provinces to prevent him from falling prey to the regular “cleansings” during the party-internal struggles of those years. Having no dissertation to his name, the university leadership hesitated to employ Stern in the Philosophical Faculty, where such a move still ran the risk of encountering resistance. He was instead placed in the Faculty for Social Sciences and there in the Institute for Marxism–Leninism, while working full-time for the Nordic Institute. Even though Stern was active in the build-up of the Nordic Institute, his tenure in Greifswald was a hibernation period and once the situation in Berlin had sufficiently calmed down, he was appointed to the German Institute for Economics (\textit{Deutsches Wirtschaftsinstitut}) in 1967.\textsuperscript{98}

Conflicts with the SED-run academic system were to a degree unavoidable since the personnel policy of the ever more firmly socialist university had to insist more strongly on party loyalty than before, sometimes at the expense of scholarly capabilities. Apart from the displacement of older, bourgeois scholars, a striking example of this is the handling of the foreign language lecturers. With the exception of Finnish lecturer Reino Järvinen, who had been employed before the war and had rebuilt his lector’s post between 1956 and 1959, the first generation of lecturers had been Germans of mixed heritage such as Odorich de Pers, Herbert Reiher and Marianne Carlsson-Lenz, who had one Scandinavian parent, but whose class-background was not

\textsuperscript{96} Kress to Rector EMAU, 31/12/1957, UAG NEW 7.

\textsuperscript{97} Bien to Association for Cultural Connections Abroad, Dept. Norway-Finland, 02/12/1957, UAG NEW 30.

always satisfactory. In the late 1950s and early 1960s these were replaced with more politically reliable personnel, enlisting the help of the respective communist sister parties in the North.99 These lecturers though, while loyal comrades, were often under-qualified for their tasks. The Dane Mogens Møller, resistance fighter against the German occupation during his student days and an expert on this aspect of history,100 proved dismal at teaching his native language. Repeated complaints that he was incapable of giving a scholarly account of the problems of Danish phonetics were lodged,101 but it took years before the institute’s leadership finally decided to take measures.102 Even without the demands for political reliability, the high teaching load and low payment compared with West German universities were sufficient obstacles.103 Under these circumstances, the Nordic Institute was forced to disavow the principle of regular lecturer rotation in favour of much longer tenures. Where lecturers were expected to be at the disposal of the institute for a longer time, for example because they had German partners, attempts were made to develop them as long-term cadres. This mostly concerned Danish lecturer Aud Broby-Ilg, in Greifswald from 1964, who was to be developed into a lecturer for all Continental Scandinavian languages in the long run, as well as Finnish lecturer Kaija Menger, in Greifswald since 1963.104 While contradicting the traditional idea that foreign language lecturers should not “go native”,105 the arrangement at least provided some continuity in the language instruction, which – with often half the lector posts vacant – had been notoriously fickle.106

99 Kress to SED Regional Headquarters Rostock, Dept. Agitation/Propaganda, 27/05/1960, UAG NEW 7.
100 Scholz 2000, p. 279.
101 See e.g. Report about study trip to Copenhagen by Erika Kosmalla, 31/10/1960, UAG NEW 98. The fact that this complaint is lodged within an official report indicates the level of frustration among the students.
102 Decision Memorandum of Institute Leadership Meeting, 20/03/1963, UAG NEW 14.
103 Kress to StHF, 16/05/1962, UAG NEW 98. At a later date Kress sent the state secretariat a list of Swedish lecturers abroad to illustrate the problem, finding not only that the FRG could boast a total of 17 lecturers against the GDR’s 4, but also that payment on the other side of the wall was noticeably higher. See Kress to StHF, 20/02/1967, UAG NEW 41.
104 Promemoria on cadre meeting with Mrs. Broby-Ilg on 19/01/1965, 28/01/1965, UAG NEW 40 and Minutes of Institute Leadership Meeting, 29/03/1966, UAG NEW 14.
105 Aud Broby-Ilg was still teaching in 2004, after 40 years of not having actually lived in Denmark.
106 It could even be speculated that the process of “going native” was desirable to totalitarian systems, where the transmission and consequent understanding of an
The personnel situation remained unsatisfactory until the mid-1960s, eliciting notable complaints from Kress\textsuperscript{107} and the party group\textsuperscript{108} that valuable resources were being frittered away if Scandinavian Studies were taught as an under-utilized minor subject in Leipzig, Berlin and Rostock without achieving critical mass anywhere. Area specialists were widely dispersed, and the notoriously difficult to acquire foreign language lecturers were often under-employed elsewhere, while development in Greifswald stalled because of understaffing.

This notion [the concentration of Nordistik in one place] is conflicting with traditional ideas, stemming from the time of the feudal “universitas literarum”. This idea was understandable from the point of view of the feudal princely universities and in consideration of the small extent of the sciences. But the people’s universities have no reason to cling to traditions that hamper the development of science.\textsuperscript{109}

But socialist dogma could not change the shortage of talents, wherefore the Nordic Institute was restricted to training its own academic personnel, a slow and often halting process.

\textbf{V.4 “Our Line will be enforced!” (1962–1967)}

At the beginning of the 1960s tensions between Greifswald and Berlin began to arise over these issues. The contentious study programme, which never seemed to satisfy, and the painful stalling of the extension of the institute’s personnel base had been mentioned in correspondence with the super-ordinated offices before, and in the winter of 1960 the Nordic Institute’s party organization sent a letter to the state secretariat decrying the present state of affairs: While the comrades of the Nordic Institute had authentically different “Other” would not be considered a positive development, but where the “Other” would have to be understood on one’s own terms.

\textsuperscript{107} Kress to StHF, 13/12/1958, UAG NEW 7.
overcome certain internal difficulties, it was felt that “questions have arisen during the establishment phase whose answers can no longer be put off”.  

There were still a number of unclear points, including the different demands made of the institute’s students and graduates as well as the number of different requests submitted to the Nordic Institute, which were at loggerheads with the institute’s current nature: The socialist praxis needed the services of interpreters, tour guides, custodians, archivists and investigators, something the Nordic Institute could not provide, or not to the necessary degree.  

While the Nordic Institute acknowledged its general political assignment as laid down in the oft-quoted speech by Otto Grotewohl, it nevertheless had to call for the clarification of fundamental questions: First, what were the tasks of the Nordic Institute, and second, what was its position? Furthermore, what precisely were the practical demands on the students of Nordistik and what did that mean for the curriculum? And what further tasks did the Nordic Institute have besides the training of students and what did that entail for the institute’s endowment and status? The 1958 perspective plan, the first one built around the demands of the state and party apparatus, was still in Berlin. It had hitherto been discussed within the institute, the university and with the Regional Party Offices, but the deciding response from the Central Committee had never come. Berlin neither confirmed nor denied the plans for the further extension of the Nordic Institute. Greifswald and Rostock were in agreement that a large meeting with interested agencies would be the best way to determine the exact tasks of the Nordic Institute.  

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111 Ibid.  
112 The suggestion included the Departments Arts/Sciences and Foreign Policy/International Relations in the Central Committee, the 4th European Department (Northern Europe) in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Sectors Philosophical Faculties and Foreign Policy in the State Secretariat for Higher Education, the Northern European Department in the Ministry for International and Intra-German Commerce, the Department Nordic Countries in the Association for Cultural Relations Abroad, the Sector Higher Education in the SED Regional Headquarters Rostock as well the party and institute leadership. See Party Leadership “Nordisten-Slawisten” UG to SED Central Committee, Dept. for Science, 07/11/1960, UAG NEW 7.  
113 Ibid.
Länderwissenschaft!

It was now the Nordic Institute’s turn to insist on its political assignment and remind the interested offices of the prerequisites for the work in Greifswald. Instead of being pushed into submission under a political programme, the academics actively demanded a clearer setting of tasks. This stemmed from the divergence between the implied objectives and the allocated resources and the failure in providing adequate services to the intended recipients. The MfAA had, for example, already requested an analysis of West German journalistic activities in Northern Europe, but Kress had to refuse since the institute simply lacked the capacities for such an undertaking.\textsuperscript{114} Without Berlin’s consent, little was moving and the complaints about this state of affairs heralded a phase of profound change in the way the Nordic Institute was organized.

The sluggish reaction from Berlin opened discussions in Greifswald about how to resolve the present problems. The perspective plan had stressed the importance of extending area research into politics, history and economics, but provisions were lacking. With Günther Politt and Willy Stern the institute already had a historian and an economist, but these two could only cover a limited number of Nordic countries between them. More personnel was needed to extend the work, but the measures to achieve that goal were contentious. With enough resources the Historical Institute and the Institute for Marxism–Leninism could be strong-armed into releasing some of their scholars who studied Northern Europe. Another solution would have been to leave these scholars in their respective institutes and instead loosely attach them to the Nordic Institute for specific teaching and research tasks.\textsuperscript{115}

Bruno Kress favoured the latter option, asserting that the non-philological disciplines were best kept in their own institutes, there to serve as Nordic outposts in their respective disciplines. Since the scholars in question were still within walking distance, collaborative teaching and research could still be organized with them.\textsuperscript{116} This decision might just as well have been in light of the obviously not forthcoming support from Berlin as in

\textsuperscript{114} Kress to Vogel (Dept. Universities, BL Rostock), 16/06/1960, LAG BL IV/2/9.02 1088, fol.19–22.
\textsuperscript{115} Minutes of discussion between institute- and party leaderships of Nordic and Historical Institute on the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of January 1964, 13/01/1964, UAG NEW 30.
\textsuperscript{116} Vogel (Dept. Universities BL Rostock) to Börner (ZK der SED), 21/06/1961, LAG BL IV/2/9.02 1088, fol. 102–103.
Kress’ own interest. Keeping politics and economics institutionally separate would have preserved the philological character of the Nordic Institute, thereby keeping Kress’ position untouched. However, the party group and the Regional Party Offices in Rostock were uniformly against such a solution. Seeing Kress taking up such a viewpoint suddenly jolted Berlin into action. In June 1961 the responsible officer in Rostock, Vogel, reported an urgent need for action to the Central Committee. Probably after a phone call from Berlin, he noted in the margins:

Discussion with the comrades of the Central Committee and State Secretariat in Nordic Institute on September 20th 1961
Our line will be enforced.
Comrades have to work out programme.
Conception Länderwissenschaft (against purely philological)
V.117

The meeting, attended by representatives from the state secretariat, the Central Committee’s Depart Arts/Sciences and SED Rostock, finally ratified the provisions of the 1958 perspective plan.118 Bruno Kress, though, exhibited little haste in executing his orders. This was compounded by the fact that the promised support from higher offices was still nowhere to be seen. Consequently, Kress returned to his original vision of a philological institute around which social sciences were to work in their own institutes. The 1962 batch of graduates, which faced difficulties in finding employment, seemed to confirm Kress’ idea that an institute that dabbled in everything could not produce excellence anywhere, and that fulfilling all the ministries’ wishes within a single institute was illusory. Kress even brought this up at a faculty meeting, where his proposal for an extended cooperation with other institutes instead of a concentration of forces in his own, found approval.119

In the summer of 1962, most of the issues had still not been resolved, Kress received an unusual visit from some gentlemen from the State Secretariat for Higher Education. The state secretariat had previously asked for a meeting with the director of the Nordic Institute, the Dean of the

118 Kress to SED Greifswald, 1st Secretary Marlow, 13/11/1961, UAG NEW 15.
119 Kress to Dean Philosophical Faculty UG (Prof. Liewehr), 01/09/1962, UAG NEW 1.
Philosophical Faculty, party secretary, and the professors Schildhauer and Geerdts, directors of the Historical and German Studies Institute respectively. The original date, July 18th, 1962, was not possible, and the whole meeting was adjourned to July 23rd. Despite having stated their inability to make it on this date, the two representatives of the state secretariat, Müller and Dr. Wagner, arrived in the morning hours of July 18th. They proceeded to call Kress at his private residence and asked him to assemble the Nordic Institute’s leadership at 2.30 pm. Even though the meeting was supposed to be with the leadership alone, Kress found all available members of the Nordic Institute present when he arrived, a state of affairs for which no explanation was offered. In the ensuing discussion, which lasted until 8 pm, the representatives of the state secretariat tried to convince Kress to accept the concept of *Länderwissenschaft* as the structuring element for the work of the institute. According to this new layout the Nordic Institute would abandon its country-specific departments in favour of disciplinary departments – entitled Language, Literary History, History and Economics – a layout that Kress rejected. He also did not give his consent to the drastic reduction in student numbers, which would have included pushing a sizable number of current students into other subjects, mostly teacher training. But almost all of the assistants supported the change and eventually Kress was told that the Nordic Institute would henceforth be curated by the department called *Länderwissenschaft* in the state secretariat. Upon Kress’ protest against this, the comrades from Berlin had him know that the state secretariat could organize itself as it saw fit and that one would not discuss this with scholars.120

Kress did turn to the university leadership to appeal his case, but it was hopeless. He had to admit to the Dean from the beginning that he stood pretty much alone with his views within the institute.121 Since August 13th, 1961, the last part of the intra-German border had been sealed off with a wall, robbing academics of their last option to resist political pressure. Between 1957 and 1961 the university had lost close to 60 qualified personnel due to emigration, the majority in the clinics.122 With the building of the Berlin Wall, this loophole was closed, and the party leadership obviously felt that they could increase the pressure. Out of options, Kress made the state

120 Kress to Dean Philosophical Faculty UG (Prof. Liewehr), 01/09/1962, UAG NEW 1.
121 Kress to Dean Philosophical Faculty UG (Prof. Liewehr), 01/09/1962, UAG NEW 1.
122 Reports about illegal emigration from local party organization EMAU to regional party leadership Rostock, LAG IV/2/9.02 1085
secretariat’s opinions his own. Upon a request for cooperation he described the institute’s new outlook in terms not unlike those of his superiors in Berlin:

The Nordic Institute will be structured by the principles of “Länderwissenschaft”, i.e. one strives to engage with the constitutive aspects of societal development of the countries in research and instruction. The field of activity of our institute includes the countries Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. Departments for politics and economics are currently under construction, which – in concert with the departments for philology and literary studies – are to tackle the current problems of societal development in the countries named.123

But Kress’ flexibility in this matter was of no consequence any more. His position was not just compromised by his ongoing support for a philology-heavy institute, but also by a long developing front against him within the institute.124 In the year following, 1963, Kress was relegated to the position of second-in-command when Rudolf Agricola, freshly equipped with a professorship in Political Economy and International Relations with the Nordic Countries, was appointed Director of the Nordic Institute.

The Watchdog

Agricola was not a typical academic, neither by training nor by inclination. While he had studied law and economics and graduated as “Dr. rer. pol.” in 1924 in Freiburg, his subsequent career moved between journalism, political functions, and academia. After he lost his position as teacher in the

124 In 1958 the party organization had already addressed the ever-present gossip and tattle in the institute. Apart from the two underqualified lecturers Møller and Sudmann, who were denounced by students, Kress in particular was the victim of office politics and felt that decisions were made without him. See Report about discussions with the comrades of the Nordic Institute and the current situation, no date (summer 1958), LAG BL IV/2/9.02 1087e, fol. 60–62. Despite several interventions, the situation only subsided after Agricola took office.
commercial college in Mannheim in 1933, he worked as an underground journalist for the Communist Party, which earned him eight years of imprisonment. In 1945 he began work as an editor on a local newspaper that he had started at the request of the French occupation forces, and in 1946 joined an American-dominated news agency. Being isolated due to his political views, he settled in the Soviet Zone of Occupation a year later. The local authorities installed him as Professor of Journalism at Halle University, after the university had objected to his teaching economics. His work there, including the functions of Assistant Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor, was marked by little success, though, with him being unable to cope with the teaching and doing little substantial research. Having called in permanently sick in 1952, he was transferred to the East German Academy of Arts and Sciences, where he became department head in the Institute for Economics, again with little success. In 1956 Agricola was appointed consul general at the GDR trade delegation in Helsinki and in 1961/62 extraordinary envoy and plenipotentiary of the GDR in Finland.\(^\text{125}\)

Apart from his unpublished dissertation, Agricola had published a textbook about accounting\(^\text{126}\) and a small brochure about the state of the West German economics.\(^\text{127}\) Commanding little in the way of academic capital, Agricola was as a party functionary in academia. Further considering his advanced age, it is likely that Agricola’s appointment owed more to the wish to replace the uncooperative and politically fragile Kress than to hopes for Agricola’s energetic leadership. In fact, Agricola presents the first case of a “watchdog”, a professor and director whose main function was to enforce the party line in the institute.


\(^\text{126}\) Agricola, Rudolf: Abschluss und Bilanz, Stuttgart 1928.

Within the university this function was seemingly understood and acknowledged. Regular letters of congratulation, which eminent members of socialist organizations received, underline this acceptance of Agricola’s role. These letters, on the occasion of significant birthdays, stressed his political career and his party-loyal teaching, while neglecting to mention academic achievements.\textsuperscript{128} Agricola’s later successor and the second watch-dog in the Nordic Institute, Herbert Joachimi, was similarly honoured.\textsuperscript{129} In contrast, more dedicated scholars like Horst Bien and Bruno Kress had their political loyalty mentioned in passing, while their praise focussed on emphasizing their academic work.\textsuperscript{130}

With Agricola installed to ensure party loyalty in the Nordic Institute, Bruno Kress was marginalized and reduced to displaying his power by sabotaging the careers of the assistants who had effected his ousting. His intervention against the \textit{Habilitation} of Horst Bien and the dissertation of Günther Politt, where he demanded higher standards,\textsuperscript{131} only aggravated the situation. In the summer of 1964 he was finally brought to heel in an enforced private talk with Agricola, after which he had to declare that he

\textsuperscript{128} Draft Letter of Congratulations for Agricola’s 80\textsuperscript{th} birthday (21/10/1980), UAG NEW 21.
\textsuperscript{129} Laudation for 65\textsuperscript{th} birthday of Herbert Joachimi, 09/10/1986, UAG NEW 21.
\textsuperscript{130} Draft Letter of Letter of Congratulations for Bien’s 60\textsuperscript{th} birthday (29/10/1980), and Draft Laudation for Bruno Kress’ 80\textsuperscript{th} birthday, no date (1987), both UAG NEW 21.
\textsuperscript{131} Minutes of Institute Meetings, 10/04/1963 and 22/12/1963, UAG NEW 14.
approved the tasking of the institute. “All colleagues leave the long discussions of the past years behind.”\textsuperscript{132}

Agricola could not solve many of the institute’s problem but he aptly supervised the transition of the Nordic Institute into a \textit{Länderwissenschaft}-institute until his retirement in 1965. This included the institution of an advisory board for Northern European Studies to permanently preside over the development of the Nordic Institute. Demands for such a board had come from Greifswald, where the need for a deeper integration in the “Socialist Praxis” had long been felt. While still not fulfilling all the wishes that had been harboured there, the board nevertheless managed to put the Nordic Institute into closer contact with the ministries and thereby energized the subsequent transition process.

\textbf{A New System of Instruction}

The most immediate change was the abandonment of the present study programme, as the idea of a major programme for \textit{Nordistik} had proven unproductive. In August 1962 the state secretariat ordered the effective cessation of instruction under the existing curriculum. Of the 40 \textit{Nordistik}-students, only six were allowed to finish their studies according to the old study plan; the rest were to be transferred into other programmes. New enrolments were stopped, effectively scrapping the \textit{Nordistik}-programme, at least as a major subject. The same went for the secondary programmes, such as teachers and interpreters, who also had to change their subjects, as experience had shown that there was hardly any demand for them in real life.\textsuperscript{133}

Intense discussions began between the Nordic Institute and the interested agencies that led to a new approach to instruction. Fulfilling all the demands of the ministries and associated agencies had proven well-nigh impossible. This was not just because the Nordic Institute was suffering from a shortage of manpower, but also because its study programme was designed to produce Northern European experts with a diplomatic or economic training, whereas it slowly transpired that what Berlin actually desired was diplomats and economists with a schooling in Northern European affairs. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs had fewer problems accommodating the Greifswald graduates, but the Ministry for Inter-

\textsuperscript{132} “\textit{Alle Mitarbeiter ziehen einen Schlussstrich unter die langen Diskussionen der vergangenen Jahre.}” – Minutes of Institute Leadership Meeting, 30/06/1964, UAG NEW 14.
\textsuperscript{133} Tobler 2011, pp. 55–57.
national and Intra-German Commerce (*Ministerium für Außen- und Innerdeutschen Handel*, MAIH) had remarked early on that their demand for “cultural advisors” was low and that they too would like to couple *Nordistik* with another studies programme, such as economics or economic geography.\(^{134}\) The MAIH consequently did not show great interest in Greifswald, until cooperation was intensified following the shift to *Länderwissenschaft* and the institution of the advisory board. In the discussions following, a solution was found: Since Greifswald, even with an extended economics department, could not deliver what the ministry desired, the idea was to train a smaller number of cadres as market economists and leadership personnel in the ministry’s own College of Economics in Berlin-Karlshorst. These students would then take a further two-year-course in Northern European studies in Greifswald to top off their education.\(^{135}\) A similar project was discussed with the MfAA, where Babelsberg-trained diplomats would receive additional education in Greifswald.\(^{136}\) While being cumbersome, this method finally worked, but silently acknowledged that the desired training could not be crammed into a standard five-year programme without serious disturbances.

The Gordian knot was cut in mid-1965, when Erich Klien, officer in charge of Area Studies in the State Secretariat for Higher Education, attended a leadership meeting in Greifswald to lay down a new set of guidelines. Originally devised by and for the Centre for Asian, African and Latin American Studies in Leipzig, these guidelines committed the Nordic Institute to the needs of the Foreign Service and contained, apart from a number of institutional details, two provisions that concluded the ongoing debate: First of all, language acquisition was paramount. For the sake of the acquisition of the world languages, Russian and English, the study programme would henceforth confine itself to one Nordic language, which should be brought to as high a level as possible. Secondly, the philological training would be reduced to a level more reflective of the needs of the

\(^{134}\) Ministry for International and Intra-German Commerce, Department for Cadre and Training, to SED Central Committee, Department for Science and Scholarship, 16/06/1958, UAG NEW 7.

\(^{135}\) Promemoria by Träger (MfAA) about a meeting with Prof. Dr. Freund (Dean of the Faculty for International Commerce at the College of Economics, Berlin-Karlshorst) and Prof. Dr. Agricola (Director of the Nordic Institute) on the 23\(^{rd}\) of October 1964, 24/10/1964, UAG NEW 30.

\(^{136}\) Minutes on meeting between director of the Nordic Institute and the head of the 4\(^{th}\) European Department in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 19/10/1964, UAG NEW 28.
interested ministries. Generally, the distribution of skills should be along the lines of 40 percent economics, 20 percent history, 15 percent language and culture, 15 percent law and 10 percent journalism, turning the previous priorities upside down.\textsuperscript{137}

Contract Research

While this new system of education was halting at first, with it for example being unclear whether the Nordic Institute would even receive any contingent of students for 1966 after serious delays on the part of the state secretariat,\textsuperscript{138} it paved the way for a reorientation of the Nordic Institute. Where previously the Nordic Institute had, in conjunction with neighbouring institutes, focussed on its task of training young cadres, it now changed its character into that of a research institute.

The Nordic Institute had previously tried to characterize their research as a “systematic investigation of the GDR’s relations with the Nordic States”, yet their research was far from systematic. With only Kress, Bien and Stern being fully qualified researchers, the majority of ongoing projects were dissertations, more reflective of the scholars’ interests than of any systematic approach. Discussions with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the beginning of 1964 led to the idea of employing the institute in a more purposeful manner. The ministry would apply to the State Secretariat for Higher Education for a research contract to be set up with the Nordic Institute. The research task, “The intellectual, political and cultural situation in Northern Europe” was to analyse the manifestoes of the Social Democratic parties in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, their foreign and domestic policies, the influence of decisions by the Socialist International and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, as well as that of other important parties and the general outline of Western German influence in these countries.\textsuperscript{139}

The research programme had a strong influence on the character of the Nordic Institute. While it had previously focussed on philological and cultural aspects of Northern Europe, the ministries now insisted on a

\textsuperscript{137} Minutes of Institute leadership meeting, 16/07/1965, UAG NEW 14. This meeting was special insofar as Erich Klien, who handled the area studies institutes in the State Secretariat for Higher Education, attended.

\textsuperscript{138} Minutes of Institute Leadership Meeting, 13/05/1965, UAG NEW 14.

\textsuperscript{139} Minutes of meeting with Comrade Bick, 20/04/1964, UAG NEW 28.
stronger presence of economic topics. Even though the institute’s leadership proposed more cultural and political topics, such as the peace movement in the North, Nordic Socialism and the popular front in Finland, the MfAA requested that the institute engage with questions of the economic structure in the North or the economic foundations of Swedish neutrality.\(^{140}\) A list of research assignments of all the Länderwissenschaft-institutes in the GDR shows that the Nordic Institute, despite being ill-equipped for that task, was the only institute that concentrated so much on economic and political topics. Most other institutes focussed on the production of teaching materiel, such as dictionaries and textbooks.\(^{141}\) This new profile found widespread approval among the interested agencies, and so it was with satisfaction that Agricola reported from the advisory board meeting: “In regard to research, the Nordic Institute is no longer bringing up the rear. Due to its extent and up-to-date topic, the long-term research assignment (Social Democracy) has been presented as exemplary for area studies.”\(^{142}\)

Five-Year Plan and Reality

This ambitious and extensive research solved a number of problems for the Nordic Institute. The institute’s leadership had pointed out before that, with the amount of personnel necessary to teach all the intended fields even for a subsidiary subject, the institute would be decidedly top-heavy.\(^{143}\) This problem would be alleviated if this personnel was at the same time employed in a research function. Furthermore, the collective character of such a research programme could also serve as a tool for the further qualification of the assistants as well as help to secure more resources. The ministry’s weight might help with the notoriously difficult task of acquiring qualified personnel, first and foremost, but the institute hoped for help in alleviating other shortages as well. Foreign currency, always in short supply in the GDR, was only available in miniscule amounts to the Nordic Insti-

\(^{140}\) Minutes on meeting between Seyfert (Head of 4th European Department, MfAA) and Director of the Nordic Institute, 10/02/1965, UAG NEW 28.

\(^{141}\) List of research contracts 1965, no date (1965), UAG NEW 63.

\(^{142}\) “In Bezug auf die Forschung bildet das Nordische Institut nicht mehr das Schlußlicht. Der langfristige Forschungsauftrag (Sozialdemokratie) wurde seines Umfangs und seiner aktuellen Thematik wegen als beispielhaft für die Regionalwissenschaft hingestellt.” – Minutes on institute leadership meeting, 13/05/1965, UAG NEW 14.

\(^{143}\) Party Leadership “Nordisten-Slawisten” UG to SED Central Committee, Dept. for Science, 07/11/1960, UAG NEW 7.
tute, a state of affairs that limited not just the scope of activities abroad, but even such basic things as acquiring modern literature and newspapers from the Nordic countries. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs promised help in these quarters.144

High hopes were followed by deep disappointment, though. While the Ministry had promised support, this was difficult to turn into reality. The institute could count on its own students to provide them with a predictable, if trickling, growth potential, but the acquisition of outside personnel was still no easier, especially if faced with competing offers. When philologist Ernst Walter, formerly head of the Department of Scandinavian Studies in Leipzig became available in 1964, recruiting him proved a trying endeavour. Once Walter had been convinced to come to Greifswald, it transpired that the university could or would not provide an established post. Once the position had been secured, Walter had already accepted a position with the Hinstorff publishing house in Rostock.145 Since the university itself had to provide posts, the process was far from smooth or transparent, and Walter stayed in contact with the Nordic Institute, but only took office in 1968/69.146

On the other hand, the leadership of party and state provided Greifswald with the services of Kurt Vieweg. Vieweg, who had been a communist activist during his exile in Denmark and Sweden, had become one of the GDR’s leading agronomic experts before being ousted from the party and all offices for his “counterrevolutionary” position on collectivization in 1957. After illegally leaving the GDR for six months, he returned in October 1957, only to be arrested and sentenced to twelve years’ incarceration for treason. He was amnestied in December 1964 and assigned a position as assistant in the Nordic Institute in 1965.147

144 Minutes about meeting with Comrade Bick, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 20/04/1964, UAG NEW 28.
145 Correspondence between Ernst Walter, Bruno Kress, Rudolf Agricola, State Secretariat for Higher Education and Dean of UG, from 10/12/1964 to 12/10/1965, UAG NEW 40.
146 ‘The exact date of Walter’s taking office is not available. A post was provided by him for 1968, see (Draft) The further development of academic relations between EMAU and Northern Europe, no date (February 1966), UAG Prorectorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33. Walter’s B-thesis, which qualified him for the post, was only published in 1969, after which point he regularly contributed to the Nordic Institute’s journal.
What none of the interested agencies provided, though, was foreign currency. The literature supply to the institute had severe gaps due to its inability to buy books and hold newspapers. This situation had been critical before, but with the planned start of the contract research in August 1965 it became ludicrous. Attempts were even made to get the Nordic newspapers that Radio Berlin International held subscriptions to, where they had previously been scrapped. But this measure only filled the most glaring gaps. For the most part, the researchers of the Nordic Institute were confined to reading the free newspapers of the communist sister-parties to in order to stay up-to-date with current events in the North. The 14,000 Marks earmarked for the contract research had contained not a single Mark of foreign currency, a situation that Agricola had been aware of since March. But while the ministry insisted that the money had been approved, none was forthcoming, despite repeated complaints, which made the ambitious plans for the research contract sound fanciful.

V.5 On the Way to Real Socialism

The post-war years of the Nordic Institute were marked by perpetual contention. In the early years this was primarily due to the indeterminate state of affairs, with an unclear division of responsibility in the state apparatus, which made work in the university difficult. Attempts by Leopold Magon to have the Nordic Institute reopened therefore faced the additional challenge, apart from widespread want, that the authorities themselves were still undergoing a restructuring process. By 1953, Magon had instead managed to convince the university leadership itself that a revival of the Nordic connection was an important selling point for Greifswald, and by the following year the Nordic Institute had a new management and began working again.

148 Tobler 2011, p. 58. Kurt Vieweg’s wife worked at RBI and Vieweg himself produced a number of programs for the radio, see Minutes on Institute Leadership Meeting, 18/10/1966, UAG NEW 14.
149 Report on Meeting between Börner (Central Committee SED), Weiß (University Party Leadership), Seyfert and Knöller (both MfAA), Agricola (Director Nordic Institute) and Kosmalla (party secretary Nordic Institute), 19/11/1965, UAG NEW 5.
150 Minutes on Institute Leadership Meeting, 23/03/1965, UAG NEW 14, Agricola to StHF, 18/10/1965, UAG NEW 63 and Tobler 2011, p. 58.
This management was quickly ousted by forces more loyal to the SED, though. The network of pupils and colleagues that Magon had left behind to secure his legacy in Greifswald, was eroded between campaigns by party-loyal students and younger scholars who saw their future in an alliance with the political sphere. The results of this partification, which was mostly concluded by 1958, were mixed. For the political sphere they were a qualified success. Even though the new director, Bruno Kress, was by no means a model communist, he was kept on course by younger assistants and students, and the party had managed to secure an unassailable foothold in the institute and could subsequently enforce its will. For the scholars the outcome was more diverse. Especially the younger assistants and students, who had come up in party organizations, would go on to pursue stellar careers with their specific mixture of political and academic capital. Others, such as Odorich de Pers, failed in their attempts to secure their academic career with political backing. Kress managed to gain an elevated position in academia, even though this did not come without perceptible limitations on his power. In sum, the alliance between a political system that wished to extend its grip on the academic sphere and younger scholars who hoped to further their careers by pandering to the political system proved to be mixed blessings to the latter. While it weakened the position of the people they needed to expel from their positions, it also weakened themselves once they had taken over these positions.

This is illustrated by the fate of Bruno Kress, who found it entirely within himself to accept a communist spin to his philological work and was willing to help in the expulsion of Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld to effect his own advancement. Upon his ascension to the spheres of power, though, Kress found that what the party had given, the party could take away. When in 1962 the state secretariat streamlined the Area Studies and Kress’ own subject began to be marginalized, his protest was in vain. The exchange of disagreeable directors had been established as practice and Kress found himself relegated to the ranks again. While he was allowed to keep his chair and managed to work himself back into favour in due time, his was a sobering example of a Faustian pact.

Instead of relying on the opportunistic academic who had given legitimacy to their takeover, the party replaced Kress with a second-line party activist with few academic credentials. While being hailed as a professor – on somewhat shaky grounds – his actual contribution was not in research but in enforcing the party-line. This position of “party watchdog” became increasingly institutionalized, and would go on to be in force
until the mid-1980s, when academics from the institute itself would be allowed to fill the director’s position again.

Once the party’s control over the Nordic Institute had been established, though, it turned out that the actual use of it was not entirely clear. The educational task in particular was hazy and covered in flowery rhetoric, but lacked clear guidelines on what students could and should learn. The Nordic Institute could not provide the education that the concerned ministries wished for, but was beholden by their superordinated offices to do so anyway. Graduates turned out to be unsuited to the jobs they were earmarked for and study programmes were regularly revised to rectify this problem.

Furthermore, there existed a pervasive shortage of resources to support this endeavour. The GDR had suffered a massive brain-drain until 1961, and attempts to recruit qualified personnel were difficult and often fraught with red tape. Worse still, was the question of financing. While the Nordic Institute gladly accepted a research contract from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this major long-term project was ludicrously underfunded. Even though the Nordic Institute and its scholars willingly put themselves at the service of state and party, the results of this cooperation were not an unqualified success. Even in a single-party state the bureaucratic coordination between different authorities was a difficult process, whose results would then have to be translated into clear guidelines for what academia was expected to deliver, at which point further questions of feasibility, methods and resource allocation arose. This process of coordinating demands and production was halting and took a long time to complete. It was not until the late 1960s that the Nordic Institute could deliver its services to general satisfaction.
By the mid-1960s the SED had secured a firm grip on the universities. The most glaring opposition had been driven out by about 1950, which in turn opened the way for its own loyal personnel to slowly occupy positions of power. While non-communist scholars were at first expediently tolerated, these were pushed out in the mid-1950s through a combination of administrative measures and low-level campaigns. By the end of the decade the party had its own personnel in place and bureaucratic instruments at their disposal that allowed for deep intrusions into the academic world to assert their power. After the building of the Berlin Wall, the last option for resistance – emigration – was lost and the party could now clamp down on the last vestiges of recalcitrance. While communist control over the universities was not – in a strict sense – total, its logic ruled the academic career system to a degree that made conformism unavoidable. At the same time, the party offered privileges to academics who showed the required conduct, thus adding a carrot to the stick.\(^1\)

The Nordic Institute bears witness to these developments. Nevertheless, as the previous chapter has shown, the increased political control over academia did not necessarily lead to an increased efficiency. Coordination of political needs with academic realities was often lacking and results were, therefore, unsatisfactory. This was to change in the late 1960s, which saw fundamental shifts established in the academic landscape and the different institutions within the universities brought in line. The thus established system worked well enough to dominate political-academic relations until the end of the GDR.

VI.1 Pacifying Academia

The parlance of the GDR included three academic reforms, even though only one of them can actually claim to represent a centralized effort to restructure the academic landscape. Nevertheless, the SED held that it had instituted three such reforms, not least to keep up the appearance of continuity and a determined march towards the future.

The first academic reform, according to this reading, was the cleansing of the universities in the years immediately following the war. In a mixture of executions, deportations, dismissals and relegations of real or alleged Nazi-sympathisers, a process unified by the rhetorical notion of denazification, the universities lost much of their teaching and research staff. This process, augmented by voluntary relocation of many scholars to West German universities, led to a substantial bloodletting in many universities,\(^2\) which in turn opened the way for a replacement of old bourgeois elites with new socialist cadres.\(^3\)

Where the “First Academic Reform” had laid the groundwork for a reform of the old universities, the “Second Academic Reform” in the early to mid-1950s aimed to finalize the takeover of academia by party and state. The original idea of the SED, to add socialist institutions to the old pre-war universities, proved to be less effective than expected. Systematic promotion of social groups not traditionally rich in cultural capital, through preference for worker’s children in university admission and the establishment of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Faculties, was one way to replace bourgeois dominance in academia. Another way was the introduction of the *Aspirantur*\(^4\) as the obligatory form of post-doctoral programme, which wrestled control over the academic recruitment from professors and turned it over to science administrators. Furthermore, the introduction of more rigid curricula with an extended academic year, obligatory introductions in Marxism-Leninism

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\(^2\) The most radical case was Berlin University, which lost 78% of its staff. See Schulz 2010, p. 36.

\(^3\) For an overview over this phase see Kowalczuk 2003, pp. 99–120.

\(^4\) In contrast to the traditional dissertation process, the *Aspirant* was not tied only to his supervising professor, but was required to work in the university and pass several exam during his tenure. This more bureaucratic process allowed for greater control over selection and development of junior academic personnel than the traditional *Promotion*, which was often a private arrangement between supervisor and doctoral student, and the university at large was only involved when the thesis had to be examined.
and internships with the intended post-graduate employers served to – apart from immediate economic concerns – turn universities from self-replicating social cosmoses into teaching institutions with many fulcrums for political control.\(^5\)

**The Problems of Modernity**

By the end of the 1950s, party and state found themselves lording it over an academic system that had little in common with that of the late Weimar years, the last state of affairs that was still considered “normal” by Western standards. Internal party organizations exercised control at every level of the university, while research projects had to be approved by ministerial officials, and young academics were obliged to constantly update their political as much as their scientific training. The new universities were younger, more female and more ideologically streamlined. The process of taking control over academia was finalized when in 1961 the Berlin Wall cut off the possibility for academics to resist this power by leaving for West Germany. Nevertheless, the system of research and teaching was still comparatively untouched.

At the same time, a number of intellectual developments heralded a changing relationship between science and society. The gradual expansion of academic institutions – inside and outside of the universities – had led to the point where, as the American Sociologist Derek de Solla Price estimated in 1963, almost 90 percent of all scientists who had ever lived were his contemporaries and conducted more than 80 percent of all scientific works ever.\(^6\) This numerical growth indicated to decision makers worldwide that science and scholarship would play a correspondingly large role in the future development of industrialized societies. This not only concerned hard science and its industrial and military applications, but also sociological studies, hinting at the possibility of planning and controlling a modern and diverse industrial society. Particularly in the shadow of the clash of ideologies, the dream of a rationally plannable society, with an industry and military profiting from the latest scientific developments was tempting. Already at their party rally in 1956, the SED had made the terms “Nuclear Age” and “Second Industrial Revolution” hallmarks of their belief

\(^5\) For an overview over this phase Schulz 2010, pp. 58–75. A more in-depth analysis in Kowalczuk 2003.

in a future of unlimited possibilities, with science and scholarship as its key building stones. During the 1950s international discussions and domestic experiences coalesced into a cluster of keywords in party and wider official discussions about the future of science. Western discussions about a “Second Industrial Revolution” were refracted into the more Marxist “Science becoming an immediate productive force” (Werden der Wissenschaft zu einer unmittelbaren Produktivkraft) – shortened into the “Productive Force Science” (Produktivkraft Wissenschaft) – and became a key element in “mastering the scientific-technical revolution” (Meistern der wissenschaftlich-technischen Revolution), a term that even made it into the GDR-constitution of 1968.7

Nevertheless, this discussion about the growing importance of scientific principles for practically all sectors of public life was not universally welcomed. Many in the SED feared that dreams of a scientifically controlled society, such as cybernetics, which was in widespread use in the GDR since around 1964, would threaten the role of ideology in societal control. If the direction that the socialist society was to take were to be determined scientifically, many wondered, where would that leave the party? These fears were spurred on by ideas, circulating in the West, about an inevitable convergence of socialism and capitalism. Under the objective pressure of managing an industrial society with scientific means, some scholars argued, capitalist and socialist societies could not but become ever more similar, up to the point of indistinguishability. While not a particularly influential theory in the West, the convergence theory remained a pet-peeve of party officials and on the to-do-list of Western theories to refute in Northern Europe.8 It was, therefore, not without grounds that discussions on the scientific-technical revolution had an immediate hiatus in 1957. Walter Ulbricht had to defend himself against contentions by Karl Schirdewan and a number of other high-ranking comrades about a post-Stalinist rethinking of societal policy. Only a gradual relaxation of the ideological leash, not least due to discussions in Moscow, led to a re-introduction of the “scientific-technical revolution”. And still, the party remained wary of the implications of the idea for its own position. In 1968 Gregor Schirmer, Deputy Minister for Higher Education, reminded the senate of Berlin’s Humboldt-university

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7 Schulz 2010, pp. 89–103.
8 Development of Sektion Nordeuropawissenschaften and its research areas until 1980, no date (1973), UAG NEW 5.
that formulations, about the scientific-technical revolution suddenly being paramount and everything else being derived from it, slip even into key documents by Higher Education leaders. This leads us immediately into the vicinity of the well-known convergence theory, and I think it would be illusory to believe that clarifying this question was a discussion with some backward scientists who still have not understood this.9

The term scientific-technical revolution fell completely out of favour after 1971, when Erich Honecker repealed a large number of his predecessor’s measures. While still present in the GDR’s constitution, it received only lip-service from there on. For the SED, the second industrial revolution posed a problem insofar as for them the danger of – to put it in Weingart’s terms – the scientification of politics was clear and present, so much so, that discussions about the role of science and scholarship in society became a dangerous political issue.10

A New Economy

Despite the inhibitions of the party leadership to engage with the uncertainty of unleashing societal dynamics outside of their control, the importance of technology and science in the development of modern industrial societies could not be denied. This was all the more so since the military confrontation with the West had been shelved by the nuclear stand-off, and economic means were one of the remaining ways of competing. The GDR was not off to a good start in this competition, though, and by the beginning of the 1960s the staggering problems of economic development had become apparent. Some of them were more or less objective, such as the widespread destruction after the war, reparations to


10 For an extensive exploration of the discussion surrounding the scientific-technical revolution, convergence theory and the entangled dynamics of scientific reform debates and Politburo politics, see Schulz 2003, pp. 89–110.
the Soviet Union and large parts of Eastern Germany being traditionally agricultural. Others were homemade, such as the botched land reform and agricultural collectivization, the high public consumption, the brain drain to Western Germany and widespread inefficiency and waste.11

The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 did not solve these problems, but it defused them and reduced their immediate threat to the existence of the state. Furthermore, removing the option of dissent-through-emigration, the Wall increased party control and thereby laid the foundation for a more extensive reform process. The “New Economic System of Planning and Management” (Neues Ökonomisches System der Planung und Leitung), which the SED confirmed in 1963, saw the party relinquish some of its central control over the economy. Factory administrators received a limited license to deviate from the plan; new accounting rules were introduced to ensure that plants noticed when they ran unprofitably, and a bonus system was instituted to increase the material interest of workers and managers in their businesses. While effective for a short time, the reform was neither as drastic nor as consistent as advertised, partly because it introduced the regulatory mechanisms of capitalist systems without providing their foundations, partly because the SED as well the comrades in Moscow feared that the reform might remove too much control from central party institutions, and therefore reduced its extent.12

The Third Academic Reform

These attempts to reform the economy also heralded a renewed interest in a fundamental reform of the educational field. On the one hand, while the economic reforms in themselves were concerned with organizational improvements, they were accompanied by deliberations on how to employ the scientific community to give maximum support to the industrial sector. On the other hand, in the first ten years after the foundation of the GDR the party had striven to establish a tight control over all walks of life. But at the beginning of the 1960s, with party control ensured, far-reaching structural reforms became not only possible but seemed increasingly urgent so as to guarantee the optimal functioning of societal subsystems.

12 Ibid., pp. 207–213.
The VI. Party Congress of the SED in January 1963, on which the New Economic System was proclaimed, saw a number of measures for the educational sphere. Following the discussions started there, Ulbricht demanded that the principles of the New Economic System were to be transferred to other societal sectors, culminating in the “Law on the Unified Socialist Education System” in February 1965. According to this law, the stakes were high:

The Socialist Education System contributes substantially to enabling the citizen to form the socialist society, master the technical revolution and contribute to the development of the socialist democracy. It conveys a modern general education and high special training to the people and at the same time forms character traits in line with socialist morals. The Socialist Education System enables them to do valuable work as good citizens, continually learn, engage with society, participate in planning and take responsibility, live healthy lives, use their free time meaningfully, do sports and cultivate the arts.13

The new law introduced a streamlined and unified educational system, running from day care and kindergarten through to school and higher education. Apart from unifying prior school systems and setting up clearer structures, it also introduced polytechnic elements, with an emphasis on preparing children for future industrial employment, by means of training in natural sciences and crafts as well as regular visits and short internships in factories, shops and community farms.14

This was the framework on which the Third Academic Reform was envisaged. To induce initiative without losing ideological control, the reform restructured the leadership of universities at all levels along the principle of “Individual Leadership and Collective Responsibility” (Einzelleitung und

kollektive Verantwortung), renamed to “Staff-Line-System” (Stab-Linien-System) for academic purposes. The system posited that the head of an organization had full authority over subordinate units, while being super- and advised by a board of peers, with no direct authority of their own. In situ this meant that, for example, the Vice Chancellor was given the right to transfer his authority over certain issues to his Deputy Vice Chancellors, instead of relying on the autonomous administration of his “subjects”. His ability to exercise oversight over subordinated offices was further strengthened by a staff of directors for different subjects, such as Education, Cadre and Qualification or Economy and Planning. On the other hand, the Vice Chancellor was now flanked by a Scientific Council, which advised on scientific matters, and a Societal Council, containing inter alia representatives of economy and state administration, which ensured that the interests of the “customers” were taken into account and that the education in the university was along socialist lines. While managers on all levels thus received more responsibility and authority, they were also overseen by a group of peers and representatives of state and party. The reform furthermore introduced a focussing (Profilierung) of individual universities, cutting down on redundancies and concentrating capacities. This focussing mirrored the ever-present balance between increasing effectiveness and ensuring party loyalty, in that the new structure favoured natural and applied sciences, while extending the instruction in Marxism-Leninism as a basic capability. Considerations about a more effective leadership and closer integration with the “consumers” in economy and state administration infused the numerous changes that followed the reform.15

The most fundamental change in the universities was the introduction of an entirely new structure. The traditional faculties and institutes were dissolved in favour of compact interdisciplinary units, called sections. Out of roughly 900 institutes at East German universities grew some 170 sections. At the Humboldt-University in Berlin alone, the numbers show a transition from 169 institutes to 26 sections. In contrast to their predecessor units, which were primarily organized along disciplinary lines, the sections were problem-oriented, combining close disciplines into one institution that handled a certain complex area. A look at the structure of Leipzig’s Karl-Marx-University illustrates the underlying principle: While a number

of sections, such as Chemistry, Biosciences, Physics or Mathematics, combined adjacent disciplines into compact administrative units, an equally great part was combined from different disciplines along one more or less practical issue. Examples of these are the Section Animal Production/Veterinary Medicine, Section Computer Sciences/Data Processing or the Section Asian-, African- and Middle Eastern Studies.  

Research-wise, the GDR had previously had a splintered environment of industry-, ministry- and party-affiliated research institutes, which often duplicated and overlapped research with the university-based researchers. This lead to complaints, not only from the state administration but also from university-based scholars, who perceived fruitless competition without any one institute reaching its full potential. Furthermore, criticism had been directed against the often haphazard approval of research before its societal usefulness had been determined. The reform therefore introduced a state research plan, into which all sections and researchers were to be included. Long-term “perspective plans” would determine the general projects of research institutions, while “annual plans” would boil these down to concrete and measurable goals. Furthermore, the reform formalized the assignment of lead-institutions to disciplines. These institutions, often the respective party or ministry-level research institutes or academies, were to coordinate research in their field. But individual sections did not only have to accommodate the wishes of their lead-institutions, but also those of their assigned “cooperation partners”. This was a list of state, party and economic institutions that were most interested in the sections’ work and appropriated their scientific output as much as their graduates. All in all, the new sections had a list of customers and higher-ups to coordinate with, limiting the leeway for ground-level decisions.

A similar intensification of immediately useful output was aspired to in education: If it was to overtake the Federal Republic in industrial capacity, it was determined, the GDR would need to increase its number of annual graduates by 250 percent in general and by 350 percent in natural sciences and technology until 1980. Apart from massively increasing the student capacities at universities and widening university admission, education was to be made more effective: Besides shortening study programmes, the main structural innovations were the “scientifically-productive studies”. The study

17 Lambrecht 2007, pp. 179f.
programmes were to reduce the volume of ex-cathedra teaching and instead to involve students in research and applied science projects, so as to introduce them early to their later tasks in the workforce. Furthermore, the state administration hoped that this influx of helping hands would speed up research progress.\textsuperscript{18}

In summary, the Third Academic Reform in the GDR was one of the – if not the – most extensive reform processes German academia had ever seen. In the space of just a few years, from the “Principles of the Further Development of Research and Teaching in the Academies of the GDR”, presented by the State Secretariat for Higher Education in 1966, to 1969, when the restructuring was mostly complete, the power relationship within the universities and between academia and state changed profoundly. While the first two “academic reforms” had already factually undermined academia as a self-governing body and increased the dependencies between it and the political field, the Third Academic Reform provided for systematic pathways of command and control, from the Politburo down to the individual researcher. Research as much as teaching was integrated into the needs of the state bureaucracy and the economic system, on call for research, advice and services. While many of these changes had in principle crept in before, the years running up to 1969 were characterized by profound changes in the organization of academia.

Office Politics

In Greifswald the situation had become difficult when the reform was put on the tracks in Berlin. Since Agricola’s retirement in late 1965, the position of institute director had provisionally been filled by Horst Bien.\textsuperscript{19} This had reverted the dynamics within the institute back to the status that Agricola had been called in to resolve, namely that the leadership was in the hands of a literary scholar with limited political ambition.

Bien was part of a younger generation of literary scholars who had taken up the call for political activism. He was a member of the party group and had proven that he was willing to publically support the GDR abroad. During the 1960 German Scholar Congress in Copenhagen, when – as was to be expected – the flags of the participating nations did not include the

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, pp. 181–185.
\textsuperscript{19} Minutes of Institute Leadership Meeting, 14/12/1965, UAG NEW 14.
GDR flag, the leadership of the East German delegation, consisting of Hans Mayer and Leopold Magon, refused to seek a confrontation over the issue. The party group in the delegation, younger scholars including Bruno Kress and Horst Bien, had to pressure them to remonstrate against this discrimination, which they only did half-heartedly.  

Even so, Bien’s loyalty to the orders of the Politburo was distrusted. Especially economist Willy Stern and historian Günther Politt agitated against him, suspecting him of trying to roll back the Länderwissenschaft-concept and return to a language and literature approach. These suspicions had been uttered from the beginning of Bien’s tenure, but were supported by the sluggish development of the historical-political and economic departments in the institute. This, however, was due less to Bien’s unwillingness than to a general lack of resources from higher up. Bien principally agreed with the need for a stronger mobilisation of the institute.

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21 Statement by the Party Leadership Nordistik, 03/01/1967, UAG UPL 233.
for immediate political purposes, yet his attempts to acquire more foreign currency for literature acquisition and additional personnel fell short, and even his attempt to appeal to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs were stopped cold. While being aggravated by Bien’s lonely style of leadership, the crisis and the split in the collegiate it facilitated were predominantly down to unsolved questions about how best to fulfil the political demands put on the institute.

With Bien therefore unable to hold the institute together, let alone handle the large reform that was about to start, the State Secretariat for Higher Education, which was turned into the Ministry for Higher Education (Ministerium für das Hoch- und Fachschulwesen, MHF) in 1967, decided to push its own candidate. Herbert Joachimi, like Agricola before him, was an economist with a mixed career between state, party and academia, having served as assistant and department head of Political Economy in Jena from 1950 to 1959, as cultural attaché responsible for East German exchange-students at the embassy in Prague from 1959 to 1964 and as department head for foreign exchange students in the StHF from 1964 to 1967. Unlike Agricola, who had at least spent some time with the trade delegation in Helsinki, Joachimi had no qualifications for a posting in Northern European affairs. Nor did he have the necessary requirements for a professorship. Agricola had lacked those as well, but since he had previously been appointed professor in Halle, by the grace of the party, Greifswald’s philosophical faculty could avoid the embarrassing question of his qualifications. The situation proved more difficult with Joachimi. The results of his undergraduate studies had been deemed a mere “C” (befriedigend), as had his dissertation about Japanese pre-war imperialism (cum laude), which was consequently not published. The ministry had ordered the procedure for his appointment to be opened in May 1967, but the faculty hesitated to proceed. Joachimi could only boast a meagre five publications, of which four were in popular scientific journals, three were

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22 Bien had presented a paper about the problems of developing the NI into a Länderwissenschaft-institute with the given resources, obviously demanding an axiomatic statement by the ministry on the usefulness of Northern European Studies, so as to be able to coax Berlin into following up with material support. Yet, the ministry flat out refused to respond. See Herbert Krolikowski (stellv. Außenminister) an Horst Bien, 25/10/1965, UAG NEW 5.

23 Tabular CV Herbert Joachimi, 05/02/1970, UAG PA 3880.

24 Diplomas, Attachment to: Deanery PhilFak UG (Schildhauer) to MHF, 18/09/1967, UAG PA 3880.
co-authored and one was in Hungarian. Neither the number nor any one publication in itself was sufficient to judge the applicant’s academic merits, the faculty argued, and when the ministry pressed the issue, they settled for calling in the opinion of external experts. The experts in question were Herbert Luck, economist from Rostock, and Rudolf Agricola. Agricola gave glowing references and declared that Joachimi’s publication list might be short, but that this was easily explained with the strains of his workload in party activism and teaching, while the articles, though popular scientific, were correct and along the party line. When asked for a second statement about the dissertation, Agricola even went so far as to declare that Joachimi’s dissertation was under-valued and he would have granted it far higher than a mere “cum laude”. When Herbert Luck, who was less enthusiastic, advised that Joachimi not be named director of the Nordic Institute immediately but instead be given a grace period to “re-adapt” to academic life, the faculty immediately seized upon the opportunity to read this as a condemnation, until Luck retracted and corrected his statement. Despite all these misgivings, Joachimi was appointed in September 1967, and even though he wrote a number of articles on the political situation in Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea Region – mainly mirroring party directives – Joachimi never even learned a Nordic language. Instead, he went on to become Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät) in 1970, which he remained until his retirement in 1987. Instead of a research career, which was not in his vein, Joachimi became an administrator with professorial rank.

25 Publication List Herbert Joachimi, Attachment to: Deanery PhilFak UG (Schildhauer) to MHF, 18/09/1967, UAG PA 3880.
26 Correspondence between StHF (Engelstädt) and Deanery PhilFak UG (Schildhauer), May–June 1967, UAG PA 3880.
27 Dean PhilFak UG (Schildhauer) to MHF, 18/09/1967, UAG PA 3880.
28 Statement by Rudolf Agricola, 22/06/1967, Attachment to: Deanery PhilFak UG (Schildhauer) to MHF, 18/09/1967, UAG PA 3880.
29 Statement by Rudolf Agricola, 10/09/1967, Attachment to: Deanery PhilFak UG (Schildhauer) to MHF, 18/09/1967, UAG PA 3880.
30 Deanery PhilFak UG (Schildhauer) to MHF, 18/09/1967, UAG PA 3880.
31 SNEW (Bethke) to Directorate for Cadres and Qualification UG (concerning Pestalozzi-medal for Joachimi), 24/12/1970, UAG PA 3880.
The episode highlights the relationship between academia and state at this point in time. Where loyal and competent science administrators could not be found in academic circles, uninitiated personnel could be inserted through the normal channels. Direct appointments by the ministry, as were still common in the 1940s and 1950s, were no longer necessary, as serious resistance from academic administrative authorities was not to be expected, even if those had serious concerns about the appointee. At most, they referred the decision to experts such as Agricola and Luck, whose own qualifications were questionable, and then appointed the candidate anyway, against their better judgement. Academic autonomy was thereby reduced to a figurehead without authority to back their judgements. Joachimi, due to the mellowing of academic standards, became the second “watchdog” in the Nordic Institute. After the attempt to leave the institute in the hands of an actual scholar had failed, the party reintroduced their own overseers, a situation that was to continue into the 1980s. Joachimi did little in research, and Marxism-Leninism was the only topic he was qualified to teach. Nevertheless, the presence of an actual manager helped smooth out the functioning of the otherwise competitive and conflictual environment of the institute, much as it helped the institute to navigate the socialist bureaucracy in ways that Kress and Bien had proved unable to.
First Proposals

Meanwhile, the broiling situation in which political, historical and economic studies were more or less appendices to a language and literature institution, and the Nordic Institute was unable to acquire the necessary resources to change this, met with the first reform proposals by the state secretariat in early 1966. An appraisal by the Nordic Institute leadership showed how the institute aimed to capitalize on the general lines that Berlin had drawn. Questions surrounding the integration of different disciplines were no problem for the institute; these developments were already under way. The most pressing point that the Nordic Institute’s leadership put forward was re-evaluating its position within the university: “Since neither the university’s nor the faculty’s leadership have hitherto come around to appreciating the Nordic Institute’s special tasks, the necessary support for the fulfilment of these tasks could not be bestowed upon it to the necessary degree.” The proposal of a section structure would solve the problem of distributing scarce resources within the faculty, making Northern European Studies institutionally independent. The Nordic Institute had previously clamoured for such an arrangement, claiming a special status directly subordinated to the Vice Chancellor’s office, much as the Institute for Marxism-Leninism enjoyed it. Consequently, the Nordic Institute’s proposal for the implementation of the state secretariat’s plans focussed on the most expedient steps to increase its institutional pull in the university. “In this context [the Third Academic Reform] it would have to be reviewed if it is advisable that junior researchers work in the Historical Institute, who engage with the modern history of Finland, a subject that belongs to the domain of the department International Relations in the Nordic Institute.” The placement of scholars with Nordic interests in the Historical Institute had been begrudged by the NI for a while. Particularly the transfer of

32 “Da sich bisher weder bei der Leitung der Universität noch bei der Leitung der Philosophischen Fakultät die Erkenntnis über die besonderen Aufgaben des Nordischen Instituts durchgesetzt hat, konnte dem Institut die erforderliche Unterstützung bei der Lösung seiner Aufgaben nicht in dem notwendigen Maße zuteil werden.” – Perspective and Structure of the Nordic Institute, 26/01/1966, UAG Prorectorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.

33 “In diesem Zusammenhang müsste überprüft werden, ob es zweckmäßig ist, dass am Historischen Institut einige Nachwuchswissenschaftler tätig sind, die sich mit der neuesten Geschichte Finnlands befassen, einem Gebiet, das zum Gegenstand der Abteilung Internationale Beziehungen des Nordischen Instituts gehört.” – Perspective and Structure of the Nordic Institute, 26/01/1966, UAG Prorectorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
Manfred Menger and Irene Wilhelmus had been requested as early as 1964. Both worked on modern Finnish history, and the NI had need of further reinforcements on Finnish and historical topics. But even though both scholars declared that they were willing to work in the Nordic Institute – not least because they had teach to German history in the Historical Institute, which was outside their research focus – their home institution had been unwilling to part with them. The Third Academic Reform was an opportunity to repeat these claims, particularly since the Nordic Institute encouraged making itself the profile-focus of the university, so as to receive full support from senate, faculty and university party leadership. Ultimately, this encroachment on the territory of other institutes failed, though, since the transfer of Menger and Wilhelmus would have effectively terminated Contemporary History in the Historical Institute.

Within a few weeks the institute upped the ante even further: After the aforementioned Herbert Luck, economics professor in Rostock and the regional SED’s handyman in matters of ideology in the universities, had requested a comprehensive plan for international relations with Northern Europe, Horst Bien delivered his plan to the senate. For the university, he argued, an aggregation and professionalization of foreign relations was critical, which is why he argued for a Council for Northern European Relations (Rat für Nordeuropabeziehungen). This council was to combine all concerned elements in the university, advise the Vice Chancellor on Northern European matters and even have the right to supervise the execution of the Vice Chancellor’s orders in their area of expertise. The interesting point was the composition of this council. It would be headed by a special Deputy Vice Chancellor for Northern European matters and contain a number of university representatives. Among them would be the director of the Nordic Institute, a member of the board of the German-Nordic Association (Deutsch-Nordische Gesellschaft – DENOG) who was also a member of the university and a junior researcher as permanent secretary. These arrangements would have meant that under most circumstances, the Nordic Institute would be able to send four representa-

34 Minutes of discussion between institute- and party leaderships of the Nordic and Historical Institutes on the 1st of January 1964, 13/01/1964, UAG NEW 30.  
35 Perspective and Structure of the Nordic Institute, 26/01/1966, UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.  
36 Draft “The further development of the academic relations of the EMAU to Northern Europe, no date (February 1966), UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
tives to the planned Council for Northern European Relations, including the key pro-Vice Chancellor and secretary. If the plan had gone through, the Nordic Institute would have effectively dominated the GDR’s Northern European academic relations, ordered – via the Vice Chancellor – measures for its implementation and supervised these measures themselves. The plan never materialized, not necessarily because of resistance within the university, but because the faculty’s Dean – who was otherwise open to the idea – handed everything upstairs and out of his hands, referring to the plans for the institution of a section:

The demands for the acquisition of job openings and financial means for books, newspapers etc. surmount the possibilities of the faculty and surely also those of the university by far (the Philosophical Faculty e.g. has hitherto only half of the foreign currency that the Nordic Institute craves for Other Capitalist Countries). They will only be satisfiable by central agencies. This should already be reflected in the submission.

A New Rhetoric

This ambitious plan did not see the light of day, though. The early enthusiasm that the Nordic Institute exhibited – the proposal’s author is not given – was slowed down in the weeks and months following. Discussions broadened and included not only more agencies within and without the university, but also more of the concerned personnel in the institute. A number of position papers and proposals were sent back and forth until the new project took shape. It was not until late 1968 that the final concept for

37 The Nordic Institute would be represented by its director. Since the positions required command of a Northern European language, the likely choices for Deputy Vice Chancellor and Secretary would also have been members of the NI. The requirement for the representative of DENOG – that they be members of DENOG’s board and of UG – was phrased in such a way that only a member of the NI was eligible, since the institute had a permanent seat there, and UG was not otherwise represented.

38 Foreign Currency allocations for literature acquisition were generally divided into West (i.e. West Germany) and Other Capitalist Countries.

39 “Die Anforderungen für Beschaffung der Stellen sowie der finanziellen Mittel für Bücher, Zeitungen usw. übersteigt weit die Möglichkeiten der Fakultät und sicher auch die der Universität (die Philosophische Fakultät hat z.B. bisher insgesamt nicht viel mehr als die Hälfte der allein vom Nordischen Institut geforderten Valutamittel für die übrigen kapitalistischen Länder); sie werden nur von zentraler Seite zu erfüllen sein. Dies sollte bereits in der Vorlage zum Ausdruck kommen.” – Commentary by the Dean on Draft “The further development of the academic relations of the EMAU to Northern Europe, no date (February 1966), UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
the Section Northern European Studies (Sektion Nordeuropawissenschaften – SNEW) was adopted.\(^40\)

In many ways the reform had acted as a catalyst, in that the multitude of papers and discussions reinforced developments that had either already taken root or had hitherto only been acknowledged as influencing the institute’s work in principle, but not yet turned into practice. A scant two years before the reform discussions began, the Nordic Institute had described its raison d'etre thus: “The Nordic Institute has the task of curating the academic relations between the German Democratic Republic and the capitalist countries of Northern Europe, i.e. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, in the fields of linguistics, culture, economy and foreign policy.”\(^41\) Now, in 1968, the new Section Northern European Studies had a clear mission statement: “Based on the materials of the 9th plenum\(^42\) it is acted on the assumption that all problems of the social sciences, the scientific-technical revolution and the academic reform are parts of the class struggle with Imperialism, especially the West German.”\(^43\) Even accounting for the ever-present chaff of socialist phrases and slogans pervading the documents of this time, the statement is representative of a changed rhetoric about the tasks and means of Northern European Studies, broadly beginning with this 1968 concept.

Having thus grounded their academic work in a world-wide struggle, the design for the new section went on to declare that one of its main tasks – and the only one named in the preamble – was

\(^{40}\) Conception Sektion Nordeuropawissenschaften, no date (second half 1968), UAG NEW 5.


\(^{42}\) On the 9th plenum of the Central Committee of the SED in April 1965 Ulbricht refused any place for modern elements in Socialist Realism and declared all culture part of the international struggle of systems.

the training and education of socialist specialists for activities in the field of the international relations of the German Democratic Republic towards the Nordic countries on a state and societal level, for the cultural political work within the German Democratic Republic and as early-stage researchers for the different disciplines concerning Northern Europe.44

The 1968 concept sticks out in that it was the first concept for the Northern European Studies that gave such open and honest expression to the political tasking that had governed its work for several years and that directly referenced political decisions as work assignments; not as a societal background and *zeitgeist*, but as direct tasks that determined the perspective and direction of an academic institution. In a discussion around the same time, Herbert Joachimi pointed out to his fellow members of the institute’s steering committee: “Everyone must understand the character of the academic reform correctly. One focus is on the utility and thereby the enhancement of the useful effect of research activity in the institute.”45

**Deep Integration**

Having so extensively established the direction and utility of the Section Northern European Studies, a closer integration with the customers of the section’s services was a further logical implication. For the most part, this was nothing new in itself. The Nordic Institute had maintained a more or less regular cooperation with a number of state and party agencies before, but in the Academic Reform these relationships were clarified and institutionalized to a degree that made them qualitatively different. The Nordic Institute had previously argued its own utility by pointing out the possible applications of its work, indicating that their academic work was primary and its application secondary. With the new concept, the work and institu-

44 “Eine wichtige Aufgabe der Sektion ist die Ausbildung und Erziehung sozialistischer Fachkader für die Tätigkeit auf dem Gebiet der internationalen Beziehungen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zu den nordischen Ländern auf staatlicher und gesellschaftlicher Ebene, für die kulturpolitische Tätigkeit in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und für den wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs im Bereich der verschiedenen Disziplinen, die sich mit Nordeuropa beschäftigen.” – Concept Section Northern European Studies, no date (second half 1968), UAG NEW 5.

45 “Der Charakter der Hochschulreform muss von allen richtig erkannt werden. Ein Schwerpunkt ist die Frage der Nützlichkeit und damit die Erhöhung des Nutzeffektes der Forschungsarbeit am Institut.” – Minutes of Institute Leadership Meeting on May 15th 1968, 27/05/1968, UAG NEW 14 (second sentence is underlined in the original).
tional setup of Northern European Studies was directly inferred from the work tasks given it by what came to be called the “praxis partners”. For the Section NEW the main partner was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with further cooperation partners being the Ministry for Foreign Trade and DENOG, with a number of additional state and societal institutions that concerned themselves with Northern Europe being secondary. Almost as an afterthought the concept mentioned cooperation with the Ministry for Culture, to “utilize the cultural achievements of the Nordic peoples for the educated socialist nation, and to promote productive and ideological discussions with academics, artists and persons engaged with the cultural sector in the Nordic countries.”

True to the idea of streamlining academia to the needs of the praxis partners, the partners had a seat on the newly instituted Section Council (Sektionsrat). This council “advised” the director and debated the perspective and annual plans, appointments and the bestowal of academic degrees. While the director was given greater authority in everyday matters, all conceptual and principal question were deliberated by the council. This inclusion of the praxis partners into the section council not only created a permanent line of communication between the section and the interested ministries, these also had a say in the direction and decisions of Northern European Studies. The Nordic Institute had already developed such an institutional fusion with the DENOG, but the extent to which state agencies now governed the academic sphere was unprecedented.

A Special Place in Heaven

The 1968 reform instituted a form of Northern European Studies in which direct convertibility into political gains was the paramount concern. This

46 “geeignete Kulturleistungen der nordischen Völker im Sinne der gebildeten sozialistischen Nation nutzbar zu machen und um mit Wissenschaftlern, Künstlern und Kulturschaffenden aus den nordischen Ländern produktive ideologische Auseinandersetzungen zu fördern.” – Concept Section Northern European Studies, no date (second half 1968), UAG NEW 5.

47 The Section Council consisted of the director, who also chaired its meetings, the director’s deputy, the scientific secretary (a deputy to the director, responsible for managing research and teaching), the research leaders, the full professors, representatives of the assistant professors, assistants and students, the party secretary, the head of the trade union organization, the head of the FDJ and further representatives of other cooperating sections and the praxis partners (especially MfAA, MAIH, MHF and DENOG).
naturally reinforced the dominant position that the Departments International Relations and Economics occupied – at least rhetorically – to the point where these departments made up the _raison d’etre_ of the whole section. This left the philological departments, Culture and Literature and Language in an awkward position, having to defend their right to existence vis-à-vis their more “useful” cousins. The documents following the primary decisions about the future structure of Northern European Studies in Greifswald make it clear where the different departments saw their problems: While Political Science and especially Economics complained about the difficulties of finding suitable personnel for the planned expansion, Linguistics and Literature produced papers outlining their usefulness. For Linguistics, headed by Bruno Kress, this was comparatively easy. While their output was not directly useful for the main cooperation partners, their work was indispensable in the language training of the students. This was doubly so as the department’s prognostic papers cited an increasing importance of trade with Northern Europe as a major driver for increased language training, especially for legal and economic purposes, an argument that could hardly be refuted without denigrating the GDR’s economic successes.

Such an argument was less easy to make for the Literature and Culture department. Horst Bien, when he was director, had been accused of favouring that department, but such an accusation could not be made against his successor. Herbert Joachimi, an economist by training and equipped with a mandate by the party, took the expansion of the new flagship department to heart. In what was probably his first leadership conference in the institute, he insisted that the new profile would necessitate focussing the literature acquisition on “certain” departments, and declared that egalitarianism would no longer answer. This included cancelling a number of journal subscriptions, mostly in Literature to judge by the immediate reaction of Artur Bethke, who represented that department.

The sources hint that the Deputy Minister for Higher Education, Gregor Schirmer, intervened to stop the complete marginalization of Literature and

48 See e.g. Kress to StHF, 26/04/1967, UAG NEW 38. Kress complains about the bureaucratic hurdles in acquiring new personnel. Before a regular position could be confirmed at the university and accommodations (always in short supply) arranged, the candidate had mostly grown tired of waiting and accepted a position elsewhere.
50 Minutes of Institute Leadership Conference, 03/04/1968, UAG NEW 14.
Whether this intervention actually happened is difficult to ascertain, as this would have come in the form of a phone call or a nudge in the right direction, but in 1971 the Ministry charged Greifswald University with curating the development of the “special field” of Nordistik, under which Linguistics and Literature and Culture were now subsumed. The discipline’s contributions to the state’s and people’s welfare was more indirect and subtle, consisting primarily of a “philosophical-theoretical and political-ideological enrichment of Marxist-Leninist social sciences”. The specific tasks that Nordistik was to fulfil were two-fold: On the one hand it was to affect domestic society positively by enhancing the spiritual and cultural life of the socialist citizens through studying and popularizing the progressive cultural achievements of the Nordic peoples. Furthermore, it was to “survey the literature for propagandistic utility and analyse cultural-linguistic processes as an orientation guide for socialist writers”. On the other hand, there was the probably more significant international dimension. Here, Nordistik was to foster cooperation with the socialist brethren in the Eastern bloc and cooperative elements in Northern Europe. There it would, on the one hand, show the willingness of the GDR to participate in a

51 “In Greifswald the official leadership had the tendency to ‘profile away’ the discipline of Nordistik. This problem was solved in Greifswald by an energetic and critical intervention of the deputy minister, comrade Prof. Dr. Schirmer.” (In Greifswald bestand seitens der staatlichen Leitung die Tendenz, die Fachrichtung Nordeuropawissenschaften “wegzuprofilieren”. Durch ein energisches und kritisches Eingreifen des stellvertretenden Ministers, Gen. Prof. Dr. Schirmer, wurde jedoch dieses Problem in Greifswald gelöst.) – Report on the Study Year 1968/69 in the Area Studies sections, no date (end of 1969), BA DR3 2. Schicht 63. Considering that there were no attempts by the university leadership of getting rid of their flagship section – indeed, there were attempts by the Nordic Institute to use the new profiling line to make the SNEW the central section of the whole university – the leadership in question is most probably Joachimi and his attempt to marginalize the core of Northern European Studies.

52 “Weltanschaulich-theoretischen und politisch-ideologischen Bereicherung der Marxistisch-leninistischen Gesellschaftswissenschaften” – Concept for Development of Nordistik at the EMAU Greifswald, no date (1971/72), UAG NEW 5.

53 “Untersuchung von Literatur auf propagandistische Nutzbarkeit und Auswertung kulturell-sprachlicher Prozesse als Orientierungshilfe für sozialistische Schriftsteller” – Concept for Development of Nordistik at the EMAU Greifswald, no date (1971/72), UAG NEW 5.

54 Considering the importance that GDR authorities placed on cooperation with Soviet scientists, the Nordic Institute/SNEW had always been in a binder: Soviet research into Northern Europe was sparse and mainly consisted of philological studies, which the GDR had branded as outmoded. Nordistik was, for all intents and purposes, the only discipline in the SNEW that could fruitfully cooperate with Soviet institutions.
fruitful cultural exchange while, on the other, critically engaging with bourgeois ideologies.55

A large number of tasks that were given as public justification for the continued existence of Nordistik were as sounding brass. Nevertheless, the concept for Nordistik is interesting insofar as it showed an entirely different profile from the concepts for its adjacent disciplines in the SNEW. Nordistik was not directly useful for the state – it did not enhance the state’s ability to churn out consumer goods, it did not produce state functionaries nor did it deliver action-guiding analyses on political, economic or military matters. Instead, its existence was justified by the fact that parallel institutions existed in the non-socialist countries. This meant, on the one hand, that completely abolishing the “artes liberales” would entail a loss of prestige in the eyes of Western, in this case Northern European, states, who would consider such a step as further proof of a systemic incompatibility with the socialist world. On the other hand, Nordistik was a discipline compatible with like-minded philological disciplines in the West, which meant that they opened channels of communication with Western academia that were closed to Marxist economics or political studies. As an internationally recognized discipline with a more traditional profile – which it could only preserve in the post-1968 GDR’s university landscape by special permit – Nordistik was a key to infiltrating international academic circles with the GDR’s own message. The concept only admitted this in the cryptic wording that Nordistik would provide “manifold support to progressive forces in the Northern European countries, at which the targeted employment of scholarly research results, publications and guest lectures to push back the class enemy becomes increasingly important.”56

To this point, the Third Academic Reform had managed to solve the latent relationship problems between the Literature and Culture-department and its brethren in the Section Northern European Studies. While the more hands-on departments would directly contribute to the main task, information and training of cadres, the brunt of the public diplomacy and especially the academic communications rested squarely on the shoulders of the loftier

55 Concept for Development of Nordistik at the EMAU Greifswald, no date (1971/72), UAG NEW 5.
Literature and Culture-department, which was kept in its own game reserve so as to remain as compatible with Western academia as possible.

The Special Branch

With the Third Academic Reform, all social sciences had been integrated into a system of lead institutions, which supervised and directed their work, allowing for a tight control. For the SNEW this lead institution was primarily the Institute for International Relations (Institut für Internationale Beziehungen – IIB) at the German Academy for Political Science and Jurisprudence (Deutsche Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaft – DASR). The DASR was the central cadre factory for the state apparatus, with the IIB being the Foreign Ministry’s department within it. With the Third Academic Reform prescribing lead institutions for all social sciences, the IIB became the nexus for all research that concerned foreign political topics. This necessitated a certain amount of house cleaning among other institutions for the coordination of research, to avoid overlap. It was in the course of this reorganization that the Central Council for Asian, Africa and Latin American Studies (Zentraler Rat für Asien-, Afrika- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften – ZENTRAAL) was subordinated to the IIB in 1969.

ZENTRAAL had been founded in March 1966 as an organization within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to allow for a deeper integration of research into the developing countries with the anti-colonial foreign policy of the GDR. ZENTRAAL brought together representatives of the universities and state actors to set the focus of research, discuss and analyse the output, coordinate the work and publish the results.57 The academic institutions concerned were the Section Asian Studies in Berlin, African- and Middle Eastern Studies in Leipzig and Latin American Studies in Rostock. When the Central Council came under the aegis of the IIB, it naturally assumed the role of the central institution for the coordination of Area Studies in general, which meant that its character changed. Where the integrating factor of the council had previously been the anti-colonial endeavours of the GDR, it now made the provision of area specialists and expertise for the foreign political apparatus its main goal. By this new logic two further institutions came under its care: the Institute for Intensive Language

Training in Brandenburg/Plaue and the Section Northern European Science in Greifswald.\(^58\)

For the SNEW this meant that they were now subject to harmonization with the other Area Studies. Länderwissenschaft had already introduced a similar logic, by which all Area Studies were grouped in one department in the StHF. This further shift was of less impact than might be expected, considering that the majority of institutional reforms had already taken flight and, in some cases, finished by the time of the SNEW’s ascension. In fact, the SNEW quickly integrated into the new surroundings, becoming a pacemaker in many of the intended reforms. Especially the development of the scientific-productive studies was exemplary in Greifswald.\(^59\) Nevertheless, the SNEW remained an outsider in the midst of Asian-, African- and Latin American scholars, considering that the name-giving institutions were dominating the council and were committed to a joint political project.\(^60\)

**The Difficulties of the Plains**

The reforms that rolled over the Eastern German universities in 1968 to about 1972 were not perceived as a threat in Greifswald. Instead they produced a remarkably positive echo. The institute, prominently Horst Bien, saw the reforms as a way of solving long-standing organizational issues, and even though the reform did not achieve all the institute had hoped for, including more liberal funding, it was remarkably successful. What marked the post-1968 period is the absence of the incessant squabbles, personal intrigues and lamentations that had been so liberally strewn throughout the source material before this point. Academia seems to have indeed been pacified by the reforms. The streamlined teaching and research meant fewer frictions between plan and reality, which must have reduced the amount of frustration on the ground level. Furthermore, the closer integration into political and societal work may also have had a subtle


\(^{59}\) Evaluation of the 1969/70 academic year in the Area Studies sections, no date (end of 1970), BA DR3 2. Schicht 63.

\(^{60}\) The special research project for Northern European Studies was e.g. little more than the already existing research contract with the ministry, see 2\(^{nd}\) Draft “Profiling of the Area Studies institutes (Asia-, Africa- and Latin American Studies / Northern European Studies)”, 01/07/1966, BA DR 3 2. Schicht 59.
psychological effect on the academics by giving them the feeling of being part of a great ideological project, an effect exacerbated by the prominent position that SNEW’s scholars enjoyed in the university.

On the other hand, the state apparatus was not entirely satisfied. While the cooperation went smoother, some of the ministries saw the work of the section that provided their personnel for the first time, now that they sat around the same table. An evaluatory meeting of the section directors with the MHF brought some curious concerns to light. At least one of the interested ministries found fault in the overly strong focus on Africa, Asia and Latin America, whereas research on socialist or even imperialist countries was almost entirely missing. It is surprising that it apparently only now became clear to the ministries involved what research institutions they had at their disposal, but also that they suddenly wished for research on friends and enemies, where before research had focused almost exclusively on neutral countries. This evaluation hints at a still existing distance between the ministries and the research institutions. Despite the ongoing cooperation between them, the international apparatus of the GDR cannot have made extensive use of the university institutes if their character and orientation only now dawned on them. Furthermore, while the state apparatus had been able to subordinate existing academic structures to itself, it was more difficult to create new research environments from scratch, and the request for increased research on socialist and capitalist states was never implemented.

VI.2 On a Mission

With the Third Academic Reform the Section Northern European Studies had reached a resting point. Its cooperation with political agencies had been reformed to a point where smooth communication became the norm, while its new institutional setup had resolved long-standing frictions between the disciplines involved. This and the installation of a “party watch dog”, in the person of Herbert Joachimi, had stopped personal disputes from regularly hampering the section’s work. With academia thus pacified, the SNEW could focus on its regular work – research, teaching and public diplomacy.

The following two chapters will thus focus on giving a categorizing overview over the development of public diplomacy and research in the GDR, as well as their involvement in clandestine operations. This effort demands a caveat, though, as individual activities often resist easy categorization. Research would be delivered to – and sometimes commissioned by – intelligence services, while in some cases research cooperation with foreign universities would be coordinated closely with public diplomacy efforts, while a large number of the participants were actively working for the intelligence community.

The Nordic Institute’s identity had always been characterized by the idea that its task extended further than purely academic endeavours, namely that it had the additional mission to work for a better understanding between Germany and Northern Europe. This understanding had been re-affirmed by Leopold Magon in his 1946 memorandum and continued to determine the self-understanding of the institute. And while the institute was dormant until 1954, one of Ruth Dzulko’s first actions upon re-activation was to begin an extensive cooperative project with scholars from Iceland. The project’s aim, to publish the sagas bilingually, fell flat with Dzulko’s departure from Greifswald, but endeavours to establish contacts with Nordic academia and its cultural sector continued under Dzulko’s successors. Especially the 500th anniversary of the university in 1956 presented an opportunity to invite prominent academics, with philologists Elias Wessén and Arvid Rosenquist holding lectures and a special ceremony to the memory of 18th century Swedish writer Thomas Thorild. These lectures were representative of the language and literature course that Dzulko and Rosenfeld steered. For the institute they served a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, they connected the Nordic Institute to Nordic research, establishing a link to ongoing scholarship. Apart from constituting a necessary and natural prerequisite for research and teaching, the international recognition expressed in these contacts also constituted a potent form of symbolic capital, increasing the legitimacy and standing of the institute and its affiliated scholars, a very useful commodity concerning the still shaky position they occupied. On the other hand, the establishment of academic

links abroad not only served to enhance the position of the academics involved, but furthermore created communication channels and a transfer of knowledge and understanding between different cultures. This soft public diplomacy, contributing to transnational relations with personal contacts and dissemination of mutual insights, was a form of activity that Dzulko’s and Rosenfeld’s predecessors, Braun and Magon most notably, had already established as an acceptable and desirable academic strategy. Dzulko being Magon’s student and Rosenfeld a close colleague, this concept of the foreign political role of the Nordic Institute was further ingrained.

Hardening Public Diplomacy

While this indirect and generalized approach continued to constitute a major task for the Nordic Institute, the exit of Dzulko and Rosenfeld led to an extension of this approach into a more direct and goal-oriented interaction with the target territories. Producing generalized goodwill and trust for the GDR in Northern Europe was commendable, but when the Central Committee, nudged by the Soviet Union, began formulating its own Northern European policy in the mid-1950s this was no longer enough. The party needed results in its contest with the Federal Republic of Germany, and in Greifswald the new party-sanctioned director, Bruno Kress, was willing to deliver. Already in 1957 the scope of the institution’s contacts widened: Apart from philological professors from Stockholm and Göteborg, the Nordic Institute also managed to welcome Gunnar Brandell, at that time arts editor of *Svenska Dagbladet*, and two representatives of the Association Iceland-GDR. Furthermore, Kress could proclaim contacts with *Svenska Institutet*, the University Library Copenhagen and the Icelandic Parliament, the *Althing*. He even boasted of having received a Scandinavian peace delegation, which was most probably a visit by private citizens too harmless to name in an official report.64

This new direction – a centralized, wide-front approach to enlist non-governmental contacts to facilitate international recognition through public pressure and de-facto contacts on a lower level – was not limited to the Nordic Institute. A plan by the Theological Faculty to invite Swedish students in early 1957 was stopped by the State Secretariat for Higher

64 Kress 1957.
Education, on rather shaky ground and with little prior warning. Unregulated contacts beyond the party’s control were not to be tolerated anymore. Instead the state secretariat issued memoranda advising all university functionaries on the best ways to influence West German academics and students.

The primary goal is to put all West German student organizations – as long as they are not directly opposed to us, like the corporations etc. – under constant political-ideological pressure, and force them, through appeals, proposals etc., on the basis of the policy of Party and Government to take positions and deal with us. It is necessary to use all present opportunities – beside press, radio and TV – to appear publicly in West Germany, as long as they are suited to provide us a forum to offensively represent our views.

This document illustrates the direction the Central Committee wished to see in international academic relations. Universities were to serve as an under-the-radar pathway to West German audiences, since the communications between academics could not be censored as easily as in other cases. The pace at which this turn in the form and function of inter-university connections took place was astounding. Within the space of a year the contacts abroad of the Nordic Institute had changed markedly in tone.

One new element was what the state secretariat’s memorandum had called the “constant political-ideological pressure”, where regular pleas were made to promote the supposedly peaceful intentions of the Socialist bloc and move Western citizens to protest the policy of their own governments. Kress, for example, turned to the newly opened Nordic Institute in Kiel in 1958, asking them to join their Greifswald colleagues and others in their demand for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Europe. A response is not docu-

65 Nagel (Dean Theological Faculty EMAU) to Provost Grüber (State-Church Liaison Office), 22/12/1956 and Harig (StHF) to Zschiechang (Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs EMAU), 04/02/1957, both BA DR3 1. Schicht 390.
66 “Es kommt darauf an, die westdeutschen Studentenorganisationen, soweit sie wie die Korporationen usw. nicht direkt feindlich uns gegenüberstehen, unter einen ständigen politisch-ideologischen Druck zu nehmen und durch Apelle, Vorschläge usw. auf der Grundlage der Politik von Partei und Regierung zu zwingen, Stellung zu beziehen und sich mit uns auseinanderzusetzen. / Es ist notwendig, neben Presse und Rundfunk auch die gegebenen Möglichkeiten, legal in Westdeutschland aufzutreten, auszunutzen, soweit sie geeignet sind, uns ein Forum für die offensive Vertretung unserer Anschauungen zu geben.” – Memorandum by StHF to all Deputy Vice Chancellors for Social Science Propaedeutics (Gesellschaftswissenschaftliches Grundstudium) and Deputy Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs, 10/03/1958, BA DR3 1. Schicht 4459.
67 Kress to director of Nordic Institute Kiel, 02/04/1958, UAG NEW 13.
mented, and it is improbable that any came. Not only was the personnel in Kiel at that point unlikely to be receptive to East German appeals, but the move was entirely transparent and therefore unlikely to provide a positive reaction. The same went for the regular orders from Berlin to petition for different West German dissidents – they too lacked any impact, mostly because the source and motives of the petitioner were obvious.

The pressure on the Nordic partners varied in form and shape, with its subtlety seemingly dependent on the influence of higher offices. While the 1960 German Scholars' Congress in Copenhagen, where the East German delegation offensively forced the flag issue, was marked by an aggressive marketing of the GDR, with East German delegation members trying to convince their Western colleagues of the GDR's advantages at every turn, this was not always the case. Especially where smaller delegations were involved and direct control by higher offices low, contact with Nordic scholars and public personalities seems to have been more civil. A visit to Iceland by Kress and Walter Baetke in the summer of 1958 went entirely differently. While not as well organized as could have been wished for, old contacts in academia and the literary field served as starting points for a foray into Iceland's political landscape. Not only were the ways to the highest spheres of power short on the island, the newly elected government contained some communists who opposed NATO-membership of their country, creating an ideal ground for a positive reception of East German advances. Contacts were made with (predominantly left-wing) members of the Althing, student exchanges planned and cooperation agreed upon. An extensive meeting with Iceland's Nobel Prize-winning author Halldór

68 The predominant exponents of Northern European research at that point were historians Alexander Scharff and Wilhelm Koppe. Both had been opportunistic NSDAP-members and worked closely with NS-organizations, not unlike Kress, but had little reason to renege their worldview after 1945.

69 Among others, the state secretariat ordered the petitioning by teachers and students for Professor Hagemann, who had been an outspoken opponent of West German nuclear armament and was subsequently removed from his position in Münster because of an extramarital affair with a student (Draft of Memorandum by Girnus [StHF], 24/04/1959, BA DR3 1.Schicht 4460), and Freie Universität-student Klaus Walter, who had hung posters denouncing the then ubiquitous swastika-graffito as the work of Konrad Adenauer, Hans-Maria Globke and Theodor Oberländer. See Lehmann [Dept. Admission and Graduates, StHF] to all Deputy Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs, 08/02/1960, BA DR3 1. Schicht 4460, also: Schei, Stefan: Transatlantische Wechselwirkungen. Der Elitenwechsel in Deutschland nach 1945, Berlin 2012, S. 187.

Laxness served to further promote the East German delegation.\textsuperscript{71} The outcome of this visit was a number of plans to strengthen contact with individual Icelanders, most prominent among them the Minister of Education, Gylfi Gislason, but also a number of scholars who showed genuine interest in the GDR or could be convinced to do so.\textsuperscript{72} The same offensive was started as regards Norway, where Kress and Horst Bien had old contacts that could be reactivated \textit{ad gloriam majorem} GDR.\textsuperscript{73}

The Nordic Institute spent much of its energy on the project of employing cultural contacts to work for international recognition of the GDR and beat the competing German state out of the field, and it was far from the only institution to do so. The watchword in the GDR, handed out by the Central Committee, was “International Recognition”, and in the late 1950s many scholars scrambled to advertise their own competence in this regard, especially those involved with international questions. The Nordic Institute was still in the forefront of this movement, but at roughly the same time many Area Studies institutions offered to put their competencies at the disposal of the state. On the other hand, the flood of possible confederates reporting for duty in 1958/59 prompted the StHF to come up with conceptions on how best to employ these academic resources and still retain maximum control. These concepts quickly coalesced in the “\textit{Länderwissenschaft}”-model introduced in 1961 and the institution of the first advisory boards, which streamlined and centralized Area Studies, bringing them under close supervision by the State Secretariat for Higher Education and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.\textsuperscript{74}

Efforts to get the upper hand in the competition with the Federal Republic became a staple of the Nordic Institute, up until 1989. Establishing and exploiting contacts in Northern Europe was an ongoing task for Greifswald’s area experts, even though it met with serious resistance right from the start. The perception of West Germany was marred in the first decade by several issues, most notably the refusal of the border settlement with Poland, plans for nuclear rearmament and the incomplete removal of old Nazis from positions of power. But the Eastern Bloc did not fare any better, with the violent suppression of the 1953 revolt in Berlin, the

\textsuperscript{71} Report on the journey of study delegation to Iceland, May 22\textsuperscript{nd} to June 5\textsuperscript{th} 1958, (no date), UAG NEW 12.
\textsuperscript{72} Kress to StHF, Dept. Foreign Relations, 25/11/1958, UAG NEW 98.
\textsuperscript{73} Kress to StHF, Dept. Philosophical Faculties, 06/04/1958, UAG NEW 98.
\textsuperscript{74} The phase is documented in BA DR3 1. Schicht 4095.
Hungarian Uprising in 1956 and the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 seriously undermining the GDR’s attempts to paint themselves as the “better Germany”.

The GDR was, to a sizable portion of the Western public, an outpost of the opposing ideological camp. A great number of its appeals fell on deaf ears therefore, whereas the soft power-approach allowed opposing opinions to be voiced to East Germany’s cultural ambassadors. The Nordic Institute encountered such reactions as well, especially in the first years of its activity. The strongest such rebuttal of the GDR’s cultural diplomacy in general and the Nordic Institute in particular was an article in the conservative Swedish newspaper *Kvällsposten* in 1957. The article began by decrying the East German attempts to infiltrate Sweden through peaceful means, especially the indoctrination of athletes who were briefed to “soften up” the Western countries they visited. The background was an invitation to students from Greifswald to Lund for athletic competitions shortly before, where the East Germans obviously came well-prepared for political discussions. The fact that the author of the article used the comparison with National Socialist advances some fifteen years earlier was not unfitting: In 1938, when official high-level contacts between Greifswald and Lund had foundered, Günther Falk similarly used inter-student athletic competitions to maintain a publically exploitable connection between the universities. After an extensive warning of East German athletes, the author went on to scourge the Nordic Institute and its director, Bruno Kress. The Nordic Institute, already an espionage centre during the Third Reich, was now to be turned into a school for subversion in Northern Europe, the author claimed, with a politically suitable but scientifically disinterested director, who supposedly decried the study of Nordic literature and language. Instead, the author claimed, Kress worked as a spy, even though his intentions were too transparent for this to actually work. An application for a visa to visit the biggest economic fair in Sweden, *St. Eriksmässan*, had been turned down because Kress could not explain where his sudden interest in trade and industry came from, an incident that supposedly proved the sinister

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intentions of the whole institution. That Kress accused the exiled Odorich de Pers of being the instigator of the article only served to deflect the message in the article, namely that Greifswald was suspicious to many anti-communists. Similar problems were encountered in other countries, when Horst Bien had his visa for Norway refused in 1960. A group of students who were to have a seminar with Svale Solheim near Oslo had to make do with young assistant Franz Hochmann as their supervisor, since Bien’s entry into the country had been denied at short notice. The reason was Helga Preugschat, who had accused Bien of having been involved in creating swastika graffiti in Oslo during his last visit, purportedly to exploit these incidents in East German propaganda. Preugschat had left Norway in 1945 because of her relationship with a German and later found employment in Greifswald, where she had posed as a Socialist Hungarian Jew with Norwegian roots and a teaching qualification. When her students found that her grasp of Norwegian grammar was unaccountably weak, her story unravelled and she fled back to West Germany, where she spread rumours about her former employers.

Taking the view away from the supposed vindictiveness of disgraced employees, the articles do underline a few key points that marked the perception of the Nordic Institute in Northern Europe. The story about a

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77 Statement by Kress on the article in Kvällsposten of 22/09/1957, no date, UAG NEW 73.


79 UAG PA 1698. Preugschat had presented herself as a half-Jew, a trained actress, an honorary member of the Communist Party and former resistance fighter in Greifswald. Her unfitting qualifications had led to her only being employed as a part-time teacher, but after a few weeks it began to appear that her Norwegian was too bad for her to have successfully passed school. When Horst Bien visited her family in Oslo, it turned out that no part of her story could be corroborated. Upon inquiry she could neither produce documentation for any of her supposed qualifications nor did visiting Norwegian communists know anything about her. The only document she possessed was a badly doctored birth certificate, in which she had changed her father’s profession from “smith” to "student of medicine" and her birthplace from Oslo to Budapest. Being confronted with these contradictions and faced with an impending charge of falsification of documents, she left the GDR. In West Germany she spread the story about Greifswald being a hotbed of espionage, probably to distract from the actual reasons for her flight. The story was picked up by Aftonbladet, leading to Bien being denied entry. See UAG PA 1698 vol. 2 and Translation “Warum darf ostdeutscher Dozent nicht nach Norwegen kommen?”, in: Dagbladet, 10.08.1960, UAG NEW 108.
group of German students with fluent Norwegian in a mountain cabin and
the machinations of their disgruntled ex-teacher was played for its quaint-
ness by Dagbladet, and the article in Kvällsposten transparently informed by
anti-communist sentiments. Nevertheless, the distrust of functionaries of
the Nordic Institute was not unfounded. Kress and Bien did aggressively
pose the question of international recognition of the GDR and certainly
alerted many of their interlocutors with their tenacity,80 and their per-
ception in Scandinavia subsequently coloured by this behaviour.

Clear Frontlines and Gentle Public Diplomacy

From about 1960 onwards, particularly after the building of the Berlin Wall
in 1961, the difficulties of offensively convincing Northern academics of the
GDR’s merits mounted. In 1962, the journal Scandinavica had an opening
in its board of editors, and it was felt that East Germany needed to be
represented. While Kress was assumed to be the candidate, the journal
decided to co-opt the venerable and politically inconspicuous Leopold
Magon, to the utter surprise of Kress and the state secretariat.81 While the
state secretariat extended their control over the academic contacts abroad in
the early 1960s, encouraging and briefing scholars and scientists to seek
private conversations with their foreign contacts to bring up political topics,
the net-effect seems to have been alienation.82

Stable contacts only developed with partners whose political views were
compatible with those of the GDR. Student exchanges would be organized
through the socialist Clarté society in Denmark and Sweden, which had
limited resources. A few East German students could be hosted privately in
the homes of old communists, while Danish and Swedish students would
spend some time in the Harz-mountains. The contacts with fellow com-
munists did not in themselves further the cause of the GDR’s public diplo-
macy, but they were useful in ensuring entry into Northern Europe. The GDR,
and by extension its passport, was not officially recognized outside the
Warsaw Pact, wherefore visas required written affidavits from natural citi-

80 What little correspondence is conserved shows a tendency to steer the conversation
towards the German Question. See e.g. Kress and Bien to Tordis und Per Julsvik,
23/10/1959, UAG NEW 108.
81 Kress to StHF, Dept. International University Relations, Sector II, 10/09/1962 and
27/11/1962, UAG NEW 98.
82 For Greifswald this phase is documented in UAG Direktorat Internationale Bezie-
hungen 232.
zens, who declared themselves willing to host and act as guarantors for East German visitors.83 Nevertheless, if the travel reports by the students are anything to go by, the visitors’ tenacious political agitation cannot have failed to put off all but the most wholehearted communists.84 Where the outcome of this agitation can be gleaned from the otherwise white washed reports, they paint a bleak picture of the impression that the Greifswalders left. Since the lecturer for Danish, Mogens Møller, had proved himself incapable of teaching phonology, Erika Kosmalla stayed in Copenhagen during the first half of 1960, to round out her language skills. Besides hearing lectures at the university, which she found not helpful since they were not Marxist-Leninist in nature, she also agreed to teach German at the Pedagogical School in Emdrup. These courses were stopped after a short time, since Kosmalla used her lessons to pontificate on the merits of the GDR.85 Rosemarie Kamrath, who made a similar trip to Sweden three years later, became ostracized in her multinational language study group because she tried to steer every conversation onto politically charged territory.86

The reaction to the recalcitrance that the ambassadors of East German culture encountered led to a type of natural selection among contacts in Scandinavia. Where cooperation with left-wing organizations was more easily established, these naturally intensified and flourished, while those with initially more distant organizations and individuals were burdened with a clash of anti-communist distrust and brash agitation. Cooperation with communist parties and organizations in the target country was a necessity anyway, and led by extension to a much easier access to their immediate environment. One of the first international supporters of the Nordic Institute was thus the Finnish People’s Democratic League, an organization uniting parties left of social democracy and dominated by the Communist Party. In early 1959 they sent a delegation to Greifswald, where

83 Kress to StHF, 16/07/1957, and Kress to Lennart Johansson, 09/05/1958, both UAG NEW 108.
84 Report about journey to Norway by Ursula Malinowsky, 25/10/1959, and Evaluation of Norway-journey by Rosemarie Ruge, no date (early 1960s), UAG NEW 98.
85 Report on Study Trip to Copenhagen by Erika Kosmalla, 31/10/1960, UAG NEW 108.
they received a festive reception and agreed to support the Nordic Institute with literature and to host student delegations.\textsuperscript{87}

This trend did continue in a number of ways. The list of Norwegian guest lecturers for 1960, gives a good example of the logic underlying international contacts. Of the three guests, Hans Kleven, Trygve Norum and Svale Solheim, the first two were members of the Communist Party and Solheim was characterized as a sympathizer.\textsuperscript{88} The different roles that guest lecturers fulfilled is also visible in this line-up. Kleven held a certificate for a one-year-course at the SED’s central ideological school, the Karl-Marx-College, but was no academic. He was a secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Education and a party functionary, who was supposed to lecture on the class structure of Norwegian society. Nevertheless, the year previously Kleven had published a brochure on the social position of Norwegian fishermen\textsuperscript{89} and his lecture – while undocumented – probably gave the official position of the Communist Party on Norway’s social problems.\textsuperscript{90} While Kleven was a member of the upper echelons of the party, his comrade Trygve Norum was more of a cultural worker than a functionary. A successful translator and theatre critic, he was a public intellectual with left-wing leanings, whose lectures actually provided intellectual input for the Nordic Institute, which otherwise suffered from a lack of access to contemporary literature. On the other hand, such public valorisation could be expected to bind the guest closer to the host country. The third guest, Svale Solheim, was an academic of no small stature. As director of the Institute for Ethnology, he was among the most prominent scholars in his field, and while not a member of the Communist Party, supposedly sympathized with it and used Marxist-Leninist theories in his research. His lecture was to be about \textit{Draumkvædet}, a medieval Norwegian ballad, and a criticism of its bourgeois interpretations, a topic that did not particularly fit the profile of the Nordic Institute. But Solheim was a friend of Horst Bien and showed little fear in associating publicly with the GDR, and in this way giving him the chance to speak in front of a foreign

\textsuperscript{87} Report on the Reception of a Finnish Delegation from the SKDL at the Nordic Institute of EMAU, no date, appendix to: Kress to Boriss (Rector EMAU), 04/02/1959, UAG NEW 12.

\textsuperscript{88} Bien to StHF, Dept. Philosophical Faculties, 07/09/1959, UAG NEW 98.

\textsuperscript{89} Kleven, Hans I.: Fiskerne. Deres problemer og framtid – Fiskerispørsmålet i Norge, Oslo 1959.

\textsuperscript{90} Years later Kleven turned his research into a book: Kleven, Hans I.: Klassestrukturen i det norske samfunnet, Oslo 1965.
audience would intensify contact with him. The pattern that emerges from these lecture lists is not dissimilar to that during the Third Reich. Besides genuinely political figures, whose isolation in their native countries could be alleviated by publicly rewarding them, there were public intellectuals, whose vague sympathies could be reinforced by lectures abroad, and curious, sometimes naïve academics, whose research interests could be used to publicly associate them with the own regime.

Nevertheless, while a tool in holding and extending contacts with Northern Europe, the Nordic Institute began to quickly lose autonomy in its foreign contacts after the party takeover of 1957. Greifswald’s “foreign policy” was to a large degree independent before that point, but from that time on international contacts became almost entirely remote-controlled by party institutions.

A particularly Greifswald-centric connection was Stellan Arvidson. Arvidson, who had been ousted as Swedish lecturer in 1933, again took up contact with Greifswald in the early 1950s. During the 500th anniversary of Greifswald University, in 1956, plans called for a speech in honour of Thomas Thorild, an 18th century Swedish radical whose support for liberal reforms had earned him an exile as librarian in the then Swedish provincial University of Greifswald. When the originally requested speaker, Uppsala’s philosopher Anders Karitz, rejected the invitation, Arvidson was chosen to give the speech. Arvidson had started research on Thorild during his tenure in Greifswald and had arguably chosen the rejected revolutionary as something of a paragon for himself.91 While Arvidson had been highly critical of National Socialist attempts to employ Swedish–German relations for a political rapprochement, he almost immediately became complicit in similar attempts by the GDR.92 Arvidson, who had in the meantime become a significant figure in the literary field and an active political figure in school and educational policy,93 was among the most influential advocates

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92 Almgren 2009, especially pp. 72f.
93 Arvidson was president of the Swedish Association of Writers (Sveriges författarförening) from 1950–1965, and of the Joint Committee for Artistic and Literary Professionals (Konstnärliga och Litterära Yrkesutövares Samarbetenämnd) between 1959 and 1970. He was an active and highly placed participant in Swedish school reforms and became Member of Parliament for the Social Democratic Party in 1957.
of a recognition of the GDR in Sweden,\textsuperscript{94} and his most lasting connection was with Greifswald. Even though Arvidson did not agree with the entirety of the GDR’s policy’s,\textsuperscript{95} he was still its willing advocate. The most important connection to him was with the Nordic Institute and the Section Northern European Studies respectively, with which he was in regular contact. Arvidson even became a guest professor in Greifswald, upon request of the League for Peoples’ Friendship, a development that would have been difficult to facilitate for the institute alone.\textsuperscript{96} The downside of this arrangement between Greifswald’s scholars and the party and state apparatus was that Arvidson’s visits were dutifully prepared, logged and coordinated with a wide range of official agencies. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and its subordinated organizations kept close watch over the courting of the intercessor, and when for example Arvidson’s 75th birthday approached, the League for Peoples’ Friendship (\emph{Liga für Völkerfreundschaft})\textsuperscript{97} suggested that the SNEW would organize an event in which Arvidson’s literary work would be celebrated. Greifswald was to organize the event itself, while the League would stand for the public exploitation via the usual channels of national and international propaganda – RBI, \emph{DDR-Revyn} and \emph{Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst}.\textsuperscript{98} The Nordic Institute was thus reduced to a

\textsuperscript{94} Arvidson was an important figure in the Swedish Association for Workers’ Education (\emph{Arbetarbildningsföreningen}), which allowed him to edit handbooks that described the GDR as the better Germany and defended the Berlin Wall as a necessary and humane security measure. In the 1960s Arvidson took over presidency of the Friendship Association Sweden-GDR (\emph{Vänkapsföreningen Sverige-DDR}), where he publicly defended the GDR’s policy. See Almgren, Birgitta: \emph{Inte bara spioner. Stasi-infiltrationen i Sverige under kalla kriget}, Stockholm 2011, especially pp. 72f; as well as Abraham, Nils: “Die Rolle der Freundschaftsgesellschaft ‘Schweden-DDR’ in der Auslandspropaganda der DDR gegenüber Schweden nach 1972”, in: Schartau, Mai-Brith & Müssener, Helmut (eds.): \emph{Den okändes (?) grannen. Tysklandsrelaterad forskning i Sverige (=Schwedische Perspektiven. Schriften des Zentrums für Deutschlandstudien, 4)} Huddinge 2005, pp. 9–29.

\textsuperscript{95} After a meeting with Bien and Stern in 1964, it was noted that Arvidson had markedly different views on e.g. free choice of profession, but would still assist the institute in making contacts in Sweden. See Report about Arvidson’s visit on 15–16/07/1964, no date, UAG NEW 98. Furthermore, Arvidson was noticeably silent after the expatriation of Wolf Biermann. This was criticized by many of his colleagues, who would have wished for a strong statement against that act, but Arvidson also did not jump to the defence of the GDR’s leadership. See Almgren 2011, p. 57f.

\textsuperscript{96} Wandel (\emph{Liga für Völkerfreundschaft}) to Böhme (MHF), 13/06/1980, UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 34.

\textsuperscript{97} Umbrella organization for all the international friendship associations and committees.

\textsuperscript{98} Gerhard Kasper (Secretariat of \emph{Liga für Völkerfreundschaft}) to Joachimi, 13/10/1977, UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
wheel in a machinery of hard public diplomacy, in which its own radius of action was curtailed by deep integration with the toolset of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, this development, while increasing the efficiency of the public diplomacy-dimension of the Nordic Institute, also undermined the same. In correspondence the representatives of the Nordic Institutes often mention encountering distrust and having to step lightly. After a tour of Sweden in 1960, Horst Bien and Artur Bethke reported:

We have consciously avoided advertising political events in the GDR, such as the Baltic Sea Week, as this would be too early in our current relations with Uppsala, and most academics would not have accepted it. Our experiences indicate that professional contacts are the first and decisive step for a continual cooperation.99

Even though these instances became scarcer with time, especially after 1973, when the GDR’s international recognition and the Helsinki-process eased international cooperation, keeping hard and soft public diplomacy apart was an ongoing problem. In the MHF, international relations with the North were planned and organized with military precision, searching for low-level technical and professional connections, which would then be used to identify individuals whose connections with the GDR could be extended and fostered.100 For the Nordic Institute this was especially true since the university’s own Directorate of International Relations, subordinate to the MHF, instituted a rigorous reporting and planning system, in which academics were encouraged to seek out private discussions with West Germans and foreigners, only to then steer the conversation to the German Question.101 To what extent the reports adequately represent the attitude of East German academics abroad is a moot point, but as a general trend it is plausible that their political task shone through all too often. This became a particularly hot topic in 1968, when Russian forces suppressed reform communist efforts in Czechoslovakia. These measures received interna-


100 Action Plan for the Kingdom of Sweden 1971, no date, BA DR2 24799, as an example among many.

101 UAG Direktorat Internationale Beziehungen 232.
tional condemnation, even from those who were otherwise favourably disposed towards the communist bloc, and discussions in the SNEW made it very clear that private letters in which these matters were discussed, were not a private issue. Horst Bien had obviously received a letter from a Norwegian professor in which the topic was viewed very critically, as had a student. The responses were discussed publicly, so as to present a united and loyal front, but it is questionable if form letters venting the party line increased trust into Greifswald’s scholars. The connections between the SNEW and the party and state apparatus, after all, were difficult to disguise. Nevertheless, the deep integration cut both ways, since it also gave access to resources for foreign contacts and conferred on the Nordic scholars a privileged position not otherwise attainable.

Technical Services

Deep integration was not a process that limited itself to extending the core functions of the Nordic Institute. Apart from infiltrating research and teaching as well as external contacts, the party and state apparatus also used the Nordic Institute as a consultant and service agency for its own public diplomacy. After 1958 the GDR held an annual Workers Conference of the Baltic Sea States in Rostock, in an effort to increase international cooperation with Northern Europe. Surrounded by a multitude of cultural, political and athletic events, the so-called Baltic Sea Week (Ostseewoche) came to be an important tool in communicating the GDR abroad. With guests from the nations bordering the Baltic Sea as well as Norway and Iceland, the organizational work was immense, and the wish to exploit the contacts made there necessitated a large amount of trained personnel. The natural contact for providing special intercultural expertise for these events was the Nordic Institute, which regularly provided interpreters and tour guides, as well as diplomatic and consulting work. This proved to be a strain on the institute’s resources, as a report for 1971 shows: Of the 468 man-days that the institute’s employees and students spent on external assignments, a full

102 K. Sokoll (managing assistant SNEW) to Gärtner (Dean PhilFak), 21/10/1968, UAG NEW 13.
103 Muschik 2006, pp. 231–244.
360 were billed for the Baltic Week. Nevertheless, this strain also came with benefits. One the one hand, the students could practice their language skills, which they often enough received from non-native speakers, as well as being gently introduced to the politically sensitive task of handling foreigners. The Baltic Sea Week also brought the institute’s staff into contact with a number of Northerners who could be assumed to be at least

104 Public Relations/Public Diplomacy (Öffentlichkeitsarbeit/Auslandsinformation) of SNEW between 1st of January 1971 and June 1972 (Statistical Analysis), 05/06/1972, UAN Prorectorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.

105 Development of SNEW and its departments until 1980, no date (1973), UAG NEW 5. Only after the international recognition in 1973 did Greifswald receive regular lecturers from Sweden, the most important language in the section. Svenska Institutet, which organized the employment of lecturers from the Swedish side, had previously cooperated with Greifswald, but lecturers had not been sent. Even after the international recognition made the official provision of lecturers possible, high ideological standards still created problems. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs obviously considered the admission of lecturers into the GDR a political advance payment, and desired to send their lecturers into Sweden. When Svenska Institutet declared that this was not their area of operations and that the universities and schools hired their own lecturers, the department International Relations of MHF suggested that only Greifswald be supplied with native speakers. Other universities would still (or again) have to make do with politically more reliable personnel, even if those were Finland Swedes or emigres. See Eiteljörg (Main Directorate International Relations, MHF) to Dep. Faculty and Nomenclatura, MHF, 10/07/1989, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1967.

106 Western foreigners in particular were permanently viewed with suspicion, since they could challenge the Socialist views of students. In 1962 the Nordic Institute lost a student interpreter during the Festival of Youth and Students in Helsinki, when she walked off into the West German embassy. The incident created a stir and increased the suspicion among the staff. (Scholz [Academic Secretary SNEW] to Kloß [Director International Relations, EMAU], 30/03/1983, UAG NEW 55). The student who was expelled for violating study discipline in 1959 exhibited a dangerously loose handling of a Dane, whom she had met at the Baltic Sea Week. That she accompanied him to the Leipzig Industrial Fair on her own, without the institute leadership’s supervision, was a grave concern. (Minutes of the FDJ-group Nordistik, 09/03/1959, UAG NEW 98). Furthermore, as time went, the political reliability of interpreters became an issue for the state leadership. Intertext: “In light of the somewhat often encountered negative political-ideological attitude and the consequently absolutely inadequate attitude to the profession of interpreter (petition of familiar relationships with foreigners in combination with a petition for emigration), a fundamental clarification of the ideological situation in the faculty (especially Section Asian Studies at HUB, but also Section Northern European Studies at EMAU) is urgently necessary!” (Angesichts der etwas gehäuft auftretenden negativen politisch-ideologischen Haltung und damit einer absolut unzureichenden spezifischen Einstellung zum SM [Sprachmittler]-Beruf (Eingaben familiärer Beziehungen zu Ausländern und damit verbundener Ausreiseanträge) ist die grundsätzliche Klärung der ideologischen Situation im Lehrkörper (vor allem der Sektion Asienwissenschaft der HUB, aber auch der Sektion Nordeuropawissenschaft der EMAU) dringend erforderlich!) – Preparatory materiel for discussions on interpreter questions on September 19th 1986, no date, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1165.
partially sympathetic to the GDR’s cause. Many of the contacts with which excursions were made possible, were made during the Baltic Sea Week, which subsequently also profited the Nordic Institute.\textsuperscript{107} The institute even gained a limited amount of political leverage out of its role as the prime supplier of trained personnel for the GDR’s major public diplomacy event towards Scandinavia. Having more expertise in cultural matters, the Nordic Institute had an important voice in the organization of the event. The Baltic Sea Week was collectively organized by the “Komitee Ostseewoche”, in which the regional party leadership was represented, and DENOG, the Northern Europe-branch of the League for Peoples’ Friendship. Both the regional and national representatives of party and state used Greifswald’s expertise and counsel in setting up proper handling of foreign visitors. This was not only because the institute provided an educated workforce, but also because its personnel often understood the development better than the bureaucrats involved. In 1963, to give an example, the institute criticized the deployment of foreign interpreters, which led to “political mistakes”,\textsuperscript{108} and that the academically trained cadres from DENOG and the Nordic Institute were employed to handle tourists, so that no firm contacts could be made with the guests of honour. Furthermore, they admonished the inadequate linguistic and cultural qualification of the personnel of DENOG and insufficient cooperation between regional and national offices.\textsuperscript{109} Due to their expert position, the Nordic Institute held a powerful position in the organization of the event, which furthermore gave them regular personal contacts into the higher spheres of the GDR’s foreign policy establishment.

Similarly, the institute was involved in state-level public diplomacy efforts. By the end of the 1960s the major agencies had seemingly stocked up on Northern European experts, to the point that the “Days of the GDR”, which were to be organized in Sweden and celebrate the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Workers’ and Peasants’ State, could be organized without involving the SNEW.\textsuperscript{110} Nevertheless, for “difficult” topics, such as Finnish history, Greifswald was still consulted, and when DENOG prepared the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of

\textsuperscript{107} UAG NEW 108.
\textsuperscript{108} How this comment was to be understood is unclear, but the unspoken insinuation could be that non-socialist interpreters were to be kept away from important visitors, who were to receive “loyal custodians” during their visits, so as to maximize influence on them. This would align with the other comments given in the evaluation.
\textsuperscript{109} Addendum to Evaluation of Baltic Sea Week in Nordic Institute, July 1963, UAG NEW 14.
\textsuperscript{110} Concept for “Days of the GDR” in Sweden, no date (early 1968), BA DR2 24799.
Finnish independence, they had to admit that their own competence was insufficient.\textsuperscript{111}

The Nordic Institute was not only consulted on questions of public diplomacy, though. Apart from the often overwhelming number of short-notice requests for interpreter services the SNEW was also to provide top-level interpreters from 1981 onwards. In the process of reforming the GDR’s ailing interpreter service, specialized interpreters with an outstanding command of their chosen language and a high security clearance were to be held in readiness to interpret at international political meetings. These specialized interpreters were normally provided by Intertext, but peak-demand would still necessitate requesting personnel from the universities. While demanding, the position of top-level interpreter brought with it a number of perks, such as increased pay and specially earmarked job positions.\textsuperscript{112} Greifswald’s personnel provided three interpreters for Swedish, two each for Danish and Finnish and one each for Norwegian and Icelandic,\textsuperscript{113} which provided them further access to the higher levels of power. To what extent this access could be mobilized is a different question. Gregor Putensen, one of the top-level interpreters for Swedish, had his permission for travel abroad revoked after his father petitioned to visit family in his native Hamburg, and he could only get reinstated as “Reisekader” when he threatened to enlighten his Swedish colleagues as to the actual reason for his inability to attend conferences abroad.\textsuperscript{114} In a similar vein the otherwise loyal Günther Politt lost his travel privileges in the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{115} Reasons for this revocation were not given, but the correspondence makes it clear that standards were high and travel privileges not lightly given. Both these cases make a strong claim that even the privileged position that the section and its scholars occupied did not exempt them from political control.

\textsuperscript{111} DENOG to Director NI, 11/05/1967, UAG NEW 30.
\textsuperscript{112} Böhme (MHF) to Imig (Rector EMAU), 23/02/1978, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1714.
\textsuperscript{113} Overview of part-time top-level-interpreters in the area of operations of MHF, no date (1989), BA DR3 2. Schicht 1165.
\textsuperscript{114} This is at least his own version, see “Gregor Putensen. 1989: Professor für Internationale Beziehungen Nordeuropas. 54 Jahre”, in: Mellies, Dirk & Möller, Frank (eds.): Greifswald 1989. Zeitzeugen erinnern sich, Marburg 2009, pp. 239–248.
\textsuperscript{115} Attachments to Knuth (Deputy Vice Chancellor for Cadres, EMAU) to Sacher (MfHF, Dpt. Cadres), 07/01/1983, BA DR3 2. Schicht 339.
Top Secret!

Cooperation with the GDR’s intelligence community was a later addition and is notoriously difficult to track in detail. As in the case of Johannes Paul’s tenure with the Abwehr, statements about intelligence work come with a sizable *caveat emptor*. Information is often fragmentary, incomplete and deliberately misleading, making the assessment difficult. Working from the documents in Greifswald, this is doubly so, since the handling of all things intelligence-related was strictly regulated and only glimpses show up here and there. Secret material was kept in a special safe, the contents of which were seemingly summarily destroyed in 1990. Secret material, in this case, meant all documents relating to or even mentioning the Stasi. Even the safe itself was somewhat confidential, and is only mentioned in the margins of a request for a list of graduates.116 In general, all mention of intelligence services seems to have been strictly avoided, and it is even possible that the already archived documents were selectively cleaned in 1990. Even the personnel structure of the SNEW was considered to be a state secret, despite the fact that publically available telephone catalogues gave the same information.117

The Nordic Institute had a standing cooperation with both the GDR’s intelligence agencies. The most important was the Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* – Stasi). As the central intelligence agency in the GDR, most of the Stasi’s directorates provided domestic security and acted as political police, while the Main Directorate A (*Hauptverwaltung A* – HVA)118 carried out espionage and covert operations abroad. In the few instances where the HVA was mentioned in documents in Greifswald, they were referred to as the Ministry of the Interior. The smaller cousin to the Stasi was the intelligence arm of the National People’s Army (*Nationale Volksarmee* – NVA). Having changed its name several times throughout its

116 “*Antwortschreiben ist 1 VD – liegt im Stahlschrank*” (Response is Confidential – located in the steel safe) – Engel (asst. Minister for Higher Education) to K. Schmidt (SNEW), 02/07/1984, UAG NEW 46.
117 Certificate about return of classified material “*Structure of the Section Northern European Studies*”, 06/04/1977, UAG Prorectorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
118 The abbreviation HVA is often misinterpreted as Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung (Main Directorate for Reconnaissance). Instead it is simply Main Directorate A in parallel to KGB’s First Main Directorate. See Müller-Enbergs, Helmut: *Hauptverwaltung A (HV A). Aufgaben – Strukturen – Quellen (=MfS-Handbuch, hg. v. BStU)*, Berlin 2011, p. 41.
existence, it performed primarily high-level policy analyses of the status and intentions of enemy militaries. Mentions of military intelligence were more frequent, since it only appeared as NVA in correspondence. This is at times confusing, probably deliberately so, since the Nordic Institute also had regular contact with “normal” NVA institutions, such as the 7th Torpedo Boat Flotilla in Stralsund, where they held information meetings, visits and public presentations on political-cultural topics.

It is almost certain that contact between the Nordic Institute and the Stasi existed before 1965, even if this cooperation was sporadic. Considering that journeys abroad had to be approved by the Stasi, a regular contact was inevitable. A stable institutional cooperation was only accomplished until 1965, when Kurt Vieweg brought the Nordic Institute’s potential to the attention of the Stasi. Even though his release from custody was a courtesy to Lotte Ulbricht, with whom he was still acquainted, his freedom was conditional upon cooperation with the GDR’s security agencies. The Stasi’s primary interest in Vieweg was his contacts with prominent West German Social Democrats, most notably Herbert Wehner. But once in Greifswald, further use was found for him and the institute. Already in August 1965, a few months after his arrival, his handler wrote an “agreement”, by which Vieweg was to establish contacts among the Danish Social Democrats and deliver all his research to the Stasi for evaluation. His efforts established a standing cooperation between Greifswald and Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv in Copenhagen, a left-wing research institution and documentation centre. Rudolf Broby-Johansen, father of Danish lecturer Aud Broby-Ilg, acted as go-between and helped supply the Nordic Institute with research material, while the director, Gerd Callesen,


121 These routine procedures were not documented in situ, but occasionally mentioned, see Minutes of Institute Leadership Meeting, 19/01/1965, UAG NEW 14.

122 For Vieweg’s multifaceted biography, see Scholz 1997.

provided contacts into the Danish research community and left-wing organizations.\textsuperscript{124} Due to his prior penal servitude, Vieweg was banned from travelling to Western countries, but nevertheless managed to score a number of successes and became a valuable asset to the Stasi. His work won him the confidence of Alfred Petersen, former councillor of \textit{Dansk Arbejdsmands Forbund} and labour union functionary, who chatted freely about internal matters of the Danish Social Democrats when visiting Greifswald.\textsuperscript{125}

Image 10: Kurt Vieweg

In fact, Vieweg, who had complained that he had been ignored by his new colleagues\textsuperscript{126} – most probably out of fear of associating with a former political inmate – soon became a major asset to the Nordic Institute. When Department IV, “International Relations”, came into a crisis in 1966, due to the temporary withdrawal of Franz Hochmann and Günther Politt, Vieweg took over the management of the department and formed a new working party. His assistant and later successor, Gregor Putensen, covered Sweden, Hansjürgen Wolf studied Norway and Gabriele Sokoll researched Denmark. Vieweg himself was only marginally involved in regular research tasks, but had a standing engagement with the Stasi. Apart from providing open-source

\textsuperscript{124} Herborg & Michaelsen 1996, p. 167.
\textsuperscript{125} Herborg & Michaelsen 1996, pp. 169f.
\textsuperscript{126} Minutes of Institute Leadership Meeting, 18/10/1966, UAG NEW 14.
analysis of events within the Danish Social Democratic Party, he spent the latter half of the 1960s preparing a book about connections between Danish Social Democrats and Nazi occupiers during World War Two.\footnote{Herborg & Michaelsen 1996, pp. 185f.} This was part of a larger operation, handled by military intelligence, to discredit the anti-communist forces in Scandinavia, with a similar operation having been prepared against the Swedish royal house.\footnote{Andersson, Christoph: Operation Norrsken. Om Stasi och Sverige under Kalla kriget, Stockholm 2013, pp. 17–60.} The changing international climate in the early 1970s saw a withdrawal of these plans, though.\footnote{Herborg & Michaelsen 1996, pp. 185f.}

Relieved from teaching duties due to his prior conviction the research plans listed Vieweg with the project “The Ideological Development in the Danish Social Democracy – Objective: Publication – Deadline: N/A”.\footnote{Die ideologische Entwicklung in der dänischen Sozialdemokratie” – “Ziel: Veröffentlichung” – “Abschlusstermin: ohne” – Research plan, Attachment to: Application for Research Projects to MHF, 28/02/1969, UAG NEW 64.} No other scholar in Greifswald enjoyed such an open-ended work assignment, which did not mean that Vieweg was the only scholar there on the payroll of the Stasi. For the intelligence services, the Nordic Institute/SNEW in Greifswald served three functions – training and education, research and as a legend.

Firstly, the Nordic Institute and SNEW provided essential training services. Both HVA and NVA operated special schools for their services, the Academy of Law in Potsdam-Golm for Stasi and the Institute for Military Science in Klietz on the Elbe for military intelligence. Here prospective agents, case officers and analysts were trained, but neither of these institutions could support the infrastructure for an extensive language and area training. Consequently, the Stasi employed the services of the Nordic Institute to train their employees in this field.

On the one hand, an unspecified number of graduates ended up in the Stasi’s employ. Due to the secrecy surrounding the graduate lists, precise statements on the prevalence of clandestine employment are well-nigh impossible. Nevertheless, a few Greifswald-graduates have been named as later Stasi-agents. Among them is Olaf Schlaak who had studied as a Danish interpreter in Greifswald and went on to work in Rostock. Under the alias “IM Eberhard” he focused on contacts with Danish citizens, work that allowed him to make a radiant career as a top-level interpreter.\footnote{Herborg & Michaelsen 1996, p. 131.} The nature
of the Greifswald-graduates’ future employments make it likely that they were routinely staked out by the Stasi as collaborators, even if not all of them were considered for active employment. The demands for political loyalty – or at the very least extortability – were high. Advanced student Gero Lietz was investigated in 1987 after expressing ecological and pacifist sentiments and showing an undue interest in Solidarność. He was relegated from his intended employment, the Permanent Committee of the Labour Unions of Northern Europe in Rostock, where he would have been a prime source for the Stasi, to a post at Intertext.\textsuperscript{132} Lietz’ reassignment to a position where he would have little exposure to sensitive material is one of few documented cases that illustrate the concern that Stasi had for the future employment of Greifswald’s graduates.

On the other hand, the “gentlemen from the Ministry of the Interior”, as they were cautiously called, also turned to the Nordic Institute for specialized area training for their already active officers. The Stasi’s specialist in Danish issues, Heinz Becker, studied Danish first at Radio Berlin International, then on a special course with Aud Broby-Ilg. When this proved insufficient, he and his colleague, Klaus Witte, enrolled as doctoral students in Greifswald in 1970. Becker researched the Danish Social Democratic Party and their security policy, while Witte wrote on the connection between economy and politics in Denmark.\textsuperscript{133} Whereas Becker returned to Stasi headquarters as a case officer, Witte stayed in Greifswald as a researcher.

This leads us to the second function the Nordic Institute had in the intelligence community: research. While the Literature and Culture department’s research topics were only exploitable indirectly, the International Relations-department, and later the State and Law department, delivered their research directly to state agencies. Much of this research was public and distributed via the section’s own journal, \textit{Nordeuropastudien}. The scholars also published their results in \textit{Deutsche Außenpolitik}, the journal of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and \textit{Neues Deutschland}, the Central Committee’s newspaper. A smaller part was confidential, and such analyses were delivered to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as per the research contract. The Stasi and military intelligence received their fair share as well. HVA shared the same general interest as the MfAA, as a result of which both

\textsuperscript{132} Untersuchungsausschuss der Stadt Greifswald: Abschlussbericht, Greifswald 1990, pp. 9f.
\textsuperscript{133} Wegener-Friis 2005, pp.224f.
probably profited from the contractual research. Nevertheless, the structure of the research contract and the presence of the associated scholars made short-notice studies on special topics feasible, a fact that the intelligence communities seem to have used extensively. The research plan 1969/70 names “Trends and Prognosis of the Northern European NATO-member states” as one of the contract research-topics for Department IV, with the customer identified as the Ministry of the Interior, meaning the Stasi. Incidentally, the topic was allocated to Kurt Vieweg alone.134

From this point onward the institute as a whole seems to have become involved with legwork for the intelligence community. A singular document, in which Herbert Joachimi proudly reported the achievements of his section for 1970, gives a glimpse at the state of these affairs:

In the period under report the following were compiled: 5 special analyses for a central office; 2 country characteristics of the 5 Northern European states for public relations; 4 teaching materials on domestic- and foreign policy of Northern Europe; 2 teaching materials on the economic structure of Northern Europe; 2 teaching materials on current cultural-political discussions in Northern Europe for use by the section as basic material for advanced training of cadres in praxis; No. 3 of “Nordeuropastudien” (currently in print); 1 analysis and prognosis as part of the research plan for foreign policy research, which has already been transferred into praxis and has been deemed very useful; and 3 further parts of the research plan (contract research – 700 pages), which have been handed over to the praxis partner on November 1st.

I ask for leniency that I cannot – for obvious reasons – give any particulars about the topics of the 4 parts of the plan for foreign policy research.135

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134 Research Plan 1969/70, 03/01/1969, UAG NEW 64.
135 “Im Berichtszeitraum wurden erarbeitet: 5 Spezialanalysen für eine zentrale Dienststelle, 2 mal je 1 Ländercharakteristik der 5 nordeuropäischen Staaten für die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, 4 Lehrmaterialien zur Innen- und Außenpolitik Nordeuropas, 2 Lehrmaterialien zur ökonomischen Struktur Nordeuropas, 2 Lehrmaterialien zu aktuellen kulturpolitischen Diskussionen in Nordeuropa für den Gebrauch der Ausbildung an der Sektion und als Grundlagenmaterial für die Weiterbildung von Kadern in der Praxis, Nr. 3 der “Nordeuropastudien” (die sich z.Zt. im Druck befindet), 1 Analyse und Prognose als Teil des Forschungsplanes der außenpolitischen Forschung, die bereits in die Praxis überführt und mit dem Prädikat äußerst nützlich versehen wurde, und weitere 3 Teile des Forschungsplans (Vertragsforschung – 700 Seiten), die am 1. November dem Vertragspartner übergeben wurden.”

This piece of report is interesting for a number of reasons: First, it confirms that special studies for the Stasi – no other office would warrant as crude a circumscription as “central office” – were a common occurrence. Thomas Wegener-Friis points out at least two such studies in 1976, one by Vieweg on the Danish arms industry and one by Bien and Sokoll on an unknown topic, but Joachimi’s bragging report indicates that such requests came more frequently. Second, it indicates the teething problems with a clandestine–academic cooperation. The report was from 1970, when the cooperation between the Section Northern European Studies was still relatively young, and while individual scholars had already amassed a certain experience in keeping quiet about their work for intelligence circles, the now widespread involvement of scholars still necessitated a few briefings on secrecy laws. That Joachimi so openly hinted at the SNEW’s work for the Stasi was probably not what his customer intended. After this point in time, cooperation with the intelligence agencies ran smoothly and silently. Third, the report shows the pride among the scholars about being able to service such exalted circles as the state’s very own espionage community. Joachimi’s sentence about not being able to share the particulars of the research plan is no more than a boast to his formal superiors. Considering that in his report he named not a single topic among the many projects, the fact that he does not name the confidential ones could simply have been skipped. Instead, he openly hints at being privy to state secrets, little more than a power play on the recipient, most probably the Vice Chancellor. As a last point to pick up, the document is incomplete. Someone took the liberty of removing the first few pages of the report, thus hiding the addressee and possibly some more information. This is one among several indications that even the already archived documents have been redacted.

The Nordic Institute, so proud of its new role, became more than contractually intertwined with the intelligence circles. After the SNEW had shared its study “Armament und Arms Reduction in Northern Europe” with the People’s Navy (Volksmarine) in 1984, the head of the Operations Department, Theodor Hoffmann, praised the compilation in no uncertain terms. He nevertheless had a few recommendations for future studies.

136 Wegener-Friis 2005, p. 227. Gabriele Sokoll had already prepared a dossier about Johannes Paul in 1966. After Paul had founded a “Baltic Sea Association” (Ostseegesellschaft) in Lübeck, which aimed to delegitimize Soviet hegemony in the Baltic Sea Region, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had asked for material on Paul’s background. UAG NEW 72.
among them the inclusion of Navy cadres in the process. Since the study was a public contribution from the Central Research Plan and Hoffmann head of the overt operations department, he was probably not aware that this was already the case. Commander (Fregattenkapitän) Hermann Morbach, late of Verwaltung Aufklärung, had taken up residence in Greifswald in 1981, where he covered the military-industrial complex in Denmark. After a conference on “Problems of the Struggle for Peaceful Coexistence and Security in the Baltic Sea Region” in 1968, in which members of military intelligence had taken part, Verwaltung Aufklärung turned to Herbert Joachimi and established a working relationship. Morbach, who had participated in other conferences in Greifswald as well, switched desks and transferred into the SNEW permanently. This move not only ensured an increased expertise in Greifswald but also a personal go-between with military intelligence. Morbach was not the only one to transition from espionage to research. Klaus Witte, one of the two Stasi officers who had enrolled for Danish in 1970, stayed in Greifswald as a researcher, even though his career in research seems to have been less successful than Morbach’s.

The third function of the Nordic Institute/SNEW was that of a legend. This function was not exclusive to the Nordic Institute or the GDR, as academic travel and residencies have traditionally constituted the cover for espionage operations. The exact extent to which researchers from Greifswald were involved in espionage and clandestine operations is difficult to gauge. On the one hand, the Nordic scholars had a disproportionately large number of active Stasi-collaborators in their ranks, with some of them

137 Hoffmann (NVA) to K. Schmidt (SNEW), 23/10/1984, UAG NEW 54.
139 Wegener-Friis 2005, pp.227f.
142 A 1990 inquiry found four of the 35 staff in the Section Northern European Studies to be on the payroll of the local Stasi offices. This number, while not particularly high at
ACADEMICS AND POLITICS

holding exalted distinctions. On the other hand, this does not necessarily mean that they were in continuous deployment. Kurt Vieweg, who, due to his prior arrest, was at the mercy of the Stasi, was primarily researching for the intelligence services, but his actual espionage operations were far from a full-time engagement. The same went, with some exceptions, for the majority of Stasi collaborators in Greifswald.

While, therefore, the picture of Greifswald’s Nordic scholars in espionage is fragmentary and will most likely remain so due to the lack of sources, it is at least possible to give some typifying examples of such engagements. Most scholars with Stasi ties seem to have been employed intermittently, such as Gabriele Sokoll (IM Berndt), who is known to have been involved in at least one assignment to Norway.\footnote{"Ga Stasi rapport", in: Verdens Gang, 18/02/2000, [http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/ga-stasi-rapport/a/5581358, [retrieved: 01/07/2015].} Intermittent routine assignments, such as making contact with active assets, courier runs, regime journeys, in which the passport and security arrangements during entry into a country were explored and explorations, where meeting points and localities were scouted out, were most likely the mainstay of their activities.\footnote{A description of this type of assignment is given in Müller-Ensberg, Helmut: "Sveriges ställning som underrättelsemål för DDR:s utlandsspionage", in: Almgren, Birgitta: Inte bara spioner. Stasi-infiltration i Sverige under kalla kriget, Stockholm 2011, 238–267, here: 250–253.} Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine that their contacts with Scandinavians would not have been exploited for information-gathering purposes.

On the other hand, there were scholars who enjoyed a more active engagement with Stasi. A publicly known case is that of Franz Stepanek (IM Jochen), who managed to receive a grant from the Danish Ministry for Education for a fellowship at the Center for Udviklingsforskning (CUF – Centre for Development Research) in 1986. The CUF was a think-tank of the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and permitted him privileged access first glance, nonetheless gave SNEW the highest ratio of active Stasi-informers. Furthermore, people in the employ of HVA were unlikely to be registered in the local offices, wherefore the actual numbers are much higher. Untersuchungsausschuss der Stadt Greifswald 1990, p. 7. When recruiting Ernst Walter (IM Larus) in 1976, the local Stasi-offices remarked: “No other Reisekader [personnel with privileges to travel abroad] can be employed for this defensive work, as those are already registered for other offices of the MFS.” (Außer dem Prof. Walter können keine weiteren Reisekader für diese Abwehrarbeit eingesetzt werden, da diese bereits für andere Diensteinheiten des MFS registriert sind.) This would, if understood correctly, mean that all other Reisekader were or had been working for Stasi-offices in Rostock or Berlin. See Proposal for Commitment as IMV, 02/06/1976, BStU, MFS, BVRst, AIM 646/88, fol. 72.

\footnote{"Ga Stasi rapport", in: Verdens Gang, 18/02/2000, [http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/ga-stasi-rapport/a/5581358, [retrieved: 01/07/2015].}

\footnote{A description of this type of assignment is given in Müller-Ensberg, Helmut: "Sveriges ställning som underrättelsemål för DDR:s utlandsspionage", in: Almgren, Birgitta: Inte bara spioner. Stasi-infiltration i Sverige under kalla kriget, Stockholm 2011, 238–267, here: 250–253.}
to the ministry’s documents. This cannot have been Stepanek’s first scoop, considering that his services had been loaned out to the KGB the year before. Such transfers were unusual, and generally indicated either a highly-placed or particularly competent agent. Stepanek was praised for his “operative experience” and “political reliability”, and it was indicated that the KGB wished to employ his academic contacts in Sweden, which is why he was probably considered both well-placed and competent.\footnote{Herborg & Michaelsen 1996, pp. 63–65.}

Other agents were groomed for higher services from their studies onward, with their employment illustrating the fluid borders between academia, public diplomacy and espionage. Rainer Höll had been selected for an elevated position in the early 1970s. His political attitude and mental faculties made him a promising candidate, and at the young age of 21 the SED handed him over to the Stasi who steered his future career as a Northern European scholar up to his dissertation about the history of the Nordic Institute in 1983. After an exemplary career as a cadre-student he was formally inducted into the Stasi in 1984, under the codename “Richard Meier”. His posting was Stockholm, where he not only served as deputy director in the GDR Culture Centre but also established ties with people of public interest and infiltrated Swedish institutions and organizations. Höll did not take well to being exposed to the Western world, though, and began seeing “contradictions between the theory and practice of socialism”. In 1987, only three years after his arrival in Stockholm, he was found unfit for foreign deployment and returned to Greifswald where he stayed as a researcher.\footnote{Almgren 2011, pp. 81–83.} A similar career was pursued by Wolfgang Fritsch, another Greifswald-trained operative, who took directorship over the GDR Culture Centre in Helsinki in the 1980s.\footnote{“Stasi, Suomi ja DDR: käsikirjoitus”, http://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2000/05/22/stasi-suomi-ja-ddr-kasikirjoitus, [retrieved: 20/07/2015].}

The problem with the openness enjoyed by the academic world cut both ways, though. While especially the relaxed travel restriction after the Helsinki-process made it easier for the Stasi to send agents into Scandinavia under an academic cover, it also presented its own dangers. Hansjürgen Wolf, the assistant covering Norway in Department IV, defected during a research visit to Norway. While being debriefed by the Norwegian intelligence service he supposedly revealed four Stasi-agents among the SNEW’s students, which seriously compromised another operation. \textit{Verwaltung Aufklärung} had tried
to slip Rüdiger Meitz, a young doctoral student at the SNEW, into Denmark during that year. Codenamed “Veran”, Meitz faked a defection during a study visit to Copenhagen and started looking for work in Denmark, preferably as a historian or librarian. But, since the Norwegian intelligence service had shared Wolf’s information with their opposite numbers in Denmark, he was taken in for interrogation. While it was impossible to make him slip and reveal himself, and he was subsequently released, his chances of finding employment in Denmark were low. The original plan had called for Meitz to establish himself in an academic setting, there to act as a recruiter for potential agents which could be steered towards jobs with exposure to classified material. But with his credentials in doubt and the job market for young academics difficult, Meitz did not succeed in securing a position at either Copenhagen or Lund University, and military intelligence decided to move him to West Germany instead. Plans to use a doctoral dissertation at Hamburg University to give more credit to his cover story and later return him to Denmark faltered again, and Meitz instead stayed in Hamburg and became an “object observer” for a barracks complex. Even though he had started out with a strong cover story from Greifswald, the fact that the Nordic Institute was uncovered as a hotbed of intelligence activity in the early 1980s left him stranded.148

VI.3 “Normal Science”

After 1945, research and teaching in Greifswald, as in other East German universities, underwent fundamental changes in its relationship with the state. Ideationally, the state was run by a party that presented itself as possessing a scientific ideology, even though the position of this ideology was supra-empirical, in the sense of not being scientifically falsifiable. In the SED’s understanding of science, the canonized classics of Marxism–Leninism could claim the highest degree of certitude, with other scientific tenets ranking below it. From this tenet, the party derived not only the right but also the responsibility to interfere with scientific institutions and their

work. This trapped not only academics but also – to a degree – the party in a self-contradictory circle, between the technocratic summoning of science and scholarship as the basis of the party’s legitimacy and of societal prosperity, on the one hand, and the party’s fear of loss of control to a systemic logic outside their control on the other. As such, the primacy of Marxist-Leninist ideology in academia was ensured through control-mechanisms that also filtered or suppressed contradictions to the party’s monopoly of scientific authority.

Institutionally, this control was ensured by a number of developments. On the one hand, the post-war years saw a deterioration in the status of the individual professor, who had previously dominated the institutional and intellectual landscape of the bourgeois German university. The widespread changes that undermined his (it was still predominantly a “he”) ability to rule his own chair and institute, freely determine the content of his teaching and research and regulate the fostering of young academics to a large degree, relegated him to a *primus inter pares*. While still holding an exalted position, more and more of the institutional decisions were made collectively, and much of the academic recruitment was turned over to central state agencies. This move towards shallower hierarchies and collective research increased the potential for collective control within the university. At the same time, repression and marginalization of non-conforming scholars created an incentive for compliance. For many of the scholars in the Nordic Institute, this was a firsthand experience, with the campaigns against Hans-Friedrich Rosenfeld and Hildegard Emmel still in living memory. The message of these public campaigns was self-evident, and many scholars, such as Morgenroth and Friese, preferred a career elsewhere to this kind of pressure. Even for scholars loyal to

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150 Voigt, Dieter: “Zum wissenschaftlichen Standard von Doktorarbeiten und Habilitationsschriften in der DDR. Eine empirische Untersuchung der Jahre 1950 bis 1990”, in: Voigt, Dieter & Mertens, Lothar (eds.): DDR-Wissenschaft im Zwiespalt zwischen Forschung und Staatssicherheit (=Schriftenreihe der Gesellschaft für Deutschlandforschung, 45) Berlin 1995, pp. 45–100. While Voigt’s argumentation is rather heated and one-sided, the validity of his underlying claims is hard to dispute.


152 On the importance of repressions to discipline academia in the early GDR, see Kowalczuk 2003, pp. 424–442.
the party, this pressure existed. On the other hand, scholars were also drawn in with a variety of privileges, designed to entice their loyalty. Furthermore, research topics were subject to direct control. Already in 1957 the director of the Nordic Institute had to hand in a research plan in which all resident researchers had to give a brief account of their research projects, including start- and end date, which were then numbered and handed in to the university’s Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research, who, following central guidelines, either approved the projects or did not. Between the carrot and the stick, and under the close eye of state and party, deviation from a narrow party line was difficult and consequently rare.

The Starting Point

What did the research in the Nordic Institute look like, then? The perspective plan of 1958, drafted under Kress’ auspices as a first attempt to align the institute with state and party interests, already proved surprisingly farsighted. The proposal was subsequently confirmed by state secretariat and party, and continued to form the general basis of research. Specifically, the perspective plan outlined three broad areas of research. In the area of social sciences, which Kress still called “History of the Scandinavian Peoples”, the plan included a broad range of historical topics – Nordic History with a focus on the development of the bourgeois nation, German relations with Northern Europe and the role of Scandinavism as well as the historical development of the Nordic workers’ movements. But this field also stretched into topics such as ideological developments in the North, the theory of Nordic Socialism and the role of the workers’ and communist parties in modern Norden. Statecraft and law of modern Northern Europe, the press, radio and television landscape, party structure,

153 Kowalczuk 2003, pp. 348–380. The privileges could take a number of forms, from preferential loans for houses and increased food allotments to prizes and vacation opportunities.

154 Vice Rector for Research EMAU to Director NI, 24/04/1957, UAG NEW 7.

155 Perspective Plan of the Nordic Institute at EMAU Greifswald, 03/09/1958, UAG NEW 7.

156 Kress to SED County Leadership Greifswald, 1st Secretary Marlow, 13/11/1961, UAG NEW 15.

157 This is not to say that the perspective plan received the authority to dictate research topics along the way, as this was the prerogative of state and party. But between its description of the limitations and possibilities of the institute it proved a reasonably accurate prediction of future research emphasis.
military and societal organizations, domestic and foreign policy were also subsumed under the historical header.

A further area of research was economics, where economic policy and political-economic geography were proposed as focus areas, much like the historical and contemporary development of capitalism in the Nordic countries and trade relations with the Western and Eastern blocs.

The largest field of research was that of the arts, literature and language, where Kress emphasized the need to transform Old Norse Studies from a philological examination of individual works of literature into sociological research about the transition from classless to class society and the development of feudalism in Northern Europe. Research into modern literature should focus on progressive and humanist writers, with a special eye on workers’ literature, which should be popularized through translations, editions and literary criticism. The central focus of the Nordic Institute, the perspective plan stated, was German–Nordic cultural relations, where “the unscientific and distorting representation of bourgeois research has to be opposed.”

This summary of proposed research is relevant insofar as it provides a baseline from which to approach the research that actually materialized. It gives a rough draft of what the Nordic Institute itself imagined its work to be after its partification. While oriented towards societally and politically useful areas, all the proposed topics do still qualify as pure research. The provision of statistical material, social scientific inquiry into broader societal topics and work in the cultural sphere were still well within the traditional job description of academia. While the perspective plan explicitly mentions that work had to be oriented towards the need of the praxis, i.e. the ministries, no direct collaboration is mentioned, such as specialized studies or application-oriented projects. While it could be argued that the perspective plan was preliminary and could thus not anticipate more concrete arrangements, the plan nowhere even hints at such a possibility. Instead, it presupposes a division of labour in which academia provides basic research on topics which would then help to guide

159 The proposal might bear strong indications of having been drafted under the auspices of Bruno Kress, but the decision-making process that confirmed and amended it make it clear that the document reflected at least a general opinion within the institute, if not necessarily all individual opinions.
the political agents, reflecting an academic sense-of-self that strove for societal utility and significance while still retaining a measure of autonomy.

A Niche – Linguistics

One of the research topics that disappeared silently was Bruno Kress’ proposal of an inquiry into the social history of Iceland. Kress never published on the topic and it does not seem as if he ever conducted serious research on it. A lack of resources precludes any clear statement on this curious absence. It could be that Kress, having established himself in a comfortable position, considered this politically convenient topic no longer necessary. On the other hand, it could just as well be that Kress was discouraged from, or afraid of, pursuing a topic with the potential to clash with Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy.

Whatever the case, instead of extending his field of research into historical materialism, Kress focused on his home territory, Icelandic linguistics. Where the discipline of Nordistik had been traditionally focussed on Old Icelandic and the sagas, Kress was among the first to popularize inquiry into modern Icelandic.\footnote{Kress, Bruno: Die Laute des modernen Isländischen, Berlin 1937.} He continued in this vein, and his works on modern
Icelandic linguistics became staples of German and international Icelandic studies. Apart from international renown, Kress’ research focus had little to offer for the political system. Icelandic linguistics was a niche subject into which political interest did not penetrate to any dangerous degree. While even a rather technical field such as linguistics was subject to attempts to align it with the classics of Marxism-Leninism, these did not bear on such an obscure field. This does not mean, though, that Greifswald’s linguistics were beyond Marxist-Leninist influences. Ernst Walter, who followed Kress on his chair, was a pupil of the noted historian of religion Walter Baetke and continued in the tradition of cultural-sociological inquiry. He had won his academic merits with a study of ethical-moral loan vocabulary of Old Scandinavian under the influence of Latin, and his research did employ historical materialism as a theoretical starting point for studies into the relationship between language and society. Walter did not become famous for this part of his work – a major staple of his oeuvre was still traditionally linguistic – but it is interesting to see the tentative and exploratory nature with which he used the basic ideas of historical materialism to further an understanding of language-development beyond the narrow limitations of language-intrinsic explanations, which still characterized large parts of Western linguistics. This markedly undogmatic approach, quoting the classics without making them the sole authorities for an indisputable claim to truth, was refreshingly different from the majority of

163 Walter Baetke (1884–1979) was noted for his contributions on the history of Old Germanic religion as well as his studies of Old Nordic linguistics. Before becoming professor for History of Religion in 1935 and Nordic Philology in 1946 (both in Leipzig), he had been lecturer in History of Germanic Religion in Greifswald in 1934/35.
publications from the Nordic Institute. Linguistics, which became institutionally separate as Abteilung Sprachwissenschaft in 1963 and 1968 as the department of Nordistik-Sprachwissenschaft, offers one example of the possibilities for autonomous research. It shows that, even in an institute dominated by its political task, autonomous research was still possible, even if this autonomy was relative. Where political utility was low and there was even political interest in preserving a traditional discipline for purposes of public diplomacy, a niche could allow for a relative degree of freedom in research in which researchers actually sought out, as Walter and – to a limited degree – Kress did, the inspiration of historical materialism to stake out new research areas and, if the urge to present a combative socialist stance was low, come up with new insights.

In the Trenches – Literature and Culture

The literature department, which formed the backbone of the Nordistik branch within the Section Northern European Studies and the Nordic Institute before it, was a mixed bag when viewed through the lens of its research. Like linguistics, the literature department could at points act as a niche, having its traditional structure somewhat guaranteed under public diplomacy considerations. But Marxism-Leninism had a more pronounced opinion on literature than it had on linguistics, and thus the pressure to conform was higher. So, too, was the offer. Younger scholars like Horst Bien, who had received their induction into academia after 1945 but still under the aegis of bourgeois teachers, profited from the Marxist-Leninist paradigm, which offered them a new way of approaching literature. Bourgeois realism, social novels and workers’ literature – literary topics in which the socialist society already had an ex officio-interest – could be studied and criticized with great authority. Horst Bien for example became a renowned

166 Walter 1979, especially pp. 143–146. Walter’s colleagues, Bruno Kress and Hartmut Mittelstädt, also submitted papers on the relationship between language in the same edition of Nordeuropastudien, but both articles make it clear that the authors had little substantial to offer.

167 This pressure was of course variable over time, and, like many academic disciplines in the GDR, literary studies saw a modernization and periodical dogmatization and liberalization. For a largely comprehensive study see Saadhoff, Jens: Germanistik in der DDR. Literaturwissenschaft zwischen “gesellschaftlichem Auftrag” und diziplinärer Eigenlogik (=Studien zur Wissenschafts- und Universitätsgeschichte, 13) Heidelberg 2007.
scholar of Henrik Ibsen and could, with a historically concrete reading of Ibsen as a proto-socialist author and dramatist, challenge Western readings.¹⁶⁸

Realism and challenges to bourgeois society became a staple topic in the literary research at the Nordic Institute, entirely in keeping with Kress’ 1958 mission statement. In a number of ways the literature department was in the most exposed position within the Nordic Institute. Where Linguistics could partly hide in a discipline somewhat removed from political utility, Literature had a clearly defined political task. Nor did its research preach to the choir, as Economics and International Relations did, whose output was primarily fed into the system of state and party agencies. The Literature department stood on the frontlines in a cultural struggle over the prerogative of interpretation with bourgeois literary scholarship, and this reflected in the general tone of discussions. Erika Kosmalla, for instance, roasted bourgeois society in her contribution on the motif of happiness, when she declared:

> The growth of the socialist society intensifies the spiritual crisis of the bourgeoisie. Since this society can no longer provide a positive ideal, resignation seems the only way out for humanist bourgeois intellectuals. Man’s pursuit of happiness has disappeared from their books. Instead, the alienation of the individual is explained as a general form existence, through which man, by his nature a social creature, becomes isolated beyond hope.¹⁶⁹

This critical stance pervades many publications in the Literature department, even though a gradual liberalization in the 1970s softened the frontlines. Thus, Gabriele Sokoll welcomed bourgeois authors’ turn to social


criticism and an interest in the “workers’ plight”, even if these did not profess a stalwart socialist stance.\textsuperscript{170}

The Literature department did not limit itself to literary criticism, though. A major strand of research in this department was cultural policy. If culture was a weapon in the international class struggle, it deserved to be studied, and the Literature department had a few scholars who specifically studied not literature alone but focussed on the conditions of existence of cultural processes, the cultural industry and the media. The necessity of studies into cultural policy and its importance for the GDR’s public diplomacy had first been noted in the 1965/66 research concept,\textsuperscript{171} but developing the necessary qualifications took time. Officially the job descriptions of all the researchers for specific national literatures included cultural policy as a research topic,\textsuperscript{172} but only the representative for Swedish literature, Artur Bethke, picked the topic up in earnest. Bethke was among the first graduates of the Nordic Institute and something of a shooting star, whose career constantly oscillated between political and academic functions.\textsuperscript{173} Though trained as a literary scholar,\textsuperscript{174} Bethke extended the work of the Literature department into Cultural Studies,\textsuperscript{175} but with a distinctly Marxist-Leninist twist. As such, it did not concede autonomy to cultural processes but perceived them as purposefully controlled vehicles in the creation of public consciousness. A certain temptation to associate this research strand with

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\textsuperscript{171} Concept Section Northern European Studies, no date (1965/66?), UAG NEW 5.
\textsuperscript{172} Draft “The further development of academic relations of EMAU with Northern Europe”, no date (February 1966), UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
\textsuperscript{174} His dissertation A was a classic study on socialist realism: Bethke, Artur: Die Gestaltung des Landproletariats, besonders der “Statare” in Romanen Ivar Lo-Johanssone, Greifswald 1967.
\end{flushleft}
contemporary cultural theory is understandable, but it would be misguided to do so. Bethke’s work was an application of the cultural-theoretical imperialism-research proposed by Institute for Social Sciences (Institut für Gesellschaftswissenschaften), the Central Committee’s lead institution for social sciences and humanities, and presupposed the embeddedness of societal developments in historical materialist laws of development, which cultural processes could accelerate or hamper, but not alter. Cultural policy-research was thus more strategic in nature than the work of the literature department, serving to inform policy-makers and practitioners in the field rather than to enter into disciplinary discussions with the North. Despite its importance for socialist praxis and an early high-point in the late 1970s, the department of Cultural Policy, which became institutionally independent in the late 1970s, remained comparatively small. By 1987, it counted only three researchers: Apart from Bethke, who was almost constantly employed in the higher spheres of science administration after 1978, assistants Christine Fritze and Fritz Grothe continued this work.

A further strand of work that dominated the work of the Literature and Culture and the Linguistics department was, as already proposed by Kress in 1958, the dissemination of progressive Nordic culture in Germany. To this end, the department took up steady work of translations and editions of Nordic literature. Bruno Kress became the main translator of Nobel-laureate Halldór Laxness in Germany, but also introduced other Icelandic authors, such as Halldór Stefánsson or Ólafur Jóhann Sigurðsson, to a

177 This specific function might be the reason why Bethke’s Dissertation B went unpublished and is currently only available as one specimen each in Greifswald and Lund. Fortunately, a compressed summary was published as Bethke, Artur: "Kultur-politische Probleme und Prozesse in den skandinavischen Ländern unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Schwedens", in: Nordeuropastudien, 12 (1979), pp. 5–39.
178 In 1979 the SNEW devoted a special issue of Nordeuropastudien to questions of cultural policy, see Bethke, Artur/ Bien, Horst/ Mysliwtschenko, A.G: Geistig-kulturelles Leben in den Ländern Nordeuropas, (=Nordeuropastudien Beiheft, 6), Greifswald 1979.
180 Grothe was not originally a Northern European scholar, but received his doctorate at the College of Education in Potsdam with Grothe, Fritz: Zur Dialektik von sozialistischer Parteieligkeit und ästhetischen Werturteilen, untersucht an Problemen der komischen Gestaltung in Erwin Strittmatters Roman “Ole Bienkopp”, Potsdam 1977. Grothe worked primarily on cultural policy in Denmark.
181 Telephone directory, no date (probably 1987), UAG NEW 39.
German audience. Artur Bethke found time in his busy schedule to edit the works of Pelle Molin, Selma Lagerlöf and August Strindberg, and Horst Bien accompanied the publishing of Knut Hamsun’s works, while Erika Kosmalla’s main topic was Martin Andersen Nexø and other Danish authors. It would be wrong to call the Nordic Institute’s role in the publishing of Nordic authors in the GDR central, but the majority of scholars in the Nordistik and Fennistik-departments did to a large extent contribute to the dissemination of Nordic literature.

Despite its combative stance in its ideological struggle with bourgeois Northern Europe, the Nordic Institute’s efforts to promote Nordic literature and culture, in a popular as much as in an academic setting, did find international appreciation, a process crowned by hosting the 13th Conference of the International Association for Scandinavian Studies (IASS) in August 1980. The IASS conferences had always been something of a political minefield, with the association’s leadership unwilling to take a position in the tug-of-war between East and West Germany. The GDR’s delegation could, for example, not participate in the 1968 conference in Paris, due to obstructions by the Allied Travel Office, but that same year the association faced another political conundrum. It had received two invitations to host the 1972 conference – one from Otto Oberholzer and one from Horst Bien. Horst Bien represented Greifswald, but Oberholzer had given his invitation while still assistant professor in Zürich and had
since taken up a full professorship in Kiel. Considering the more than academic competition between the two institutions, the IASS leadership hoped for a third invitation from somewhere else. But this did not materialize, and so the 1972 conference went to Kiel. This was not just a coin-toss, either, since having a conference in the GDR seemed to face general concerns, and it was only in the mid-1970s, with the GDR’s international recognition and the Helsinki process normalizing East-West-relations, that Horst Bien was elected president of the IASS in 1978 and Greifswald awarded the 1980 IASS-conference. The conference became the peak of the work of the Section Northern European Studies, which brought forth all pomp and circumstance to welcome the scores of international guests. The section had just finished its great project for the 1970s, a comprehensive lexicon of Nordic literature, which was handed out liberally, together with another specially made publication in which the SNEW praised its own tradition as a humanist cultural project ranging back to C.H. Becker and Otto Grothewohl. The event was planned and supervised with military precision, and the section sent daily information reports to Berlin, informing state and party about opinions, moods and statements of participants, including “unusual incidents”. The whole congress was a matter of national pride, and justified not only the presence of the minister for Higher Education but no less than four articles in Neues
Deutschland, the central committee’s mouthpiece. The 220 participants from 17 nations discussed problems of historiography of literature, where the differences between Marxist-Leninist literary theory and the more autonomous Western approaches led to some heated discussions, but Greifswald and the GDR seem, at least according to the reports emanating from the SNEW, to have left a good impression.

Thinking inside the Tank – International Relations

While the Nordistik in Greifswald had thus been welcomed in the international scholarly community, their colleagues in the department of International Relations (IR) were not so successful. In a sense, they could not be, since there was little in the way of a discipline to welcome them. The 1958 perspective plan had already hinted at the problems of finding a disciplinary base for what was obviously politological studies in contemporary Northern Europe, but for which Kress could only think of the general term “Nordic History”. We have already seen that inquiries into the Nordic media landscape ended up in the Literature and Culture department, which became an independent Culture department in the late 1970s. But apart from genuinely historical topics, the 1958 proposal also promised research into ideology and political theory in the North, studies of the role and strategy of the workers’ and communist parties as well as other societal, military and state organizations.

It is, therefore, little wonder that the first exponents of this research strand came from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. The first genuine “political scientist” in the Nordic Institute was historian Günther Politt, who acted as expert for the Swedish workers’ movement. Politt had written his Dissertation A on a topic of contemporary history, but his further studies concerned less

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190 Information reports in UAG NEW 77.
historical topics than the development of the Nordic, especially Swedish, workers’ movement and its parties.\textsuperscript{192} Like Politt, the early exponents of International Relations were career-changers with a party background, like Rudolf Agricola,\textsuperscript{193} a journalist by training, and agronomist Kurt Vieweg, who specialized in the ideological development of the Danish workers’ movement.\textsuperscript{194} Only after 1965, when Vieweg began recruiting young scholars, did IR become a visible and autonomous part of the Nordic Institute. With later access to the graduates of the SNEW, the IR department began to grow and in time became the largest department in the section.\textsuperscript{195}

The department covered a wide variety of topics: The established specializations of Günther Politt and Kurt Vieweg, together with the contract research on the social democratic parties in the North, conditioned a focus on Northern European domestic policy in the early years of the department, but soon grew to encompass more foreign policy-related topics.\textsuperscript{196} Gregor Putensen for example began his studies in the domestic development of Sweden,\textsuperscript{197} but soon extended his field of view to topics such


\textsuperscript{193} Agricola never wrote an article. The only piece of scholarly “work” he committed to paper in the Nordic Institute was a two-page sketch of party bulletins: Agricola, Rudolf: “Friedliche Koexistenz, Neutralität und die nordischen Länder”, in: Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der EMAU Greifswald, Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe, XIII (1964), pp. 1–2.


\textsuperscript{195} IR had 9 scholars, with the next largest department, Nordistik/Literature, only having 6, see Telephone directory SNEW, no date (early 1987?), UAG NEW 39.


as the role of neutrality in Swedish foreign policy, and especially disarmament and the peace movement in the 1980s. Wolfgang Köster, one of the later additions to the department, covered Norwegian foreign policy and trade relations, while Klaus Witte covered Denmark and Brigitte Stepanek tracked the integration of Northern Europe into the European Union. The majority of research, though, from youth culture to military industry, went into prognostic analyses of domestic political and social processes. In the 1970s, International Relations even received a sister-department, State and Law, which researched law and political philosophy. Headed by Edeltraut Felfe,
who specialized in Marxist criticism of Welfare State-theory, it primarily contained jurists Marko Leis and Reinhold Laue, who mostly worked on questions of international law.

The IR-department also had a special connection with the Historical Institute. While the posting of historians of Northern Europe there had remained a pet peeve of the SNEW’s leadership, the intrinsic link between IR’s politological research and contemporary history was transformed into a working cooperation over time. While pursuing their independent research interests, historians with a Northern European focus did publish in *Nordeuropastudien*, and the relationship with the Historical Institute even proved a boon for the SNEW. As a politological institution, IR only had a limited access to corresponding academic institutions abroad. The natural point of contact would be Political Science-institutes, but the department’s Marxist-Leninist foundation proved to be an isolating factor in international discussions. After inviting two Danish scholars in 1966, who were to present their research results about the ideological development of Social Democracy in Denmark, the colloquium seemingly became a heated disputation, in which fundamental ideological positions clashed. In general, the IR-department found it difficult to connect to scholarly discussions in Northern Europe. Its conferences, like the large “Northern Europe in the International Class Struggle” in 1978, were well-visited by international guests, but all of them came from Warsaw Pact-countries. The primary avenue of approach to Northern European scholarship was the connection with the Section of Historical Studies. After the international

206 Dissertation B: Felfe, Edeltraut: Das Dilemma der Theorie vom “Wohlfahrtsstaat”, dargestellt am Beispiel Schwedens. Ein Beitrag zur Kritik der Wohlfahrtsstaatstheorie, Greifswald 1974; and several publications on similar topics.
207 Leis specialized on the concept of nuclear-weapons free zones, while Laue worked on the legal base of international cooperation between Finland and the socialist bloc.
208 Particularly Manfred Menger, Irene Wilhelms, Fritz Petrick, Herbert Langer and Dörte Putensen.
209 Vieweg, Kurt: “Kolloquium zur Bedeutung des Revisionismus für die Ideenentwicklung der dänischen Sozialdemokratie”, in: Nordeuropa. Jahrbuch für Nordische Studien, 1 (1966), p. 235. The sources are limited when it comes to the actual content and tone of such discussions. But it is notable that genuinely successful meetings, which were repeated regularly, do not stress that discussions were open and frank exchanges of views and conducted in a collegial manner. Comments of this nature tend to be associated with short-lived events and may well serve to hide the confrontational character of discussions.
recognition of the GDR, Historical Studies managed to institute regular joint seminars with the Institute for Political History at Helsinki University. Beginning in 1974, these annual meetings were alternately held in the GDR and in Finland, and proved to be a long-running institution. Regular topics were the history of the Finnish workers’ movement, Finnish foreign policy and current social developments, and through the common denominator of contemporary history and Marxist theory, representatives of Section Northern European Studies also had their place in these meetings.211 The joint seminars were so successful that by 1983 they were renamed “Joint Seminars of Social Scientists GDR – Finland”, and extended to include many more participants from different institutions. From the GDR, representatives of the Institute for International Workers’ Movement in the Academy for Social Sciences at the Central Committee of the SED and the Institute for Marxism/Leninism at the Central Committee of the SED were present, as were historians from other East German universities. From Finland, the list of attendees now included the historical institutes of Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, Jyväskylä, Joensuu and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in Tampere.212 For the GDR this must be considered a significant success, since it brought official party research institutes into widespread contact with Finnish academia, even though this connection was primarily conditioned by the ambiguous delimitations of Contemporary History. The IR and Economics departments at the SNEW on their own never achieved such a connection, since they had no clear and compatible disciplinary connection with Northern European scholarship. Similarly, the revival of the Greifswald-Lund-University Meetings in 1979 was anchored entirely in the Section Historical Studies. Even though the alternating venue allowed scholars from SNEW access to the guests from Lund, the Northern Europe scholars were not officially involved.213 Historians from Sweden had already participated in the colloquia for the history of the Baltic Sea Region, which Greifswald had hosted since 1973,

213 Wilhelmus, Wolfgang: “Seminare von Historikern aus Greifswald und Lund”, in: Nordeuropastudien, 14 (1981), pp. 129f. The revival of these meetings was explicitly referred back to their tradition in the interwar-period.
and SNEW-scholars had participated in these, but contact with Swedish academia seems to have been particularly difficult.

Only in 1987 could the SNEW itself host a meeting with Swedish academics. The guests – most of them younger scholars, who did not officially represent their home institutions – were welcomed with all pump and circumstance, the presentations published in a special issue of *Nordeuropastudien*, and discussions greeted by the participants, who spoke out for a continuation of this format. Klaus Misgeld, who represented *Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek* (Stockholm), gave a positive and open-minded report about the colloquium, but noted the politically charged atmosphere that pervaded the meeting and “made it difficult for most participants from Sweden to negotiate their way through the combination of politics and scholarship/research that characterized the discussion.”

While at least Misgeld was a socialist and stressed the importance of joint discussion between Swedish and East German scholars – particularly in light of the political developments in Moscow – he also found the experience revealing:

> There were other aspects that illustrate in the way of thinking and expressing oneself – and the necessity to continue the discussions. For scholars from Sweden it is very natural to express individual views, hypotheses and positions, also in an academic context. For scholars from Greifswald it seems equally natural to express themselves in more collective terms, to point out that – in an often used phrase – “here” (bei uns) the view has changed, that “we” have come to the conclusion, etc. Maybe it is only about the manner of speech, but I nevertheless got the impression that “our” subjectivism and individualism is clearly different from a more collectively oriented way of researching and presenting research results.

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214 Putensen, Dörte: “II. Kolloquium zur Geschichte des Ostseeraums”, in: Nord-europastudien, 8 (1975), pp. 171–175. As a sidenote, while the conference could welcome guests from Poland, the USSR, Finland, Sweden and Norway, the Soviet speakers seem to have all had their presentations read in absentia.


At the same time this discussion also confronted an ideological worldview with a research tradition with a more fragmentary and simultaneously problem-oriented character. The question is how far one is willing to go in questioning one’s own basics and problematize one’s own research environment. At times it also seems to be a question about the significance of empiricism. I a Swedish research context one is more inclined to let the empirical material stand in the foreground, at the expense of a worldview that entails that the borders between ideology and scholarship can easily become fluent. Here it is important for future considerations that methodological questions are given centre stage, which was not the case this time.217

Misgeld did generally view the meeting as a positive sign, but his report also made clear that future discussions would depend on the willingness of the East German scholars to open up to other viewpoints. The colloquia were not continued, even though SNEW published an additional report about the meeting in 1989, again stressing that “different positions, which existed in the discussion, were presented collegially, were an expression of openness and honesty in the academic debate and contributed in their own way to the success of the colloquium,”218 and thereby expressing their interest in continued contact. The reasons for this cancellation are unclear: On one hand, it is possible that Misgeld’s report misrepresented the general view of the delegation, and that other scholars found the differences between their own


and the Eastern German approach to scholarship too great to bridge. It is also possible that the question of where the meetings would be held proved difficult. Misgeld had hinted in his report that the East Germans had proposed holding the colloquia in Greifswald, while the Swedes preferred the venue to alternate between Sweden and the GDR, but the latter option could have presented problems for the SNEW. Only Reisekader were permitted to travel outside the Communist bloc, and even highly placed personnel would sometimes get their privileges revoked.

The difficulties that International Relations experienced when trying to connect to Northern European academia stemmed not least from the particular character of the research in that department. Technically, all research in the Nordic Institute was to focus on politically relevant and useful topics butm compared to their colleagues in the Literature and Culture-department, the IR-researchers’ work was much more immediately exploitable. As such, it was to a larger degree synched up with the developing interests of the GDR’s foreign policy-establishment and subject to more immediate considerations of political relevance. This tended to reflect in the articles by IR-scholars, in that they were often engaged in discussions not so much with fellow scholars but with the politically interested public in the GDR and Northern Europe. Many of the IR department’s articles were also published in the official foreign policy-related journals, such as Deutsche Außenpolitik and IPW-Berichte, which gave them a wide range of recipients and thus possible access to decision making-processes.

On the flipside, this close connection with current affairs also meant that the interpretative leeway of the IR-department was limited, in that the epistemological underpinning of their analyses was not a disciplinary theoretical base derived from Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy but the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy itself. This put the IR-department, and to a certain extent Economics, into a precarious position when conducting their research. A re-interpretation of existing theory was at least difficult, if not

219 As an example, of the 15 footnotes in Putensen, Gregor: “Das Jahr 1983 – Wegscheide für Gedeih oder Verderb der Abrüstung?”, in: Nordeuropastudien, 16 (1983), pp. 5–14, all but 3 are devoted to officious East German statements. The others are from a speech by Olof Palme, the action-paper of the Palme-commission and a nota by the Swedish government. In Putensen 1978, 8 of 15 references are to official declarations (Brezjnev), the classics (Lenin) or semi-official institutions (IPW, Weltföderation der Wissenschaftler). This phenomenon is not limited to Putensen. The majority of IR-articles use officious statements and evaluations of the world situation as their theoretical starting point.
impossible, since the authority to do so was reserved by the Central Committee and its affiliated research institutions. Thus, the reality in Northern Europe could be interpreted in light of Marxist-Leninist theory, but the theory itself was not subject to reinterpretation in light of reality. The articles by members of the IR department did point out the peculiarities of the small, developed nations in Northern Europe, but went to even greater lengths to make clear that they still adhered to the general tenets of international imperialism.

The validity of considering the political sciences in the GDR a discipline in its own right has been hotly debated, but the verdict has predominantly been a negative one. The various academic subjects that would constitute Political Sciences and Contemporary History in Western academia failed to develop a separate set of theories, methods and terminology independent from state-controlled ideology. The case of International Relations in Greifswald confirms this verdict insofar, as this particular discipline within the section could not even take its own – politically predetermined and exclusive – theoretical foundations very serious. While nominally conducting its studies on the grounds of Marxism-Leninism, a large part of its conclusions reflected the official dictum “The Party is always right!” more than they did actually theoretically grounded work. A brief look at discussions around the Military-Industrial Complex in Scandinavia can illustrate that point: In a 1978 article Gregor Putensen evoked the threat that powerful military and industrial circles in search of maximized profits

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220 Primarily the Academy for Social Sciences (Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED) and the Institute for Marxism-Leninism (Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED). See Mertens, Lothar: Rote Denkfabrik? Die Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED (=Studien zur DDR-Gesellschaft, X) Berlin 2004, chapters 1.3, 1.4 and 3.1 in particular. Mertens’ analysis is biased and tends towards strong judgements, but he does correctly point out the distrust of the Central Committee towards independent research.


222 Even though Scientific Communism experienced extensive discussions about the concept of “the political”, these discussions never reached the point where they would have led to an empirically oriented discipline. See Koop, Dieter: “Das Wissenschafts- und Politikverständnis im Wissenschaftlichen Kommunismus”, in: Greven, Michael Th. & Koop, Dieter (eds.): War der wissenschaftliche Sozialismus eine Wissenschaft? Vom Wissenschaftlichen Kommunismus zur Politikwissenschaft, Opladen, 1993, pp. 35–48, here: 43–47.
presented to world peace. Putensen dissipated possible illusions that this was a phenomenon restricted to the larger industrial nations with a reference to Swedish efforts to export SAAB’s “Viggen” fighter jet, claiming that the interests of the arms industry posed the one real threat to international security.223 He continued:

Something similar could principally also be said about the procurement policy of the arms lobby for the Danish and Norwegian military, which does not yet quite have “American” dimensions but is nevertheless influential. That Denmark and Norway have accepted an annual increase of their defence budget by three percent, as ordained by NATO, and the purchase of American F-16 fighters at a now repeatedly increased price, confirms this view. This leads ever more Danes and Norwegians to the question of the real reasons of the oft quoted “threat” to their countries’ national security. They inevitably come to see that the national security is not jeopardized by the USSR or the Warsaw pact respectively, but primarily by the insatiable greed for superprofitable deals of the international arms monopolies in concert with their “national” lobby.224

That Denmark and Norway regularly kept their defence spending to a minimum and had no domestic armaments industry of note,225 and that their continued purchase of military equipment would thus challenge the theory that the monetary interest of arms producers fuelled the arms race, was drowned in flowery rhetoric. The same problem appeared for Ursula Rehberg, when she had to concede that the arms industry capital (Rüstungskapital) had not managed to acquire a dominant position in Northern Europe, but had nevertheless to be taken serious as a cogwheel in the

mechanisms of the international arms industry. This example is one among many in which theory clashed with empiricism, but between a theory that was beyond the interpretative reach of the scholars and the political parameters of the Politburo, scholarly progress was all but impossible.

While the tight epistemological limits imposed on the IR department in the SNEW did not keep it from producing knowledge, they were nevertheless severe enough that it becomes advisable to think of the department as less of a discipline within an interdisciplinary institute and more of an application-oriented think-tank. Its main function was, after all, to provide the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with current analyses of the political situation and developments in Northern Europe and as such, it seems to have had some success.

**Between the Chairs – Economics**

A similar role was intended for the Economics-department. Like IR, Economics was one of the research fields that were already insisted upon in the 1958 perspective plan, but whose implementation presented great difficulties, and, like IR, it was not until the mid-1960s that Economics became an actual factor in the Nordic Institute. The founder of the department, Willy Stern, had only hibernated in Greifswald and consequently focussed his work on uncontroversial historical topics, primarily German economic interests in Northern European resources before 1945. It was only in 1967, shortly before his return to Berlin, that Stern began writing about modern

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economic topics again.228 His main task in Greifswald was training a new generation of economists, which was especially important, since economists were a desired commodity in the GDR and Greifswald University had no economic institute of its own. Nevertheless, by the time of Stern’s exit from Greifswald, other economists stood ready to pick up the torch. Klaus Sokoll, Peter Philipp and later Wolfgang Fritsch and Franz Stepanek had all been trained in the section but, despite this initial surge, the department remained rather small, with only four researchers by 1987.229 Economics’ main focus was the analysis of structural developments in Scandinavian economies and their international trade relations. This was done on the one hand as a measure of documentation. The department, like IR, delivered at least part of their research to interested state and party organizations in the form of briefings and special analyses, but also made their research available through official strategy-journals, such as Deutsche Außenpolitik, Sozialistische Außenwirtschaftspolitik and Jahrbuch der internationalen Politik und Wirtschaft. In this vein, Economics tracked international trade relations,230 economic policy and structure231 and monitored the process of Scandinavian integration into international and regional markets.232

The analyses were naturally also a struggle with Western policies and ideology. Before 1973, articles on the trade relations between the GDR and Northern Europe would inevitably lament the discriminating measures that stemmed from the non-recognition of the East German state,233 while later

229 Telephone Directory SNEW, no date (first half 1987?), UAG NEW 39.
articles would tackle specifically reformist theories. The theory of the Nordic Welfare State in particular galled GDR-scholars, as it implied a third way between Socialism and Capitalism that would invalidate the historic role of the communist world movement. Edeltraut Felfe specialized in this field and left few opportunities unused to prove that the programme of Nordic welfare was incapable of meeting its promises of shielding the working population from the worst excesses of the capitalist system. She also made the Welfare State theory out to be one in a long string of reformist theories, dating as far back as Bismarck’s social legislature, designed to curtail the workers’ movement and ensure the political dominance of bourgeois interests.234 Other articles refuted the political importance of the transition from industrial to service economy, a particularly hot topic in the 1970s,235 and discussed the importance of the peasant class in the strategy of communism.236

While not as closely tied to current affairs as the IR department, Economics still exhibited similar characteristics in their research focus. Discussions about economic developments were always also discussions about political and social developments, and as such coloured by the department’s role in political consulting and public diplomacy.

The Social Sciences in the GDR – Xenonomy?

In engaging with the character of research in the Nordic Institute and the Section Northern European Studies, one inevitably pokes a horns’ nest of unresolved questions. The general verdict on the conditions for scientific work in the GDR is unambiguous. The tight control over topics and publica-

with currency exchange, the GDR was reduced to a barter-trade with Western nations, a state of affairs that the articles in the SNEW’s journal often decried.


tions, the absence of a pluralism of theories and methods, the exclusion of politically unreliable personnel and restricted access to the international research community left East German science and scholarship behind in international comparison and major parts of its output without relevance.\textsuperscript{237}

On the other hand, once specific conditions are considered, opinions begin to differ widely. Where some scholars extend the general verdict to disavow all research undertaken in the GDR, others are open to explore the wriggle-room left by the Marxist-Leninist paradigm, and what researchers did in it.\textsuperscript{238}

For the present case, this still open question has relevance insofar as it determines how much weight can be attributed to the research conducted in the Nordic Institute. If social science researchers were, as for example Lothar Mertens holds, largely an appendix of officious state ideology with little individual agency,\textsuperscript{239} then their actual research output would be of little importance, its contents predetermined. If, on the other hand, the suspected wriggle-room existed, its extent and the possibilities within it would allow inferences on the political-academic relationship.

In the Nordic Institute, the findings are ambiguous: On the one hand, all its publications are significantly heteronomous. Not only are the texts interspersed with references to officious statements and the canonized classics quoted as accurate descriptions of reality, they also exhibit a strong tendency to comment on political and societal circumstances outside their academic scope. On the other hand, the extent and duration of this heteronomy differ notably between academic fields. On the one side of the continuum is linguistics, which enjoyed a somewhat privileged position as a niche subject, which not only allowed it a relatively free development of


\textsuperscript{239} See the rather opinionated Mertens 2004.
research, but where scholars could even emancipate themselves far enough from the prevalent orthodoxy to take tentative steps to make historical materialism fruitful for their own research. This niche existence was grounded in the fact that linguistics was indispensable for language instruction and valuable as a figurehead in contacts with the West, while neither ideology nor foreign policy put great demands on the discipline. On the other end of the continuum was International Relations, whose theoretical base was inextricably linked to the tenets of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and whose focus on current affairs additionally made it subject to considerations of political utility. In their case the heteronomy was so marked that one is tempted to call it xenonomy.

This continuum in mind, between Linguistics on the one hand and International Relations on the other, the importance of disciplinary momentum presents itself. Explaining the wide divergence in relative autonomy between the different academic fields solely by reference to their varying importance for ideology and foreign policy, as it might offer itself at first glance, would fall short. The Literature department played an important role in the public diplomacy function of the Nordic Institute, and literary scholarship was closely monitored by the guardians of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. But Literature still managed to refract a lot of ideological pressure through its own disciplinary lens and “ritually employed Socialist semantics”, and even achieved a limited heterodoxy in its ranks and international recognition for its work.240 The Economics-department, institutionally in the same role as IR of being bound to its function in political consulting, still managed to secure its own language and methodology, even if its research focus was almost entirely determined by extra-academic factors. International Relations, on the other hand, was joined at the hip to the politburo and its guidelines for their interpretation of Nordic realities.

Considering that previous research on the political influence on research has been strongly focussed on individual disciplines, the case of the Section Northern European Studies, with its interdisciplinary structure, suggests that the reach of political penetration was actually dependent on the discipline in question. The strength of integration into disciplinary communication networks and the existence of established disciplinary standards can help explain the different degrees to which disciplines were

240 Saadhoff 2007, especially chapters II and III.
able to refract political pressure on their research. The existence of independent journals, an established institutional tradition as well as disciplinary theories, methods, terminology and standards of scholarship have a strong potential to explain the varying degrees of politicization.

VI.4 A Farewell to Pens (1975–1990)

While the Section Northern European Studies, in particular the Nordistik and Fennistik departments, managed to re-establish its international reputation beginning in the late 1970s, things were far from idyllic in Greifswald. The international developments and the normalization of the GDR’s international relations contributed to the development of the section in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, the relative economic decline of the Eastern Bloc, in which Eastern Germany formed no exception,\textsuperscript{241} began to make itself felt.

Micro-Mismanagement

Although the reign of Erich Honecker began with great expectations in 1971, it soon became clear that the process of international rapprochement was accompanied by a continuation, and in some cases extension, of domestic nannying. This tendency to micro-manage and control every aspect of society led to a number of shortcomings on the ground level, often banal, sometimes absurd.

For the SNEW, the biggest problem became and remained the close cooperation with their partners in the socialist praxis. Research was tightly supervised and its output generally greeted by the customers. A certain distrust vis-à-vis the seeming harmony is in order, though, as it is not entirely clear in which way the papers and reports from the Northern European scholars were actually used in practice. It is at least possible that all sides involved only acted out a harmonious cooperation to appease their higher-ups, while in actuality the scientific findings may have been ignored by the practitioners. This possibility is hinted at by the comments of Günther Barthel, Professor for African and South West Asian Economics at Leipzig and Head of the Scientific Advisory Board for Asian, African and

\textsuperscript{241} Schroeder 2013, pp. 315–320.
Latin American Studies. In his comments on the conception for a further development of Northern European Studies, he remarked that, while academic findings entered into the praxis, it was nonsense to have international relations studied in Greifswald. The Institute for International Politics and Economics (Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft, IPW) – probably because it was closer to the centre of power – was more suited for such tasks.242 Barthel’s comments are noteworthy, in that they give one of few critical viewpoints on the work of Area Studies in the GDR. Whether this particular remark was aimed at denouncing a less than ideal cooperation between Greifswald and Berlin is unclear, but possible.

More problematic was the production of cadres for the praxis, a process that suffered from setbacks ever since it started in the 1950s. The problem was twofold: On the one hand, the training of future leaders in the socialist state was often not up to par with what the state agencies demanded. This problem was alleviated after the Third Academic Reform, when the customers sat at the same table as the producers. The other problem was the precise delivery in terms of numbers and timing. The obvious lead time in training Northern European experts necessitated a prognostic capacity on the side of the customers, which was difficult to realize. Not only that, the imponderabilities of the educational process meant that output often did not correspond to input, in that, as a report by the SNEW put it, “professional qualities and personality did not always correspond with the social background”.243 The greater problem, though, was the absence of reliable requirement figures. This was not only because of the difficulties of planning far enough ahead, but more so because a number of state agencies did not bother to do so. The most grotesque example of this behaviour is given by the State Secretariat for Physical Culture and Sports (Staatssekretariat für Körperkultur und Sport). When asked for their demand of interpreters for Third World languages in 1977, they reported they had none. The next day they corrected that number to a whopping 130 interpreters, only to correct that number down to 4 upon inquiry.244 While this

242 Barthel to Böhme (MHF), 07/11/1977, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1714.
243 “Fachliche Qualitäten und Persönlichkeitsbild stimmen nicht immer mit sozialer Herkunft überein” – Assessment of the political-ideological and professional-scientific level of the junior researchers according to preset questions, 01/10/1975, UAG NEW 58.
244 On the Relativity of Requirement Requests, no date, Attachment to: Report on the state of the training of interpreters for the necessary international languages and the most important local languages; Concepts for this field of training until 1985, 29/09/1978, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1156.
example likely does not represent the average case, such a nonchalant attitude towards the providers of essential services pervaded all state agencies.

Another persistent problem was the constant demand for interpreters nearly everywhere, while only few of the agencies that regularly required their services were willing to put interpreters on retainer. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs was a regular offender in this regard, with its tendency to delegate its functionaries to special language courses in the Area Studies sections, which often took up considerable work time, only to then declare that they had no need for interpreters. Compilations of assignments as interpreters, which members of the section had taken up, show the picture: During the academic year 1971/72 the students alone spent a combined 259 days on assignments, most of them during the Baltic Week. The strain on the researchers differed, between three days and more than a month per person. For 1977/78, in a more relaxed international atmosphere, these assignments were even more extensive, with the list of customers ranging from Intertext and the Central Committee down to smaller institutions such as local handball-club HC Empor Rostock. The fact that the majority of requests for interpreters came from large central institutions had to do with the problems of securing paid positions for interpreters. Many organizations eschewed the expense and red tape connected with holding specialized interpreters on retainer, when it was so much easier to get short-term hands when demand peaked. Since the Central Committee had its own interpreter service, Intertext, this would not have been a problem, as personnel could be hired there. But the departmental budgeting system discouraged the use of Intertext, since their services were more expensive than getting students from the respective Area Studies sections. In the universities themselves, the department and section heads were often not averse to providing these services, despite their potentially negative impact on the educational process. It meant garnering favours with

245 The demands are not documented in detail, but in 1983 Radio Berlin International delegated one of their editors to Greifswald to learn Swedish, which took up half of the lecturer’s teaching hours, see Minutes about Briefing, 14/12/1983, UAG NEW 55.
246 Burkhardt (Sektor Philosophie/Geschichte, MHF) to Prof. Schirmer (MHF), 30/10/1975, BA DR3 2. Schicht 68.
247 Public Relations/Foreign Information of SNEW in the Time from 1st of January 1971 to June 1972 (Statistical Analysis), 05/05/1972, UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
248 Compilation of Interpreter Services in the Academic Year 1977/78, no date (1978), UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
superordinate institutions and, therefore, offered the chance of meeting and courting high state and party officials, a development that was widely acknowledged as counter-productive but difficult to solve. The problem was most pronounced in the case of sudden requirement peaks, such as Angola’s independence in 1975 and subsequent involvement with the Socialist bloc, which caused demand for Portuguese to skyrocket. This often created a vicious cycle, where high demand for interpreters would mean that whole Area Studies sections were on permanent assignment and consequently the training of necessary area specialists ground to a halt. But even without such peaks, the services of interpreters were mismanaged. The worst offender was, ironically, the Central Committee itself, where Werner Knöller, head of Department IV and responsible for attending to the party’s international visitors, flat out refused to stop his practice of hiring the cheaper students instead of making use of the Central Committee’s own Intertext. That the expenses for the Intertext-personnel would have flowed back into the coffers of the Central Committee may have entered his mind at some point, but with interpreters being a large portion of his budget, the present bureaucratic system – which functioned not entirely unlike the well-known New Public Management – discouraged taking this into account. In situations where expert personnel was especially urgently needed, the state agencies sometimes even enticed academic personnel to work in their own ranks, a feat of negotiation that was easy enough with the higher pay and privileges in state services. These were nearly always advertised as stop-gap measures, but, as a report by Herbert Joachimi put it elegantly: “An orderly return from the praxis has not yet succeeded”, and these postings more often than not turned out to be permanent.

250 BA DR3 2. Schicht 982.
251 BA DR3 2. Schicht 1156, 1158 and 1165.
253 “Bisher ist eine plamäßige Rückkehr aus der Praxis noch nicht gelungen.” – Assessment of the political-ideological and professional-scientific level of the junior researchers according to preset questions, 01/10/1975, UAG NEW 58. An obvious example would be assistant Peter Krüger, who was delegated to the East German trade delegation in 1959 to get a sense of the Finnish country and people. Four years later he received a last letter from Bruno Kress, ultimately ordering him to return to his post in Greifswald. After this,
Such instances of departmental pig-headedness were legion. An especially scathing illustration of these mechanisms is the 1977 “Concept for the Further Development of Marxist-Leninist Northern European Studies in the Realm of the Ministry for Higher Education until 1990”, one of the more ambitious perspective plans, that reflected the ideas that the Ministry had after the reinvigoration of the ZENTRAAL in early 1977. Most interesting are the comments that the involved agencies and praxis partners gave upon the first draft: The Ministry for Foreign Affairs demanded a number of additional research projects and an expedited execution of the plan; the IPW wished for a stronger concentration on economic and political topics and the IIB insisted on an extended contribution to their field of work, Imperialism-studies. Two responses stuck out: The first came from the Vice Chancellor of Greifswald University and the Nordic Institute had to give him up as lost. See Kress to Krüger, 10/12/1962, UAG NEW 108.

254 The full conception can be found in BA DR3 2. Schicht 2.
255 (Manuscript for a Speech) Re: Reconstitution of the Academic Council for Asian-, African- and Latin American Studies at the MHF on 14th of April 1977, no date, BA DR3 2. Schicht 45. The speech in itself is interesting for its choice of terminology: “The Imperialism and all forces allied with it redouble their ideological attacks. Never before has the ideological struggle flamed up as intense, as extensive and as deep as in our days. We know that the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin are on the rise; we have forced the enemy on this field in our struggle for peace and rapprochement and we will beat him, for we have the stronger arguments. Science, education and culture are mighty weapons in the ideological battle of our days. We must not relent in sharpening these weapons again and again and – even more importantly – to wield them effectively. / A bit over three years have passed since the Academic Council for Asian-, African- and Latin American Studies was founded. A sizable force of professors, assistant professors, researchers and assistants has been placed under its scientific aegis, which were to be led into the mental, ideological, theoretical and practical fight.” (Der Imperialismus und alle mit ihm verbündeten Kräfte verstärken ihre ideologischen Attacken. Noch niemals zuvor entbrannte der ideologische Kampf so intensiv, so umgreifend und so tiefgehend wie in unseren Tagen. Wir wissen, dass die Lehren von Marx, Engels und Lenin im Vormarsch sind, wir haben den Gegner im Kampf um Frieden und Entspannung auf dieses Feld der Auseinandersetzung gezwungen, und wir werden ihn schlagen, denn wir verfügen über die stärkeren Argumente. (Die) Wissenschaft, Bildung und Kultur sind mächtige Waffen in der ideologischen Schlacht unserer Tage. Wir dürfen nicht nachlassen, diese Waffen immer wieder zu schärfen und – was noch wichtiger ist – sie wirkungsvoll einzusetzen. / Etwas mehr als drei Jahre sind vergangen, seit der Wissenschaftliche Beirat für Asien-, Afrika- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften gegründet wurde. Seiner wissenschaftlichen Obhut ist eine ansehnliche Streitmacht von Professoren, Dozenten, wissenschaftlichen Mit-arbeitern, Aspiranten und Studenten anvertraut, die es in diesen Jahren in den geistigen, ideologischen, theoretischen und praktischen Kampf zu führen galt.)

256 All comments can be found in BA DR3 2. Schicht 1714, except for the MfAA-statement, which is in BA DR3 2. Schicht 2.
reminded the MHF that the intended personnel expansion was beyond the means of the university and that central agencies would have to step in and provide support. The other came from Dieter Pijur, Directorate Human Resources (Hauptabteilung Kader) in the MHF, and cautiously pointed out the costs. Was it true, he asked, that the concept entailed the expansion of the SNEW from 25 to 61 researchers? Was it good and just that the numerical relationship between professors and assistant professor would go up to almost 1:1? Was the comrade minister aware that to achieve the necessary coverage of all the intended research fields, the number of full professors would have to double and that of the assistant professors to rise eight-fold? Including the replacement for retiring scholars (Horst Bien 1986, Herbert Joachimi 1987, Ernst Walter 1990) the SNEW would have to acquire or train 9 full professors and 14 assistant professors. How was that to be achieved? It was representative of such projects that these questions were ignored and the concept confirmed after minor changes. The first problems with embarking on such an expansion without any notion of where the resources were to come from, soon became obvious. A first conference of the Section Council with the Vice Chancellor unearthed a number of issues: The new goals demanded more travels, but the budget was already depleted. The regularly requested cooperation with Soviet scientists was blocked by the bureaucratic behaviour of central state agencies. The same amount of red tape and lack of finances blocked all endeavours to fulfil the recruitment goals. A lack of available living space kept the section from employing native speakers as language teachers. Everybody involved continued as if these hurdles, most notably the lack of resources, were not obvious. The ministry continued requesting updates, always wondering about the gap between actual and target numbers. This

257 Imig (Rector EMAU) to Böhme (MHF), 28/10/1977, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1714.
258 Pijur (HA Kader, MHF) to Böhme (MHF), 21/10/1977, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1714.
259 The MHF seemed to have a knack for these kinds of miscalculations. The interim report on the initiative to expand the training for interpreters for the most important Third World languages e.g. stated nonchalantly – in an appendix, no less – that the cost of the operation would be roughly five times the overall budget of the whole department. This did not stop the ministry from going on with it, though. See Attachments to: Report on the state of the training of interpreters for the necessary international languages and the most important local languages; Concepts for this field of training until 1985, 29/09/1978, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1156.
260 Minutes of conference between Prof. Imig, Rector of EMAU, and Section Northern European Studies, 14/06/1978, UAG Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
must have been particularly galling in light of the insistence of superior agencies to continue with these plans.

What went for the personnel expansion went doubly for specialized materials. During the mid-1980s the qualifications of staff to employ the new computer technology, especially in the Information Centre, had been insisted on, with regular inquiries by higher offices about progress in this area. By 1987 Kurt Schmitt reported that all but ten employees had received the necessary training and a concept for the use of a computer had been drawn up and confirmed by the Vice Chancellor. The only thing missing was the actual computer, which was not delivered, despite repeated promises. In actuality, not even the copy machine was functional, and necessary copies had to be made in other sections.  

In light of the quality of copies from the mid-1980s onward, all of them approaching unreadability, this was a serious problem which saw little alleviation until the end of the GDR.

Things Fall Apart, the Central Committee Cannot Hold

Occurrences of this kind were common and likely contributed to a feeling of frustration at the ground level. The bureaucratic machinery, characteristic especially of the Honecker years, which produced a sense of heightened activity without anything moving, also might have contributed to doubts about the effectiveness of the GDR’s state and social apparatus. From the mid-1970s onwards, the SNEW’s schedule was chock-full with competitive exhibitions, rewards and ever-repeating revisions of curricula and perspective plans, the futility of which can hardly have escaped the attention of the scholars involved. Furthermore, the obligatory service as reserve officers (for all fit male students and researchers) or in the civil defence (women and unfit men) proved an additional drain on the time and energy of members of the section, not to speak of the ever-present party meetings.

Honecker’s Unity of Social and Economic Policy had aimed at raising living standard in the GDR, so as to increase the loyalty of its citizens, but incidentally achieved the opposite, when necessary investments in industrial projects were shelved in favour of an extensive housing programme, which

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261 Information Report by SNEW, 12/05/1987, UAG NEW 13.
262 See e.g. Action Plan of the Director of Section Northern European Studies for the Academic Year 1976/77, UAG Proroktortat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 33.
263 Compilation of reservists at SNEW, 29/06/1983, UAG NEW 54.
never achieved its goals either. Based on foreign loans, the programme soon
failed to uphold the necessary consumer goods supply, and by the
beginning of the 1980s this even showed in the otherwise loyal SNEW.
Complaints about a lack of goods in the time before Christmas, Easter or
Jugendweihe\textsuperscript{264} slipped into the obligatory section reports. The same went
for foodstuff, such as meat or vegetables, which regularly suffered shortages,
even in agricultural Pomerania.\textsuperscript{265} Where the scholars themselves exhibited
their growing dissent in the form of demure questions, the students showed
a more pronounced openness to criticizing the state of affairs. In 1983,
students remarked during a meeting with the section staff that the Central
Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was much more
transparent and more critical in their language than they were used to at
home, a state of affairs that they wished to change. Counter-arguments by
the staff could not sway the students’ opinion.\textsuperscript{266} Consequently, the death of
Yuri Andropov was dutifully lamented by the students, but likewise the fact
that Konstantin Chernenko was yet another “very old comrade”\textsuperscript{267} The staff,
who were obliged to report this dissent upwards, blamed the influence of
Nordic media, whose difference from East German media outlets was
sometimes remarked upon by the students. To a certain degree, the student
opinions might also have been a way for the staff to voice their own
opinions. Complaints about the insufficient indoctrination of the students
had always been plentiful,\textsuperscript{268} but only during the 1980s was the actual
content of the dissenting voices reported to higher authorities verbatim.\textsuperscript{269}
By 1984 the discontent was hard to contain. A public information meeting
in preparation of the local council elections was commented thusly:

\begin{quote}
Trade Union assembly with comrade Höflich (City Councillor for Culture) on
April 3rd ‘84: Report on results, tasks and problems in the communal area of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{264} Jugendweihe (roughly translated as Youth Dedication) was adopted in 1954 in the
GDR as an obligatory pledge to socialism, displacing the Christian rite of confirmation.
\textsuperscript{265} Section Reports for Spring and Winter 1980, UAG NEW 13.
\textsuperscript{266} Information Report by SNEW, 11/07/1983, UAG NEW 13.
\textsuperscript{267} “sehr alter Genosse” – Information Report by SNEW, 14/02/1984, UAG NEW 13.
\textsuperscript{268} Nearly all documents the improvement of teaching, regardless if they were penned in
the 1950s or the 1980s, pointed out the need for an improved and intensified instruction
in Marxism-Leninism and ideological shortcomings in the students, often with specific
complaints. This phenomenon even continued throughout the “good years” of the GDR
and was not only a complaint of the institute/section leadership. The customers regularly
asked for a stronger ideological training as well.
Greifswald town. In the final discussion comrade Höflich answered questions that concerned some colleagues, e.g. problems in the vegetable supply, traffic problems, the problems of the parish hall\textsuperscript{270}, schedule of the cinemas, repair and value retention of buildings etc. In the opinion of the majority of the staff a more problematizing account would have been more effective than the almost exclusive listing of successes.\textsuperscript{271}

This report is notable not only because of the extensive criticism of the ever-present decay in buildings and infrastructure and the shortage in essential supplies,\textsuperscript{272} but more so because it marks a shift in the attitude of the SNEW’s staff. The incessant insistence that everything was working fine began to gradually dissolve, and not only in regards to local concerns. In December that year the information report pointedly remarked: “Reports in Aktuelle Kamera [news programme on TV]: for some colleagues there seems to be a contradiction between reports about increases in production and productivity and the actual supply.”\textsuperscript{273} While nobody went so far as to openly criticize the state leadership, uncomfortable questions from now on pervaded the reports. After a seminar with students from Bochum, origin-

\textsuperscript{270} The Parish Hall (\textit{Kreiskulturhaus}) had been an integral part of the town’s cultural life, but was showing the same signs of neglect as many of the older buildings in Greifswald, severely limiting its operation. See Mathiesen 2000, p. 673. In 1990 it had to be closed entirely for safety reasons.


\textsuperscript{272} “The problems did not only concern the condition of downtown Greifswald, which slowly decayed while new apartment blocks were built outside the town. By 1982 the majority of cars operated by the university had to be mothballed due to fuel shortages, which limited the ability to e.g. pick up foreign guests at ports and airports, or show them around the country. Furthermore, the heating in the university’s buildings was limited to a bare minimum, keeping many rooms out of commission during the winter months, as temperatures could not be raised above 10°C. See On the energy situation at EMAU Greifswald and measures to secure requirements that arise from the 3rd Session of the Central Committee of SED, 12/01/1982, LAG BL IV/E/9.02 678.

ally intended to influence the young West Germans favourably for socialism, the section reported a number of problems that had arisen with the students, without any attempt to distance themselves from the questions:

In evaluation of the Immaterial Export courses, especially the one for students from Bochum, the following problems appeared with our 1st-year students:

- Too little knowledge about the Hitler-Stalin-Pact
- Insufficient knowledge about the Potsdam-Agreement (e.g. question of military draft in Berlin)
- Ignorance of the speech of Khrushchev on the 20th Congress of the CPSU
- Differences in the electoral systems
- Personal responsibility of FRG-students for their own studies (time management, freedom, possibility to study for “older” students)
- Possibility to travel: received invitation for return visit in the context of exchange relations.

When perestroika rolled around, the staff of SNEW was consequently in favour of it. Kurt Hager’s “Wallpaper” interview in Der Spiegel of April 9th 1987, declaring that the GDR did not intend to imitate the reform process in Moscow, received criticism, even if this was retracted in the weeks following, when it became clear that Hager spoke with the voice of the Politburo.

Nina Andreyeva’s article in Sovetskaya Rossiya, decrying Gorbachev’s reforms and promoting traditional Soviet principles, was equally rejected a year later, this time without backpedalling. The SNEW

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275 Information Reports by SNEW, April-May 1987, UAG NEW 13.

276 “Andreyeva’s writings cannot represent our outlook on the current world problems – would not be in the interest of progress in the international relations.” (Das von Andrejewa Geschriebene kann nicht unsere Auffassung zu den heutigen Weltproblemen...
was no hotbed of dissidence, as is evidenced by the fact that a few members started to become nervous, when Gorbachev’s speech to the UN failed to contain some familiar concepts and terms, such as “Socialism” and “class struggle”, but his general intention was still welcomed and so—ostensibly—was perestroika.277

Chances Squandered

With glasnost taking hold in communication on all levels, uncomfortable questions also awaited the Northern European scholars. By the mid-1980s, the state apparatus had caught up to the fact that its area expert training was rather inefficient, all the more so, when the industrial export programme (Anlagenexport) lost impetus in the mid-1980s. The GDR had achieved its international recognition and without an aggressive foreign policy—further hampered by a lack of economic resources—the need for area experts and expertise was expected to wane. Some reorganization of the state-run interpreter service had furthermore stabilized the need for interpreters and translators, the lax management of which had previously led to an overvaluation of requirement numbers. Consequently, the Ministry for Higher Education began to investigate a downsizing of this sector. The first sign of a cautious re-evaluation came in the form of a request for a compilation of SNEW-graduates in 1984, as a precursor to reducing the numbers to a sustainable level.278 These attempts to rethink the necessity for Area Studies and their associated graduates came about slowly, since it took more than a year for the ministry to take any steps. Nevertheless, the orientation numbers given in late 1985 spoke clearly: In 1989 and 1991 the SNEW was to enrol a mere seven area students and zero interpreters.279 The actual numbers varied, when new information came out, 280 but Area Studies were in a crisis. Several scholars even demanded a complete rethinking of its
277 Information Report by SNEW, no date (probably late December 1988), UAG NEW 13.
278 Engel (Deputy MHF) to Kurt Schmidt (SNEW), 02/07/1984, UAG NEW 46.
279 K. Schmidt an Colditz (Head of Dept. Admission/Graduates, MHF), 15/01/1986, UAG NEW 46.
280 Later that year Intertext claimed that they needed Northern European interpreters in the range of 15 to 20 per bi-annual enrollment. See Some Comments on the Thought of Intertext about the Interpreter Training, 11/09/1986, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1165.
necessity. Diethelm Weidemann of the Section for Asian Studies in Berlin – one of the pacemaker-institutions within ZENTRAAL – wrote on this topic:

In our view and based on our experience it is absolutely necessary to rethink the place and role of Area Studies in the framework of societal needs; all this in light of a substantially changed environment for the development of scientific institutions in our country and the undoubtedly not growing significance of social sciences:

- The structural and developmental principle of Area Studies is coming ever more clearly up to the borders of what is possible within the universities, both in terms of resources and cadres.

- 15 years after the international recognition of the GDR we have to seriously rethink what the societal demands upon Area Studies are today and for the period leading up to the year 2000. Only thus can we deduce the further development of Area Studies in the long run.

- In this process it needs to be expressed clearly what is actually necessary and possible within the framework of the GDR. The dimensions of the GDR exclude, we think, that Area Studies continue to be run encyclopaedically.

There is no way to avoid this question. It seems certain that a responsible orientation of Area Studies that corresponds with the requirements of the next decade then demands new, practically viable conceptions from the sections. But new conceptions only fulfil a societal need after such a reorientation.281

The actual discussion is not documented widely enough to allow for substantial conclusions, but it does not seem as if the valiant attempt by Berlin’s Asian Studies section to adhere to the spirit of glasnost and bring about a broad revaluation was successful. Discussions about mistakes, especially if they presupposed – as did the advance by Weidemann – that Socialism was not on the rise anymore and that resources were limited, were still taboo. The new concept for the development of Northern European Studies, drafted about a year after this writ, therefore reflected the existing structure.282 If there were any changes, then they were gradual. The new concept focussed heavily on the research topics under consideration, leaving structural reforms aside. A tentative conclusion is that the topics did change to a more thorough public diplomacy-stance. This concerned not only the departments Culture of Northern Europe, Nordistik and Fennistik, which had always had a primarily soft-power outlook in their research planning, but even the traditionally more hands-on departments Economics, State and Law in Northern Europe and International Relations. Instead of special problems for the immediate use of the customers in the state apparatus, the new research plan contained more overview research with a slight emphasis on the criticism of bourgeois theories.283 Again, these findings are tentative, considering that no changes in focus actually stand out, but they seem to strengthen the idea that a direct supply of expertise from academia to state agencies might not have been as successful a modus operandi as the actors themselves publically proclaimed.

This concept shows the inability of the thoroughly politically and bureaucratically integrated system of Area Studies in the GDR to adapt to a changing environment. Even though the need to lean on Northern Europe in order to

Erachtens aus, die Regionalwissenschaften wie bisher sozusagen enzyklopädisch zu entwickeln. – An der Antwort auf diese Fragen führt kein Weg vorbei. Es scheint sicher zu sein, dass eine verantwortungsbewusste, den Anforderungen des nächsten Jahrzehnts entsprechende, Ortsbestimmung der Regionalwissenschaften dann auch für alle Sektionen neue, in praxi realisierbare Konzeptionen erfordert. Aber nur nach einer solchen Ortsbestimmung erfüllen neue Konzeptionen auch ein gesellschaftliches Bedürfnis.” – Weidemann (Section Asian Studies, HUB) to Barthel (ZENTRAAL), 26/06/1987, BA DR3 2. Schicht 1704/2.

282 Concept for the further development of Marxist-Leninist Northern European Studies at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-University Greifswald until the year 2000 (Draft), 15/03/1988, UAG NEW 5.
283 Concept for the further development of Marxist-Leninist Northern European Studies at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-University Greifswald until the year 2000 (Draft), 15/03/1988, UAG NEW 5.
affect a change in the international balance of power via soft-power means had waned more than 15 years previously, neither the state apparatus nor the academics involved managed to affect substantial change. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs had long wished for more research on imperialist or even socialist countries, yet they never managed to establish any such structures. Nor were they able to reduce the investment in the decidedly neutrals-focussed research already under way, even at points in time where it had become obvious that these were no longer of an overbearing urgency. For this to happen, strong outside forces were necessary.

Die Wende

Such outside force came about in the autumn of 1989, which also marked the fall of the GDR-government in the wake of massive popular discontent. The discontent with hollow phrases, empty shelves and a decaying infrastructure had been brewing for years, but the small Pomeranian town had afforded little space outside of social control to foster stable groups of dissidents. The outbreak of organized dissent was heralded by a petition to the Politburo by shift A of the nuclear power plant in nearby Lubmin. The petition decried incompetent leadership, broken promises and an economic policy whose shortcomings were obvious to the most casual observer. The power plant was a melting pot for this kind of dissention: A prestigious construction site in one of the GDR’s most important energy policy projects with privileged workers and engineers, many of them Soviet-schooled and party members on the one side; a four-block power plant with low safety standards and the construction site for a fifth block with a stagnating and inefficient organization and little perceptible progress on the other. The incident was discussed in the SNEW, whose staff defended the initiative of

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284 The first such requirements were already expressed in 1969, see Report about Consultations with the Directors of the Area Studies Sections on 16th of April 1969 in the Ministry for Higher Education, 25/04/1969, BA DR3 2. Schicht 52.


286 Hazardous incidents were commonplace and there are reports that a partial meltdown occurred in October 1989, see “Zeitbombe Greifswald. Die jahrzehntelang verschwiegennen Störfälle im DDR-Kernkraftwerk”, in: Der Spiegel, 2/1990.

287 Mathiesen 2000, p. 675.
the workers and declared their agreement with the concerns, although they played it down as a local affair.\textsuperscript{288}

The rapidity of change came as a surprise. The forces of change were weak and disorganized in East Germany’s north-easternmost corner, so that organized protest only began in October 1989,\textsuperscript{289} but after this point events unfolded as quickly and chaotically as in other places. After the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9\textsuperscript{th}, the SED began to crumble and resign, and with it their state. While local citizen councils took over control and party officials watched events in confusion, the winds of change also blew through the Section Northern European Studies. Discussions about a democratic leadership, a return to the institute and faculty structure and an increased autonomy for the full professors went on in the university as a whole and the SNEW in particular. The document that retraces the results of this discussion matter-of-factly states what needed to be done, but otherwise gives an impression of confused obedience to the new political thinking. Little enthusiasm pervades the document and many measures are prefaced with phrases that indicate distance to them and make it seem as though outside forces demand these.\textsuperscript{290} On March 6\textsuperscript{th} 1990 the Section Northern European Studies, headed by Professor Edeltraut Felfe, held its plenary meeting; it emerged as the Northern Europe-Institute (\textit{Nordeuropa-Institut}) headed by Professor Gregor Putensen.\textsuperscript{291} Putensen had already become involved in the process of change in the so-called Mensa Talks (\textit{Mensagespräche}), a format of open debate in the university’s newly-built canteen. The first instance of these talks had been moderated by Putensen, who had exposed himself as a reform-socialist, rather than an avid revolutionary.\textsuperscript{292}

\textsuperscript{288} Information Report by SNEW, no date (probably late December 1988), UAG NEW 13.
\textsuperscript{289} Mathiesen 2000, pp. 677f.
\textsuperscript{290} Proposal based on our previous discussions concerning leadership structures in our section (Felfe), no date (probably December 1989/January 1990), UAG NEW 4.
\textsuperscript{291} Press Release, 02/04/1990, UAG NEW 4.
\textsuperscript{292} “Putensen”, in: Mellies & Möller 2009.
But the time for reforms was over. The GDR and its supporting social groups had squandered confidence in their ability to reform. Already in April 1990 the new institute received a serious letter from the Vice Chancellor. It contained a petition from January that year, which had reached the People’s Chamber’s (Volkskammer) Committee for the Investigation of Malpractice and Corruption and to which the institute had to respond. The statement by a former student accused the SNEW of being a hot-bed of hard-line Marxism. Incensed by bad treatment at the hands of the staff and disappointed by the culture and atmosphere that pervaded the section, the former student started a reckoning with history: All teaching on Northern Europe had been aimed at giving the impression that Northern Europe was in a permanent state of political, social, economic and spiritual crisis, since this was what Lenin had predicted and it could, therefore, not be otherwise. The communist parties of these countries were the mainstay of peace and understanding, and were only just on the brink of taking over, just in time to combat the anti-democratic tendencies which were used by the waning monopolists to secure their tenuous hold on power. That all these analyses were in no way reconcilable with perceptible reality in the territory begged the question just what kind of claim to academic rigour the Northern European scholars in Greifswald could have. Furthermore, the actual contact with foreigners was strictly regulated, so far so, that even extra-curricular contact with the language lecturers held the risk of inciting suspicion. This, the former student argued, was not only to keep the stu-

293 Putensen to Zobel (Rector UAG), 14/05/1990, UAG NEW 4.
dents safe from potentially negative influences, but also to keep the existence of certain courses, such as “Confidentiality and Secrecy Law” given by Artur Bethke secret from foreigners. Thus it could hardly be argued that the section had an international air about it, since unregulated contacts with foreigners always risked the wrath of the institute leadership or, at worst, the Stasi. Under these circumstances, the old personnel could not be expected to provide any chance for a fresh start.

The March 1990 report by the citizens’ board of enquiry proved a further blow to the Section Northern European Studies: In the university alone the local Stasi dependency operated a total of 120 informants, four of whom were staff in the SNEW. While this might not sound much, it needs to be put into perspective. In the Section for Marxism-Leninism there were five informants in a staff of 63, in Pedagogy it was one among 32, in Law it was two among 110. So, where other sections close to the heart of “real existing socialism” had percentages of 2–5 percent of informants, the Northern European scholars harboured a full 11 percent of Stasi warrantors. Other, less “important” sections generally had percentages far below these numbers. And, as the report itself pointed out, these numbers only reflected the staff in the employ of the local offices, not accounting for personnel in service with higher offices in Berlin, meaning those active in foreign espionage.

Abwicklung?

Being such a representative of the old order and perceived as having its intellectual project solidly grounded in a debased political ideology, the

294 Bethke is not named in the paper, but is easily identifiable. Bethke himself took the course he taught very seriously, being the only member of the section to leave “certificates to carry secret documents abroad” in the files. How ludicrous this policy was is evidenced by the list of the materials actually carried: 1.) a presentation Strindberg’s Conception of Dramas in ’Fadren’, 2.) materials of the Symposium, 3.) documents for the preparation of the XIII. IASS-Congress. See “Mitnahmbescheinigung” Artur Bethke, 12/10/1979, UAG Prorectorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften 34.


297 Untersuchungsausschuss der Stadt Greifswald 1990, pp. 7–10.
Northern Europe Institute could not expect quarter when the restructuring of the university began. The proposals for a restructuring consequently identified “particularly ideologically relevant” institutions, which had to be phased out. These were the Institute for Philosophy (formerly Section Marxism-Leninism), the Northern Europe-Institute, the Historical Institute and the Institute for Pedagogy/Institute for Psychology. If a wholesale phase-out was not possible, then the departments International Relations, Economics, History, State and Law and Culture and Literature had to be dismantled. While the other institutes would have to be cut down by one or two chairs, Northern European Studies was to be effectively hollowed out. Furthermore, Greifswald was to become a constituent of the Federal Republic of Germany, where educational policy was a state-level responsibility, and the newly founded state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern was poor in industry and had a small population, but had two full universities plus a number of institutions of higher education spread across the countryside. Consequently, the coming restructuring was not only governed by the need to eliminate politically unwanted institutions but also to cut down on personnel. Considering that the Northern Europe Institute had a poor staff-student ratio, it could not hope for much support from fellow institutes. Where for example the Institute for English Studies had 330 students and 20 staff, the Northern Europe Institute had 72 students and 36 staff. These paradisiac conditions could not be maintained, and sharp attacks by other institutes hit the Northern European scholars. Stalling tactics were still employed, and by the beginning of 1991, the institute had survived, if only tentatively. The option to phase-out entire institutions had been limited to December 31st 1990, so that at least the wholesale abolition was no longer on the table, but hard cuts still had to be contemplated.

The new structure that was offered by the Northern Europe Institute presented a cut by 20 percent, which in effect meant a reduction in size but a preservation of the interdisciplinary structure, while giving up the hope of, for

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298 Proposals for the Renewal, Restructuring, Reduction and Phase-Out – Philosophical Faculty (not yet discussed and confirmed by the Faculty Council), 04/12/1990, UAG NEW 4.
299 Overview Philosophical Faculty, Attachment to: Minutes of Faculty Council Session on 6th of December 1990, 12/12/1990, UAG NEW 4.
300 Circular Letter by Gregor Putensen to the members of the institute, no date (turn of the year 1990/91), UAG NEW 4.
example, turning Nordic History into a full professorship. This proposal was confirmed by the Faculty Council a few days later, but the decision did not stand. On the state-level a Structure Commission had been set up to oversee the restructuring process, comprised of 27 West German and 3 East German professors, and their advice overruled the decisions of the faculties. On April 11th 1991, a telex arrived in Greifswald, giving the council’s proposal for the new structure of the Philosophical Faculty in Greifswald. The Expert Group No. 4 had met with the Vice Chancellors of Rostock and Greifswald and drawn up a different plan which reflected the average structure of a West German philosophical faculty more than any local profile. The major difference between their proposal and that of the faculty was the absence of an Area Studies institute; in its place they had drawn up plans for a Scandinavian or Nordic Institute, with chairs for Nordic Philology, Literature, Finnish Studies, Old Norse and Baltic Philology. This was remarkable in two ways: It reduced one of Greifswald’s previous flag-ships to a structure that was largely identical to about twenty similar institutions in the Federal Republic, mainly for the sake of bringing it in line with West German patterns. Moreover, the process was not guided with the amount of expertise that may be expected. The decision to assign the chair for Baltic Philology to the Nordic Institute in particular created irritation. The suggestion was quietly withdrawn, when it was pointed out that, while Estonian was a Finno-Ugric language and Estonia part of the Baltic States, Baltic Philology handled a completely different language group. But, shortly thereafter the Ministry for Culture in Schwerin declared its intention to phase out the Chair in Finnish Philology and combine it with Nordic Philology. This was not only in violation of previous agreements but was also underinformed, in that Finnish was again a different language group from Scandinavian. These points – which are in no way singular – illustrate the chaotic and often haphazard way in which the changes of 1990/91 took place. With many of the local actors being politically discredited in the eyes of the decision-makers in Schwerin, their expertise was not employed when far-reaching decisions had to be made quickly. Within the institute the assumption was rampant that the restruc-

301 Proposal for Renewal and Restructuring of the Northern Europe-Institute, 04/01/1991, UAG NEW 4.
302 G. Putensen to P. Hirtz (Dean Phil. Faculty EMAU), 07/01/1991, UAG NEW 4.
turing was predominantly aimed at doing off with the politically charged subjects, a notion especially pronounced after the faculty’s decision had been unceremoniously overturned. The records in themselves, though, only document a restructuring process that was guided by the desire to institute a faculty-structure that was comparable with West German standards in as short a time as possible. This more or less naturally excluded the participation of the local actors, who could not be relied upon to support the process and were furthermore politically dubious. Moreover, the decision-makers themselves proved to be less than fully competent in the fields they were restructuring, orienting themselves mainly along the lines of Western German Nordic Studies, with little insight into the details of the research.

Last Stand

The staff of the Northern Europe-Institute was prepared for cutbacks, but generally optimistic about the survival of their institute, until the Structure Commission’s proposal made it clear that the reorganization would be decided by executive order. At this point, the scholars began a campaign to mobilize support for their cause. Domestically this was of little consequence. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, as head of the Association of German Scientists and a well-connected public figure, had pledged his support for the idea of Area Studies and their preservation, declaring that these were of the greatest importance to linguistics, political, cultural and economic studies, and that Germany had some catching up to do in this regard. But when pressed to speak up for the institute’s survival shortly thereafter, he excused himself because of his full schedule. This was as far as commitment from established political forces went. Alfred Gomolka, Prime Minister of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, declared he could not interfere in the work of the Structure Commission, the President of Germany and the Federal Ministry for Education and Science declared their incompetence in this matter but thanked the Northern Europe Institute for interest in the democratic process. Far more response came from foreign organizations:

305 Ernst-Ulrich von Weizsäcker to G. Putensen, 15/05/1991, UAG NEW 4.
308 Hans-Jörg Dellmann (Office of the President) to Bernd Frisch, 29/05/1991 and Schaumann (State Secretary, Ministry for Education and Science) to Gregor Putensen, 05/08/1991, both UAG NEW 4.
Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv (Library and Archive of the Worker’s Movement) in Copenhagen publically pointed out that Greifswald had always been an important link between Germany and the Nordic countries and translations into German had been the starting point for the international success of many Nordic authors.\(^{309}\) The Norwegian Women’s Association (Norsk Kvinneforbund) wrote a letter to their Foreign Ministry, stressing Greifswald’s importance as a discussion leader in Baltic and Nordic social and security questions.\(^{310}\) The History Department at Uppsala University wrote to the Swedish Embassy in Bonn and the Vice Chancellor in Greifswald to express their concern about the radical cuts. Surely, they agreed, the section had been politically compromised and a certain distance had been necessary, but knowledge about and openness to Swedish problems had always been taught there, much like the Swedish heritage in Pomerania had been curated. “Maybe some Nordic scholars have played, or been forced to play, a double-role as informers for the Stasi. We have, on the other hand, been able to witness that glasnost developed more quickly in Greifswald than in other comparable universities”.\(^{311}\) A greater cleansing in Greifswald would harm Swedish interests, they argued,\(^{312}\) and by the end of the year additional scholars from Uppsala had joined this opinion.\(^{313}\) The most surprising support for the Greifswald scholars came from members of the German Scandinavian Studies Association. On the 10\(^{th}\) Workshop of German-speaking Scandinavian Studies (Arbeitstagung der deutschsprachigen Skandinavistik), between September 22\(^{nd}\) and 27\(^{th}\) 1991, the plenum of more than 200 participants expressed their regret about the abolition of the Area Studies-approach, “especially since such a setup has been considered desirable in other Scandinavian Studies-institutes and has also been partially develop-

\(^{309}\) Gerd Callesen (Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv) to Zobel (Rector EMAU), 08/05/1991, UAG NEW 4.
\(^{310}\) Norsk Kvinneforbund to Norwegian Foreign Ministry, 07/05/1991, UAG NEW 4.
\(^{311}\) “Kanske att vissa nordister spelade eller tvingades spela en dubbelroll att tjäna också som informatörer åt STASI. Å andra sidan har vi kunnat konstatera att glasnost utvecklats snabbare vid Greifswald än vid andra jämförbara universitet [...]” – Historical Institute of Uppsala University to Torsten Örn (Swedish Embassy, Bonn) (with copy to Rector EMAU), 10/07/1991, UAG NEW 4.
\(^{312}\) Historical Institute of Uppsala University to Torsten Örn (Swedish Embassy, Bonn) (with copy to Rector EMAU), 10/07/1991, UAG NEW 4.
\(^{313}\) Institute for Nordic Language at Uppsala University to Swedish Embassy, Bonn, 12/11/1991, UAG NEW 4.
Considering that there were suspicions in Greifswald that their old rivals in Kiel were at least partially to blame for the vigour with which the SNEW was dismantled, this statement carried some weight.

Nevertheless, the support came too late. By September 27th Gregor Putensen had to relinquish the reins of the institute to a Restructuring Commission, which would oversee the transformation. The five names that the institute proposed for the board were conveyed to the Dean without comment in a last act of defiance.315

The Inevitable

Scholars in the SNEW had offered several suspicions about the “real” reasons behind the swift and – in some respects – democratically deficient dismantling of the Northern Europe-Institute: Competition from Kiel, a desire to evict politically unreliable personnel and envy from Rostock, where the Section for Latin American Studies had been abolished wholesale.316 All these factors may have contributed, but the primary reason for the demise of interdisciplinary Northern European Area Studies was probably more basic. Without an aggressive foreign policy at the hands of the Federal Republic, the raison d’être of the SNEW ceased to exist. For the decision-makers running the transformation of the East German university system, the necessity of Area Studies would not have been immediately obvious. Who would the customers of reports, translations and analyses be? How could an institute so thoroughly steeped in Marxist-Leninist political thinking be expected to turn out functionaries for a democratic and capitalist state’s foreign policy? And would the few specialists that might

314 “zumal an anderen skandinavistischen Instituten der Bundesrepublik eine entsprechende Fachkonzeption seit langem für erstrebenswert gehalten und teilweise auch entwickelt wird.” – B. Glienke to Academic Senate of EMAU (Copies to Rector EMAU, Minister for Culture in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Ambassadors of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden in Germany), 08/10/1991, UAG NEW 4.
actually be needed, justify the existence of a full-blown Area Studies institute? These questions would all have to be answered in the negative, although this was perhaps not obvious to everyone concerned. Northern European Area Studies in the way they were conducted in Greifswald were untenable without a deeply integrated foreign cultural policy and a Marxist-Leninist paradigm to afford its specific interdisciplinarity. In fact, as the ineffectiveness of the foreign protest against the dismantling of the SNEW – which was renamed Nordic Institute again – shows, not even opinion abroad could stop the Northern Europe Institute’s dismantling if the German state had no particular interest in the opinion of the foreign nation in question. Furthermore, even if there had been a special interest in foreign cultural policy towards Northern Europe, finding personnel to continue the work in Greifswald would have proved difficult. The incumbent staff could not be deemed politically reliable, and while it would have been possible to find representatives of political science, economy and law for Northern Europe elsewhere to pick up the mantle, it would have equated to a complete restart either way and would not have had any advantage over building up those structures elsewhere.

In a last act of irony, Expert Group 4 had proposed to augment the reformed Nordic Institute with an “Interdisciplinary Centre for Nordic Studies”.317 To preserve the existing interdisciplinary links, the centre was to give interested scholars the opportunity to gather and coordinate their individual research in Northern European matters. This proposal, seemingly inspired by the Centre for Nordic Studies in Kiel, did not come about. If it had, it would have brought the Nordic Institute full circle, returning it effectively to the structure with which it had been founded with 74 years before.

Vogt had vainly pointed out that for purely economic reasons their institute could not afford the luxury of good taste when dealing with potential fundraisers. The funds that had flowed from Krupp’s stock to Berlin had long been devalued by inflation. Wanted, needed, requested were new sources of funding. A new, particularly imprecise – even ‘romantic’ – phrasing of their purpose was welcome, since only this allowed for a consistent continuation of their own research interests. Compared to that it was absolutely secondary if the results were later called ‘Basic Principles for a Strengthening of Military Dog Husbandry’.

Tilman Spengler, Lenins Hirn

The thoughts that Tilman Spengler puts into the mind of neurologist Oskar Vogt resemble the experiences that the Nordic Institute made during its existence in many ways. Vogt, a brilliant if difficult neuroscientist, starts a career in his chosen field, only to find his incompatibility with his academic superiors blocking any advancement within the university walls. What follows is an existence within the framework of academic research but with limited connection to academic institutions. The permanent search for external funding, which leads him to be involved in the idiosyncrasies of the Krupp family and, in the above paragraph, the army’s department for dog

husbandry, is not unlike the experience of the Nordic Institute. Having been founded on the idea of interdisciplinary Area Studies and with the implicit idea of fostering international relations, the Nordic Institute found itself equally adrift for most of its existence. Being set up as a university institute within the Philosophical Faculty, the Nordic Institute was of academia. It was embedded into the structures of the university; its personnel was recruited from and beholden to the academic career structures and administratively it was governed by the university’s bureaucratic structures. Then again, the Nordic Institute was not from academia. With its unusual structure of being an interdisciplinary agglomerate institute and its *raison d’être* grounded in foreign policy concerns, it found itself repeatedly coming up against the constraints of its environment.

VII.1 A Look Back

Many of the peculiarities of the Nordic Institute stem from its background as an offshoot of C.H. Becker’s *Auslandsstudien* initiative which was passed by the Prussian parliament in 1916. Connecting to pre-war discussions about emulating a public diplomacy on the lines exhibited by France, and offsetting itself from recent experiences with a culturally under-trained diplomatic corps and a provincial political outlook in the general populace, the memorandum proposed the institution of a new kind of academic inquest. This new endeavour called for Area Studies institutes to be opened at different Prussian universities, each devoted to one region of the world and each staffed with representatives of a number of different disciplines. The rationale behind this step was, on the one hand, to support German *Weltpolitik* by providing the pedagogical basis to a broader political outlook of the educated classes, on the other, to initiate a general reform in academia towards a more synthesizing and sociological approach in research. This first stab at a broader reform programme succeeded in establishing the requested institutions, with Greifswald University assigned the region of Northern Europe and thus a Nordic Institute. But the original proposal had failed to establish a coherent programme for these Area Studies-institutes, instead relying on an organic development. This and the implied double-task, national-political education and scientific research, made the project subject to an extensive reinterpretation on the ground.
The Weimar Republic – Experimentation and Disappointment

When the Nordic Institute was founded in Greifswald in 1918, this situation was further compounded by two additional factors. Within the university the promise of a new, liberally funded institute led to an onrush of volunteers, forcing the Ministry of Education to push through its own statutes for the institute before all necessary discussions about its structure and task had been finished. This led to a hasty and sub-optimal setup of the institute, with the scholars concerned being left to figure out a number of crucial points by themselves, often in acidic conflict. Outside the university walls, World War One was ending with a peace that did not favour Germany, and in light of the changed political situation the task of educating students in understanding foreign cultures was pushed into the background. Instead, the Nordic Institute adopted public diplomacy as a role, a task that had not explicitly been part of Becker’s memorandum. Nevertheless, even though the provisional director Gustaf Dahlmann protested this step of aligning the Nordic Institute with the foreign policy of the Reich, the move was largely accepted around 1919/20, and the role of the institute as an instrument of soft power became a staple of its identity.

This new role as a research institute with a self-chosen mission in public diplomacy did not entail the necessary funding, though. Between the financial woes of the Prussian state in the immediate post-war years and hyper-inflation, the Nordic Institute found itself dysfunctional to a significant degree. This provoked a frantic search by scholars for additional funds. Paul Merker, who had taken over the directorate in 1921, struggled in vain to highlight the significance of the Nordic Institute in international contacts. Even though Northern Europe enjoyed some interest in the foreign policy apparatus, the Nordic Institute had tangible to offer. Ideas of how best to incorporate Area Studies in foreign policy were lacking, and Merker’s pleas for increased funding remained unheard. Gustav Braun, who had managed to separate an Institute for Finland Studies under his own supervision in 1921, was more successful. Since this institute, which had been granted to Braun to pacify him and had never received a regular budget, he turned to the merchant-class in nearby Stettin. In exchange for complementing his work with economic geography and a special emphasis on the Baltic Sea ports, he received liberal funds for his small institute. But even Braun was not entirely happy with the arrangement. While the funding was welcome, the restrictions that his financiers put up him kept him from acquiring further funds from other merchant-cities or the state apparatus.
Another virulent question that had been left unanswered in 1918 was that of the character of Area Studies. On the one hand, early conflicts in the institutes concerned the unwillingness of especially the representatives of law and economics to participate in the Nordic Institute’s work. Here an important flaw in the design of Area Studies became visible, in that scholars who planned to continue their career elsewhere found that investments in interdisciplinary Area Studies were not rewarded by a career system that ran along disciplinary lines. This conflict became particularly vicious between the institute’s assistant, Johannes Paul, and Leopold Magon, who inherited the directorate from Paul Merker when the latter left in frustration in 1927. Paul’s academic advancement had been hampered by his over-specialization on Sweden, and his attempts to separate his own Swedish Institute and thereby achieve a more independent and economically secure position were stopped dead by Magon. The conflict between Paul and Magon was motivated by Paul’s career considerations and fuelled by confessional differences, but it was grounded in disagreements about the relationship between the region and its constituent nations, as much as the character of interdisciplinarity in practice. These were further fundamental questions that the original proposal and founding documents had not clarified, and their eventual discharge led to a bitter rivalry between Magon and his assistant.

The Third Reich – Voluntary Dilettantism

In early 1933 NSDAP-affiliated forces began denouncing university personnel in the wake of the National Socialist takeover in Berlin. The National Socialists had few genuine political opponents at the university, but the campaign still served to intimidate competitors. A number of established professors fell prey to accusations and character assassinations, wherever students or junior personnel found grounds for denunciation. In the Nordic Institute these attacks claimed the career of Gustav Braun, who was retired under accusations of embezzlement and fraud, while Leopold Magon could only avert his demission by agreeing to a splitting-up of the Nordic Institute into separate country-specific institutes. This elevated the more NS-affiliated assistants, Paul and Grellmann, into directorial positions, both of whom now headed their own institutes after having contributed to their former masters’ fall.

The now five institutes (Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic institutes plus the existing Institute for Finland Studies), which were collec-
tively known as the Nordic Area Institutes, developed along different lines. The Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic Institutes, which remained in the hands of Leopold Magon, continued to focus their work on language and literature studies as well as on soft public diplomacy in the form of research-related contacts with foreign academics. Magon, whose main point of reference was the university and its social cosmos, was marginalized by the machinations of local NS functionaries, but by the late 1930s he and other, less politically involved professors managed to re-establish a certain authority within the university. This was to a point accepted by the regime, which was mainly interested in securing its power, and tolerated even unruly or potentially dissenting scholar in academia, as long as they refrained from openly interfering with the interest of the political field and exhibited a measure of good conduct.

Where Magon and other established professors strove to re-establish the authority of the academic system, Paul and Grellmann, whose position rested on their promotion by the National Socialists, went a different way. Paul in particular offered his services to the new regime, and began teaching and researching topics that exhibited his ideological affinity. The mechanisms of offering the services of the institutes to the political system had already been established in the Weimar years, but now they met with an increased interest and reached a new quality. Especially services that were directly useful for foreign policy were rewarded with additional funds and public support. Johannes Paul’s press-clipping service, which he had established in the mid-1930s, soon developed into a major operation, but after the outbreak of World War Two, when interest in this regular information about the Swedish press peaked, the production cost became too high for a local effort. A cooperation with the NOFG, a Reich-level think-tank, was consequently established to finance and organize the Swedish Protocolls. While difficulties existed from the beginning, the cooperation became untenable when the NOFG was subordinated to the RSHA in 1943 and demands upon the Swedish Protocolls became more stringent. The work of the Swedish Institute, which had so eagerly put itself at the disposal of the state apparatus, was disappointing for all sides, fulfilling neither academic nor political expectations. In consequence, political favour was largely withdrawn by 1944, while academic work was all but impossible under war-time conditions.

These circumstances did not only include widespread austerity and a cessation of regular university life, but also the gradual drain of Northern European experts. After 1937 the university saw the persistent departure of
trained Area experts into the state apparatus, with army and intelligence agencies being the foremost recruiters. With prospects in academia limited and multilingual academics in high demand, junior personnel regularly chose options outside the university. The selling point that had increased their standing after 1933, their accumulated cultural- and language skills, now deprived the Northern European scholars of their ability to work. Not only were they bereft of their recruitment pool, the employed personnel, including the professors and institute heads themselves, were called up for service and often had to serve abroad, thus undermining prospects to use political support to further individual projects.

The GDR – Scholarship for the Five Year-Plan

By 1945 the Nordic Area Institutes were all but defunct. The scholars had largely been dispersed by the end of the war, with only Leopold Magon and a handful of junior personnel remaining in place. Early attempts to effect a reopening failed in the light of general deprivation and lack of interest. It was not before 1954 that the university itself began efforts to restore its Nordic profile by appointing a new director and beginning to re-staff the Nordic Institute, as it was now called again. These efforts, though, coincided with an increasing interest from the state apparatus, whose ongoing confrontation with West Germany called for an intensified public diplomacy towards Northern Europe.

Leopold Magon had, before leaving for a new appointment in Berlin, installed a number of friends and pupils in Greifswald to continue the work of the Nordic Institute in his spirit, but these were soon pushed out by forces loyal to the Socialist Unity Party and their programme of a politically useful Northern European research. Non-socialist networks within the university had previously managed to block attempts by younger scholars to enter the institute on a party ticket, but in 1957 the party succeeded in installing Bruno Kress as its new director, who owed his position to promises of strengthening political teaching and research. This programme of turning the Nordic Institute into a cadre-factory for the foreign policy-apparatus of the GDR and a public diplomacy-tool at the same time met with strong problems from the beginning. A lack of clarity of purpose and communication with the customers of the to-be-trained cadres led to large-scale inefficiencies early on, while the visible political proximity of the personnel and the party hampered public diplomacy-efforts. At the same time, attempts to strengthen the social sciences in the institute, so as to
allow for a more practically oriented research and teaching, stalled due to a lack of resources, leading to dissatisfaction with the director.

Bruno Kress, who was largely blamed for the stagnating transition of the Nordic Institute from a philological to a politological focus, was publically rebuked by the state apparatus in 1961, and soon after replaced. Rudolf Agricola, the new director, was a party functionary with limited academic merits, and set the stage for a thorough colonization of the institute by the party. Apart from a short interlude involving literary scholar Horst Bien, the director’s post was held by a party functionary until the 1980s, ensuring a development along politically requested lines. This development found its institutional expression in the Third Academic Reform in 1968, which transformed traditional disciplinary institutes into – often – interdisciplinary research sections. The Nordic Institute, which was thereby reconstituted as the Section Northern European Studies, was already set up along the general lines of the reform, necessitating only limited structural reform. What it did profit from, though, was the reworked institutional structures that connected it to the customers of its research and teaching. With the integration of representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and public diplomacy-organizations into the leadership-structures of the section, work became noticeably smoother.

This is reflected in the ongoing cooperation with state and party agencies. The SNEW prepared political analyses for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as much as for the GDR’s intelligence community, even though their practical value is difficult to assess. Graduates of the SNEW worked in all sectors of public life where contact with Northern Europe was expected, while many of the institute’s researchers themselves worked for the Stasi or military intelligence. On the other hand, while the majority of changes after the mid-1960s were aimed at directly integrating the institute and its staff into foreign policy-activities, the Third Academic Reform also set the philological departments – Literature and Linguistics – apart, and reserved for them a space devoid of the pressure for utility. This preservation of a nominal academic autonomy for a select few disciplines allowed them to preserve their impact in international academic contacts, thus enabling these contacts to still be available for exploitation by the GDR.

Even though the Third Academic Reform and the consequent deep integration of the SNEW settled the relationship between the academic personnel and their political environment, the cooperation was never without difficulties. Persistent problems with the availability of interpreters continued to periodically interfere with the section’s work, while the
provision of graduates never fully matched the actual demand. Even though the role of both participants, the state apparatus and the SNEW, had been clarified, mismanagement, departmental short-sightedness and a pervasive disconnect between plans and resources remained the norm and continued to characterize their relationship.

By the 1980s the widespread disaffection with political rule had also reached the Section Northern European Studies, but until the end of the GDR this never went further than cautious dissent. While *glasnost* and *perestroika* were welcomed, efforts to rethink and restructure Area Studies were not picked up on, and departmental egoism prevailed. A final restructuring of Northern European research in Greifswald came only about during “*Die Wende*”, when the interdisciplinary Area Studies were dismantled in favour of a traditional language and literature institute.

**VII.2 A Look Around**

Being the only university institute dedicated to interdisciplinary Northern European Area Studies in Germany, the Nordic Institute and its successors were singular in many respects. Nevertheless, its case as an Area Studies institute founded in the late *Kaiserreich* and whose development can be retraced until the end of the GDR, allows a number of findings that extend beyond Greifswald.

Firstly, there is the question of Area Studies and how they interact with their wider academic environment. This study has demonstrated that one of the major challenges to this new academic enterprise was the integration of its scholars into a disciplinary career system, all the more so within German academia, where regular moves between different universities were prescribed. It has also been evident that the limitations imposed by the career structure could be offset by conscious political intervention, thus improving the prospects of Area Studies as an individual professional choice.

Secondly, a number of incompatibilities in political-academic cooperation have presented themselves. Soft public diplomacy was intractable and potentially more effective on the recipient, but it was also less visible to political sponsors. This invited scholars to forego their ostensibly neutral role in favour of a less effective but more rewarding hard public diplomacy. In regard to research, customers in the political field often found it difficult to digest scholarly output, requesting applied rather than basic research. This left academic contributions to political decision-making often underperforming.
It is furthermore suggested that a transfer-process utilizing a dedicated think-tank can be necessary to transform basic into applied research.

Thirdly, this study finds that, while seeking cooperation with the political field could prove advantageous to scholars, gains made from this cooperation were often not permanent. Particularly where political power had been invited to override career restrictions or intra-academic decision-making, the thus privileged scholars were left dependent on the goodwill of their sponsors, and the weakening of academic autonomy that they had previously profited from became a liability.

Fourthly, it is suggested that state-sponsored political ideologies, such as biological racism in the Third Reich and Marxism-Leninism in the GDR, constituted a boon to interdisciplinary Area Studies, in that they allowed a common meta-theoretical frame of reference that helped bridge the gaps between individual disciplines.

The Foundling Discipline – Area Studies and the University

New disciplines meet challenges. Historically, the development of clearly defined academic disciplines within the humanities is a comparatively recent development, dating only from the 19th century. The evolution of dedicated scholarly communication networks dates back further, but it was not until secularization took a firm hold in universities, in the early 19th century, that the classic four faculties – Theology, Medicine, Canon Law, Arts – gave way to departments and institutes. The differentiation into distinct networks of communication, which delve into a more or less defined object of interest, generally begins with communication between individual scholars, which are then formalized by the establishment of associations and specialized journals, and are later institutionalized in the form of chairs, departments or institutes. The disciplines thus produced a specific career path, in that the professional progression of a scholar generally happens within their own discipline. Some scholars have come to coin this development in terms of biological evolution, wherein child

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disciplines share in parts of their parent discipline’s intellectual heritage, while mutating into new entities, some of which thrive while others shrivel.³

Employing such biological terminology, the Northern European Area Studies, such as they were instituted in Greifswald in 1917, would have to be called a foundling. Due to the circumstances of its establishment, Northern European Studies – and ostensibly all German Area Studies derived from the same initiative – found themselves with a vague and ill-defined parent-age. The Prussian memorandum of 1916 had heralded a new interdisciplinary, “sociological” spirit for whose implementation, but it could not provide the necessary prerequisites, since the plan had primarily been elaborated on the intellectual level, without taking the institutional frame conditions into account. Hopes of coming to greater clarity about the necessary groundwork for this endeavour in the process were balked by the quick onset of post-war scarcity and a concurrent shift in political priorities.

The problems this created were manifold, but they all stemmed from the question of how to reconcile an interdisciplinary research institute with the logic of operation in a disciplinarily organized academic environment. Especially before 1933 this was a notable problem, as investments in interdisciplinary Northern European Studies did not promise sufficient rewards. The academic career path followed disciplinary lines, and investments in interdisciplinary Area Studies ran the risk of being considered either overspecialization or exoticism. Without an established network of communication and sufficient prospects of advancement, scholars were disincentivized to partake of the endeavour.

This finding is supported by the different extent to which disciplinary representatives were involved in the pre-1945 Nordic Institute. The strongest involvement was shown by German scholars, in whose discipline Nordic Philology was already an established sub-discipline. The merits won in the Nordic Institute were thus easily convertible into career advantages in other academic settings. To a more limited degree this was also true of historians and geographers, in whose disciplines regional specializations were acknowledged, if only to a certain degree. The representatives of the social sciences – law and economics in our case – kept their distance. In their disciplines contextualization was of subordinate importance, and the specialization into one region much less accepted.

In Bourdieuan terms, Northern European Studies lacked a group of academic peers to convey academic capital upon them, thus stifling individual academic advancement and locking them in a professional limbo. This conundrum of disciplinary constraint could only be overridden by utilizing outside intervention, and since the original Auslandsstudien-memorandum had failed to provide for a systematic mechanism, punctual cooperation had to be sought to overcome the limitations of the academic environment. Greifswald’s scholars regularly sought to stress the importance of their political task to acquire either financial or career support from the political system. Before 1933, with a political environment largely strapped for resources and with little interest in cooperation with academic institutions, this was met with only limited success. Efforts to mobilize resources from the economic field were punctually more successful, but these could not override the problem of disciplinary constraints. The fact that attempts at cooperation with the political field failed so regularly before 1933 was due less to a lack of efforts from the scholars’ side, than to a lack of opportunities.

This situation only changed after 1933, when the political environment began to request a more active public diplomacy, area expertise for their apparatus and a politically affirmative education for the students. Particularly those scholars who had found that a commitment to Area Studies or – in some cases – personal conflicts had stifled their academic career, had long established a tendency to approach other fields for resources to further their advancement. The political cataclysms of 1933 and 1945 constituted opportunities that enabled the success of these approaches rather than creating them. In exchange for cognitive and apparative resources from their academic setting, primarily area expertise and experts, scholars could in turn gain a punctual suspension of the intrinsic logic of academic career structures and thus enable a career in Area Studies. What began as an irregular exchange during the Third Reich, was turned into a regular mechanism under Socialism. The thorough political penetration of the academic cosmos, which the GDR achieved by 1968 at the latest, allowed the mechanisms for the advancement of academic careers to be overridden to a degree that allowed a predictable career in Area Studies. The need to progress through a number of posts in different universities, so characteristic of the German academic

4 While the removal of scholars from their university posts in 1945 was more extensive than in 1933, the opportunities this “tabula rasa” created were only exploitable years later, when funding and regular operations resumed. For the Nordic Institute, this was in 1954.
system, was replaced for Area Studies with a prescribed path of advancement within the same institution, rendering the incompatibilities between area and discipline inert.

In sum, this finding offers a better explanation for the specific problems of Area Studies in Germany than previous literature. Where in an Anglo-American context the founding of this interdisciplinary endeavour was flanked with massive investments from the state apparatus and private foundations, and the academic career structure was less restrictive, Area Studies was a much less risky game. In Germany their road was rockier, since the institutional framework in the Weimar Republic could not reward investments in area specialization, and nor could the West German system that emulated its career paths. However, where political intervention could be secured to mitigate these obstacles, as in the two German dictatorships, Area Studies became institutionally feasible.

How far this finding can illuminate the situation of other Area Studies-institutions in Germany is open for further investigation. It is nevertheless quite plausible that this would be the case, since the German career system was a non-negotiable framework for all them.

Working for the Man –
The Problems of Political-Academic Cooperation

To facilitate political intervention, scholars had to actively look for points of contact with the interests of the political field. This was highly dependent on the political environs themselves, and the Nordic Institute showcases the difficulty, if not impossibility, of conjuring up political interest in scholarly work where there was none to begin with.

This was at least partially due to the peculiar political task that the Nordic Institute was given. Its role as a cornerstone of public diplomacy was originally envisaged as one of enabling and facilitating international contact, rather than working in close conjunction with the authorities on specific activities. Public diplomacy depended for its effectiveness on the absence of visible political interests of the sponsoring state, but the discreetness of the Nordic Institute’s task became a liability once the initial rush of financing had run out. As a prerequisite and silent facilitator of international contacts the institute’s scholars could not point to vital – or even specific – activities that would directly entice the interest the authorities. Since their work was by design an indirect influence on foreign audiences, the specific and hands-on interest of the state apparatuses found
little resonance in an institute designed for soft public diplomacy, its exploits intractable and gradual. This is reflected in the early endeavours of Gustav Braun and Paul Merker, whose efforts to intensify their international work found limited resonance, since it could not present, or even promise, rewards that fitted into the attention span or detection threshold of the political field. At the same time, attempts to harness the Nordic Institute for the day-to-day work of the diplomatic service failed miserably. Here again, the dimensions in which the work of the Nordic Institute and the Foreign Ministry operated differed, not only because the idea of public diplomacy was only vaguely conceptualized and only grudgingly accepted by the diplomatic corps, but also because considerations of immediate political expediency were, by definition, neither the forte nor the responsibility of academic personnel.

Where significant cooperation between the Nordic Institute and the authorities came about, it was either under the auspices of direct services or the provision of hard public diplomacy. Punctual cooperation for specific tasks – primarily maps and limited country-specific information – had been established as early as the 1920s, but it was only after 1933 that such border-crossings became a staple of the Nordic Institute’s work. In particular, where an intensification and “hardening” of public diplomacy was promised, scholars could now count on support from the political field. This allowed several, otherwise marginalized, Area Studies experts to overcome their career-limitations, but it also changed the character of their work. Paul and Grellmann, who were promoted in 1933, and similarly Bruno Kress in 1957, became identifiable agents of the political system that had elevated them, and they were perceived as such not only by their academic peers but also by their target audiences. Visible propaganda undermined the impact of their work, but strengthened their credit with domestic political leadership.

Similar problems of incompatibility prevailed when it came to the genuine academic work of the Nordic Institute. Here it was the differences between basic and applied research where the opinions of the academic and the political field parted ways. The interests of the academics often enough lay in the area of basic research, not only because this aligned with their training and habitus, but also because it was the way to increased academic capital. Nevertheless, basic research was to a large degree indigestible to the political field. What was needed and requested here was action-guiding materiel, such as briefings, expert opinions, policy papers and analyses, formats that an unadulterated academic setting was ill-equipped to deliver.
Basic research was by definition open-ended and focused on specific cases of a particular problem, whereas applying this research to assist the political system in decision-making necessitated a process of closing it off and abridging the results. Where this happened in academia, the resulting scholarship was generally disqualified, and even their practical utility is dubious, since the immediate concerns of the political system were often opaque to the scholars. Where this process did not happen, the results were largely useless to the political system, as lengthy studies on scientifically interesting topics but with only gradual and tentative conclusions were unusable for political decision-makers and functionaries.

This is illustrated by the changing role of the Nord- und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft during the Third Reich. As a think-tank, the NOFG could serve as an external agency to gather basic research and prepare it in forms that were digestible to political actors. Its position of mediator allowed both sides to work within their own frame of reference, while maintaining ongoing communication. This was until 1941, when the NOFG lost its position as an intermediary between academia and politics and became a subordinate office of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt. From here on the state apparatus demanded the output of Northern European scholars to attune to the logic of the political field, something that the former could not do without a loss of station. Attempts at using dissertations to write politically useful analyses fell short, as did attempts to hybridize the position of scholars by subordinating them to a specific political process. The conflict between Paul, the NOFG and RSHA presents us with an opportunity to observe a situation with and without a functional mediator between academia and politics. It suggests that the transformation of basic into applied research could profitably be outsourced into an external agency, so as not to interfere with the standards of knowledge production and reception in either autonomous field. Another approach to this problem was found in the post-1968 GDR, where the incompatibility between basic and applied research was tacitly acknowledged in the institutional positions that Nordistik and International Relations respectively occupied. While the philological departments occupied themselves with basic research, the politically relevant topics were handled in special departments, which nominally performed academic work but were for the most part expertise-in-being, at the disposal of the state apparatus.

For future research it would be interesting to investigate the utility of academic area expertise to the state apparatus’ work, not only in global terms, but sectionally, to identify the areas where the Area Studies-institutes
contributed to political decisions, if any. From the present case it seems questionable if the academic input had a measurable effect on the outcome of political decision making-processes. Their analyses, where they were conducted in an academic setting, only had a limited capacity to take immediate political concerns into account, which would have made their views quixotic to decision-makers, who were also unlikely to accept academics’ claim to authority.

Professor Dr. Faustus – The Flipside of Resource Mobilization

Operationalizing academics in historical situations as rational opportunists provides us with an image of otherwise subordinated actors as strategically maximizing their options, at least as far as is possible to them. In this regard, the border-crossings between academia and politics have been viewed as utility-maximizing trade-offs that generally furthered the interests of those involved, meaning both sides offered resources that they were willing to put at the disposal of the other side. But, to paraphrase Nobel Prize-winner Paul Krugman, the question is how far one can push this model. Mitchell G. Ash’s theory on science and politics as resources that could be reciprocally mobilized suggests that this was a mutually beneficial arrangement, and it must have seemed so to many academics. What Ash did not operationalize, or possibly did not elaborate on due to the character of his article, was that the arrangement did not need to remain beneficial for any amount of time.

The history of the Nordic Institute repeatedly shows the pattern of academics trying to offer their services and output to the political system, but it also shows the pattern of this pact turning Faustian. What most scholars were looking for in these arrangements was a political intervention into the academic career structure, to achieve a promotion where promotions were otherwise barred, or to receive a posting that would otherwise have been unavailable. The drawback of this deal was that this undermined their position as autonomous researchers, which would in turn weaken their own position in future interactions with political actors. Where the precedent of a political intervention had been established, this intervention would henceforth be possible even against the better interest of the scholars.

Johannes Paul and Bruno Kress are examples of this mechanism, where politically motivated promotions would in time result in the marginalization of scholars, if they refused to follow the interests of their protectors in the political field.

While the employment of political power to circumvent obstacles in the academic field was profitable in the short term, this power was only borrowed. Academic capital, which scholars could accrue and have bestowed upon them by their peers, was theirs to command, but the political capital that was invested into exercising power in the academic field and support their claims was not. This was only “borrowed” from its actual carriers and could be revoked at any time. Accruing political capital, much like academic capital, was a time-consuming process, and while a number of Greifswald’s scholars had political careers in their own right, many did not. In practice, that meant that they commanded little in the way of networks that would allow them to directly influence political decisions or sound out the more concrete interests of given political agencies. This left them unaware and powerless if currents were changing, and tended to undermine their position.

This finding is in need of two qualifications, though. Firstly, the two prime examples of this Faustian Pact, Paul and Kress, did not revert to the status quo ante when their political backing dried up. Below the line both still profited from their arrangement with the political field. The Faustian implication of Mephisto coming for his due is not mirrored in their fate. In reference to Gustav Braun and his arrangement with actors of the economic field, it is probably more true to point out that the employment of extra-academic forces presupposed a reliable understanding of the other field’s motives and dynamics, so as to take into consideration their interests. Where this was not available, these arrangements could backfire.

Secondly, in light of the above-mentioned, the stable application of political capital within an academic setting was possible, if only to a limited degree. But this depended on a political career, with this often coming at the cost of academic merits. Agricola and Joachimi, as much as Krüger and Falk, are examples of this category, politicians with satisfactory amounts of academic capital to ensure their admission into the ranks of scholars, but in all cases not enough to be taken serious as researchers by their peers.
An Intellectual Resource? – Ideology and Area Studies

Where one looks at the existing literature, it is clear that the relationship between academia and the two German dictatorships is considered as an invasive one. This is not least evidenced in studies of the role of their respective ideological underpinnings – biological racism and Marxism-Leninism respectively – tainting scholarship. With Mitchell G. Ash’s theory we are, on the other hand, admonished to think about the academic-political interaction as one of mutual exchange. In the case of the Nordic Institute, this leads to an interesting possibility, namely that the ideologies under consideration could actually constitute boons, specifically for Area Studies. The Nordic Institute began early on facing the problems of interdisciplinary integration. This not only concerned the problem of career structures, but also, to a less pressing degree, that of integrating research output. While the institute could field a wide range of disciplinary representatives during the Weimar Republic, scholarly cooperation between them was limited, extending no further than collective lectures. Area Studies were, so to speak, encyclopaedic, covering a variety of fields without presenting an overarching idea. For a research endeavour that was started with the idea of giving a holistic and synthesizing view of a foreign culture – sociological, in the words of C. H. Becker – this was, if not an outright failure, at least below its potential.

Academic inquiry into human activity faces the problem of encountering a multitude of interconnected facets, many of which remain non-discursive and thus inaccessible to intellectual inquiry. This unspoken “remainder”, as Michel de Certeau puts it, can be tackled by any individual discipline, which “grants itself a priori the conditions that allow it encounter things only in its own limited field where it can ‘verbalize’ them.”6 Reality is cut up into digestible chunks that allow for a clear distinction between what any particular discipline could or could not speak about. Economics, as an

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6 The full quote for the reader’s convenience: “Without going back to ancient time, we can say that since Kant every theoretical effort has had to give a more or less direct explanation of its relationship to this non-discursive activity, to this immense “remainder” constituted by the part of human experience that has not been tamed and symbolized in language. An individual science can avoid this direct confrontation. It grants itself a priori the conditions that allow it to encounter things only in its own limited field where it can “verbalize” them. It lies in wait for them in the gridwork of models and hypotheses where it can make them talk, and this interrogatory apparatus, like a hunter’s trap, transforms their wordless silence into “answers”, and hence into language: this is called experimentation.” – Certeau, Michel de: The Practice of Everyday Life, Berkeley 1984, p. 61.
example, only became a viable discipline once Adam Smith managed to separate it from human interaction, politics and morality, thus being able to describe it as a separate system, subject to nomothetic analysis. This cutting-up of reality leaves gaps between disciplines, though, since their existence as intellectually viable endeavours depends on their very limitation, and the specialization of their instruments hampered interdisciplinary cooperation. Scholars thus found it difficult to communicate across their disciplinary boundaries, and this is well exemplified in the Nordic Institute.

This phenomenon of interdisciplinary non-communication began to change though, when biological racism became a state-sponsored paradigm in 1933. Racial thought had been a viable research approach before, but its promotion to state ideology elevated its position significantly. As an ideology, biological racism promised a total explanation of all dimensions of human existence, and thus offered scholars a common frame of reference above the boundaries of their discipline. While Northern Europe still largely remained a canvas for German projections, the Third Reich saw the first steps towards an integrating view of the area under study. Paul’s interdisciplinary work with ethnologists and biologists, Kvaran’s study of literature and kinship and Krüger’s attempts at a synthesizing view of political and biological factors remained stumps, but can be considered the first attempts at a genuine interdisciplinarity. It is probably no coincidence that all of them used racial biology as their foundation, since this was the available ideology that tied together disparate dimensions of life. A successful, if one so will, consolidation of this trend – employing racial categories to explain a plethora of human activities – only happened with Paul’s overview of the history of the Baltic Sea-region of 1961, and then only in a diluted and at that point outmoded fashion.

Similarly and much stronger, the enabling function of politically prescribed paradigms can be observed in the GDR. Where, as Klaus Fischer put it, the Third Reich had attempted to establish a “counter-academia”, Real Socialism colonized it from within, arguably with more success. Marxism-Leninism as a world-explaining paradigm was hence mandatory.

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7 Graeber, David: Debt. The first 5,000 years, New York 2011, pp. 21–41.
8 Paul’s Nordic History (Nordische Geschichte, 1925) attempted an overaching view, but stuck to political, i.e. monarchical viewpoints. The same went for Braun, whose promise for a sociological overview of the Nordic states (Die Nordischen Staaten. Eine soziologische Länderkunde, 1924) likewise got stuck in political geography.
even though its interdisciplinary potential was taken up with less vigour, likely because proactive establishments of individual research projects were discouraged. Nevertheless, interdisciplinary connections pervade the scholarly output of this time, with representatives of different disciplines regularly referring to scholarship outside their own intellectual field. Marxist-Leninist social and economic determinism served as a vehicle for these interdisciplinary links, with Ernst Walter’s attempts at using social history to support linguistic history as one example, Bethke’s department for cultural policy as another.

How fruitful this use of ideology was in furthering the quality of scholarship is a different matter. The mechanisms of the Faustian Pact still applied, and the political carriers of the respective ideology were quite unwilling to subject their ideology to competing claims to authority. Although National Socialism exhibited some flexibility in the scientific aspect of their ideology, Communism was adamant about where the authority over Scientific Communism lay. Revisions of the ideology itself were out of the question, thus rendering scholarship trapped in an unchangeable theoretical framework. Nevertheless, it seems intriguing to view political ideologies as enablers of interdisciplinarity, in that they filled the void between disciplines, in a way not dissimilar to current post-modern meta-theories. If brought to a possible end-point, this mechanism could also help to conceptualize the success of US Area Studies under the shadow of totalitarian theory as much as the ensuing diversity when this paradigm lost influence.10

VII.3 A Look Forward

Even though the Nordic Institute is in many respects a singular case, it is still interesting in itself and in its potential to illuminate broader questions. In itself, the institute and its successors were in need of a revaluation. Previous literature one-sidedly stressed either the success-story of the institute as a facilitator of German-Nordic contacts or its thorough political penetration during the GDR and, to a degree, the Third Reich. By choosing an institutional approach that gave agency to the scholars in question and aimed to uncover their motives and limitations in handling their political-

10 Szanton 2004.
academic task, this study has hopefully contributed to putting previous evaluations into a different perspective. The peculiarity of the institute within its framework, as a university institute with a tasking that encompassed foreign policy, national education and wider intellectual reform, has been stressed to illuminate the particular idiosyncrasies and contradictions that shaped its work and development. Nevertheless, this peculiarity does not prohibit the case from allowing wider inferences.

Alternative approaches, such as a collective biography to highlight the particular backgrounds of scholars involved in Area Studies, would probably generate further insight. Here it would be suggested that personal backgrounds, particularly family connections, strongly shape the decision the turn towards the study of a particular region. Investigating how this influenced the form and content of scholarship would be a worthwhile task for the future. Similarly, a more thorough evaluation of the Nordic Institute’s scholarship in the context of the respective disciplines on the one hand, and simultaneous developments in national and international Area Studies of other regions would likely yield interesting results. The question of how especially the early Area Studies institutes in the Weimar Republic influenced one another, the wider academic landscape and connected to similar endeavours abroad could help in understanding their impact. This study has hopefully given some early leads in this direction, and considering the recently revived interest in a history of Northern European Studies as a discipline, such investigations are to be looked forward to.

Similarly, a closer look at the output of the scholars at the Nordic Institute could be a future endeavour. Here it would be interesting to ask for the interaction between the regional focus and the disciplinary environment, particularly the handling of possible disconnects between the two. The reception of disciplinary theory discussions and the influence of possible contradiction in the region could support or challenge the findings about the role of career structures in scholarly development. Such a study could also fruitfully integrate into already existing knowledge about the discipline-region dichotomy for the case of US Area Studies, thus helping to further contextualize the German case and its particularities. In the same vein, a more thorough study of the networks of the Nordic Institute could help to clarify the findings of this study. The general characteristics of

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11 In 2011 and 2012 the Nordeuropainstitut at Berlin’s Humboldt-Universität held symposiums to gather scholars studying the historical development of Nordistik. It is to be hoped that these endeavours continue.
scholars who looked for contact with their German counterparts and the actual influence of the Nordic Institute on their opinion, if such can be operationalized, would be of great interest.

Lastly, this study hopes to have created interest in wider research on German Area Studies, particularly in the context of the Weimar Republic. While scholarship exists on Eastern European Studies and Westforschung, these focus on their role in the Third Reich. A wider investigation of their development during the Weimar Republic, particularly their difficulties in establishing interdisciplinarity, could provide a further building block to a more comprehensive understanding of the development of sociological and politological science in the 20th century.
List of Abbreviations

BA Bundesarchiv (German Federal Archives)
BdStU Behörde des Beauftragten für die Stasi-Unterlagen (Stasi Records Agency)
DASR Deutsche Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaft (German Academy for Law and Political Science)
DENOG Deutsch-Nordische Gesellschaft (German-Nordic Association)
DHM Deutsches Historisches Museum (German Historical Museum)
DVV Deutsche Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung (German Central Administration for General Education)
DWI Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut (German Academic Institute)
EMAU Ernst-Moritz-Arndt Universität Greifswald
FDJ Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth)
GDR German Democratic Republic
Gestapo Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police)
GStA PK Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Privy State Archives)
GUB Göteborgs Universitetsbibliotek (Gothenburg University Library)
HVA Hauptverwaltung A (Main Directorate A)
IASS International Association for Scandinavian Studies
IfF Institut für Finnlandkunde (Institute for Finland-Studies)
IIB Institut für Internationale Beziehungen (Institute for International Relations)
IPW Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft (Institute for International Politics and Economy)
IR International Relations
LAG Landesarchiv Greifswald (Pomeranian State Archive Greifswald)
MAIH Ministerium für Aussenhandel und Innerdeutschen Handel (Ministry of International and Intra-German Trade)
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<td>MfAA</td>
<td>Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (Ministry for Foreign Affairs)</td>
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<td>MHF</td>
<td>Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen (Ministry for Higher Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFS</td>
<td>Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Ministry for State Security)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NG</td>
<td>Nordische Gesellschaft (Nordic Society)</td>
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<td>NKVD</td>
<td>Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOFG</td>
<td>Nord- und Ostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (North- and East German Research Association)</td>
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<td>NS</td>
<td>National Socialist</td>
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<td>NSDAP</td>
<td>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers’ Party)</td>
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<td>NSDDB</td>
<td>Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Dozentenbund (National Socialist German Lecturers League)</td>
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<td>NSDStB</td>
<td>Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (National Socialist German Students League)</td>
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<td>NVA</td>
<td>Nationale Volksarmee (National Peoples Army)</td>
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<td>PuSte</td>
<td>Publikationsstelle Dahlem (Publication Office Dahlem)</td>
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<td>REM</td>
<td>Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung (Reich Ministry for Research and Education)</td>
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<td>RM</td>
<td>Reichsmark</td>
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<td>RSHA</td>
<td>Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Main Security Office)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Sturmbteilung der NSDAP (Assault Detachment of the NSDAP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Sicherheitsdienst der SS (Security Service of the SS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SED</td>
<td>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SiPo</td>
<td>Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police)</td>
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<td>SMAG</td>
<td>Soviet Military Administration in Germany</td>
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<td>SNEW</td>
<td>Sektion Nordeuropawissenschaften (Section Northern European Studies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>In footnotes: Sommernsemester, otherwise: Schutzstaffel der NSDAP (Summer term / Defence Squadron of the NSDAP)</td>
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<td>Stasi</td>
<td>Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Ministry for State Security)</td>
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<td>StHF</td>
<td>Staatsssekretariat für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen (State Secretariat for Higher Education)</td>
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<td>UAG</td>
<td>Universitätsarchiv Greifswald (University Archive Greifswald)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>Universität Greifswald (University Greifswald)</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>VDA</td>
<td>Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (Association for Germans Abroad)</td>
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<td>WS</td>
<td>Wintersemester (Winter Term)</td>
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<td>ZENTRAAL</td>
<td>Zentraler Rat für Asien-, Afrika- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften (Central Council for Asian, African and Latin American Studies)</td>
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<td>ZK</td>
<td>Zentralkommittee (Central Committee)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources and Literature

Archival Sources

Universitätsarchiv Greifswald (UAG)

Altes Rektorat:
R177  Das Nordische Institut (1943–1948)
R186  Das Nordische Institut (1918–1933)
R190  Das Nordische Institut (1933–1944)
R191  Das Nordische Institut (1945, 1947)
R387  Auslandsreisen zu wissenschaftlichen Zusammenkünften
R406  Gastvorträge ausländischer Wissenschaftler in Greifswald
R461  Gastvorträge ausländischer Gelehrter in Greifswald
R758  Reisen und wissenschaftliche Vorträge von Greifwalder Professoren im Ausland
R988  Kriegsakten
R1010 Lektorat für schwedische Sprache

Institut für Finnlandkunde:
IfF 1  Gründungserlaß, Grundlegende Berichte, Organisation
IfF 25 Personalia
IfF 30 Verbindungen zum Nordischen Auslandsinstitut bzw. den Nordischen Auslandsinstituten
IfF 55 Beziehungen zum Ausland
IfF 61 Die „Nordische Gesellschaft“ in Lübeck und das Pommernkontor derselben in Stettin
IfF 64 Einrichtung eines Nordischen Zentralinstituts an der Universität Rostock
IfF 75 Presseausschnitte aus finnischen Zeitungen
ACADEMICS AND POLITICS

IfF 85  Gesellschaft zum Studium Finnlands: Studienreisen (mit Studik), Allgemeines
IfF 88–108  Sonderakten Organisation der Studik, 1923–1928
IfF 117  Anfragen von Wirtschaftsunternehmen
IfF 118  Zuarbeiten für amtliche Stellen, einschließlich NSDAP und ihrer Gliederungen

Kurator:
K515  Das Historische Seminar: Abt. für mittlere und neuere Geschichte, Hist.-geogr. Seminar
K628  Die Nordischen Auslandsinstitute
K630  Das Nordische Institut (1918–1923)
K631  Das Nordische Institut (1924–1933)
K632  Das Dänische Institut
K633  Das Isländische Institut
K635  Die Assistenten des Nordischen Instituts, dann Nordische Auslandsinstitute
K636  Das Schwedische Institut
K639  Das Institut für Finnlandkunde (1922–1935)
K640  Das Institut für Finnlandkunde (1936–1945)
K1707  Ankauf, Verwaltung und bauliche Unterhaltung Roonstraße 26

Nachlass Hofmeister:
13a  Protokolle der Arbeitsgemeinschaft „Geistesleben und Politik im modernen Schweden“

Nachlass Magon:
48  Unterlagen über die Beziehungen Prof. Magons zur NSDAP

Personalakten:
PA 24  Gustav Braun
PA 44  Günther Falk
PA 46  Otto Fingerhut
PA 220  Hans Grellmann
PA 248  Johannes Paul
PA 1665  Odorich de Pers
PA 1698  Helga Preugschat
PA 2445  Ulrich Noack
PA 2758  Bruno Kress
PA 3880  Herbert Joachimi
PA 4229  Heinz Krüger

Philosophische Dissertationen:
Phil. Diss. II-975  Heinz Krüger
Phil. Diss. II-1094  Friedrich Wilhelm Keese

Philosophische Fakultät:
PhilFak I-379  Dekanat Fredenhagen
PhilFak I-406  Hauptstelle für Heimatforschung und Heimatpflege.
Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft für Raumforschung

Sektion Nordeuropawissenschaften:
NEW 1  Geschichte und Struktur des Nordischen Instituts bzw. der
Sektion Nordeuropawissenschaften
NEW 4  Erneuerung der Institutsstruktur
NEW 5  Perspektivplanung der Nordistik
NEW 7  Planung und Organisation der Institutstätigkeit
NEW 12  Berichte zu Instituts- bzw. Sektionsangelegenheiten
NEW 13  Monats- und Informationsberichte der Sektion
NEW 14  Protokolle der Leitungssitzungen, Dienst- und
Arbeitsbesprechungen
NEW 15  Vorlagen zu Leitungssitzungen des Instituts
NEW 21  Glückwunschschreiben an Lehrkräfte der Sektion
NEW 28  Zusammenarbeit mit dem Ministerium für Auswärtige
Angelegenheiten, Abteilung Nordeuropa/Großbritannien
NEW 30  Zusammenarbeit mit Wissenschaftlern und Einrichtungen
der Universität und des Inlands
NEW 38  Berufungen von Hochschuldozenten
NEW 39  Funktionswechsel, Abberufungen und Emeritierungen von
Professoren und Hochschuldozenten
NEW 40  Auswahl und Einsatz von wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeitern
(Asistenten, Aspiranten, Lektoren)
NEW 41  Auswahl und Einsatz von Gastlektoren aus
nordeuropäischen Ländern
NEW 46  Studienorganisation und studentische Ausbildung
NEW 54 Zivilverteidigung und militärische Ausbildung von Mitarbeitern und Studenten
NEW 55 Anfragen und Schriftwechsel zur Durchführung externer Sprachkundigen- und Fernstudienlehrgänge
NEW 58 Förderung von wissenschaftlichem Nachwuchs
NEW 63 Konzeptionen, Pläne und Berichte zu Forschungsprojekten der Sektion (1960–1968)
NEW 64 Konzeptionen, Pläne und Berichte zu Forschungsprojekten der Sektion (1969–1991)
NEW 72 Diskussion um die schwedisch-baltische "Ostseegesellschaft" (Konstituierung Ende 1965) und deren Zeitschrift "Mare Baltikum"
NEW 73 Presseartikel zu Aktivitäten des Instituts bzw. der Sektion
NEW 77 Berichterstattung über die 13. IASS-Konferenz, Greifswald 1980, und Publikation von Beiträgen im Protokollband
NEW 98 Beziehungen zu Einrichtungen und Wissenschaftlern des sozialistischen und nichtsozialistischen Auslands
NEW 106 Organisation und Berichterstattung zu Gastvorträgen und Vorlesungen von Wissenschaftlern Nordeuropas
NEW 108 Teilnahme an Studienreisen und Studentenexkursionen in nordeuropäische Länder

Universitätsverwaltung:
53 Haushaltsplanung und -erfüllung 1953

Rechtsstelle:
99 Aberkennung akademischer Grade

Direktorat Internationale Beziehungen:
232 Jahresberichterstattung Abteilung Ausland

Prorektorat Gesellschaftswissenschaften:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Sources and Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Schriftwechsel und Arbeitsunterlagen Sektion NEW (1966–1978)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Universitätsparteileitung:

UPL 233 Protokolle, Berichte und Arbeitsunterlagen der GO Slawistik/ Nordistik/ Anglistik/ Abteilung Sprachunterricht

**Bundesarchiv Berlin (BA)**

Publikationsstelle Berlin-Dahlem (R153)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Sources and Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>659</td>
<td>Lieferung von Presseauszügen an die Nordischen Auslandsinstitute der Universität Greifswald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>688</td>
<td>Herstellung von Auszügen aus der finnischen Presse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1044</td>
<td>Schriftwechsel zwischen Brackmann und Prof. Ritterbusch, Kiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1185</td>
<td>Schwedisches Institut der Universität Greifswald, Bd. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1194</td>
<td>Schwedisches Institut der Universität Greifswald, Bd. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1219</td>
<td>Prof. Dr. Ulrich Noack, Greifswald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1254</td>
<td>Prof. Otto Scheel, Kiel und Kopenhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1286</td>
<td>Tagung in Stralsund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1583</td>
<td>Manuskripte für den Jahrgang 1943</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>Skandinavienbesprechung in Greifswald vom 28. bis 29. Febr. 1944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reichs- und Preußisches Ministerium für Erziehung, Wissenschaft und Volksbildung (R4901)

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14767</td>
<td>Allgemeine Verwaltungsangelegenheiten der Universität</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ministerium für Volksbildung (DR2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Sources and Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24799</td>
<td>Arbeitspläne, Analysen, Konzeptionen, Bd. 1 1967–1971</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen (DR3) 1. Schicht
390 Schriftwechsel mit der Universität Rostock, Greifswald, Leipzig und Jena

2947 Entwicklung der Lehre und Ausbildung auf dem Gebiet der Nordistik und Indistik, Arabistik

4095 Konzeptionen für die weitere Entwicklung der Regionalwissenschaften und Ausbau der Führungstätigkeit des SHF

4459 Schriftwechsel mit allen Universitäten

4460 Schriftwechsel mit allen Hochschulen

Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen (DR3) 2. Schicht

2 Konzeptionen für die Wissenschaftsentwicklung: Philosophie, Wissenschaftlicher Kommunismus, Afrika-, Nordeuropa- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften


59 Profilierung der Regionalwissenschaften an den Universitäten

63 Konzeptionen, Analysen der Regionalwissenschaften

68 Neukonzipierung der Regionalwissenschaften und ihrer Spezialgebiete

339 Erfahrungen und Ergebnisse bei der Auswahl, Bestätigung und Vorbereitung von Auslandskadern, Bd. 3: Universitäten

982 Profilierung der Ausbildung auf dem Gebiet der Sprachmittlerausbildung und auf dem Gebiet der Regionalwissenschaften

1156 Intensivierung der Fremdsprachenausbildung – Sprachmittler

1158 Kaderbedarfsermittlung für Sprachmittler

1165 Herausbildung einer Gruppe von Spitzendolmetschern

1704/2 Entwicklung der Regionalwissenschaften an den Universitäten und Hochschulen

1714 „Konzeption zur weiteren Entwicklung der marx.-len. Nordeuropawissenschaften im Bereich des MHF bis 1990“, erarbeitet von der EMAU/Sektion NEW sowie dazugehörige Stellungnahmen
1967 Zusammenarbeit der DDR mit Norwegen, Finnland, Dänemark, Island und Schweden

**Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK)**

Preußisches Kultusministerium, Universitäten (I. HA, Rep. 76 Va):
Sekt. 7, Tit. IV, Nr. 31 Wissenschaftliche Reisen der Professoren und Privatdozenten
Sekt. 7, Tit. IV, Nr. 34 Das Auslandsstudium bei der Universität zu Greifswald
Sekt. 7, Tit. X, Nr. 58 Die Errichtung eines nordischen Instituts bei der Universität zu Greifswald
Tit. X, Nr. 58a Das Institut für Finnlandkunde an der Universität Greifswald

**Landesarchiv Greifswald (LAG)**

Bezirksleitung (BL)
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IV/2/9.02 1085 Rektorat Informationen über Republikflucht
IV/2/9.02 1087 Berichte und Informationen über das Nordische Institut der Universität Greifswald, Bd. 1
IV/2/9.02 1088 Berichte und Informationen über das Nordische Institut der Universität Greifswald, Bd. 2

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List of Images


Image 1: Gustav Braun, UAG Image Collection.

Image 2: Gustaf Dalman, UAG Image Collection.


Image 5: Von der Goltz-Villa, UAG Image Collection.

Image 6: Bruno Kress, UAG Image Collection.

Image 7: Rudolf Agricola, in: Nordeuropastudien, 17 (1984), inserted leaflet “In memoriam Prof. (em.) Dr. rer. pol. Dr. h. c. Rudolf Agricola”.


Image 10: Kurt Vieweg, UAG Image Collection.


Image 12: Artur Bethke, UAG Image Collection.

Image 13: Gregor Putensen, UAG Image Collection.
Register

Aal, Hermann Harris 156
Adenauer, Konrad 216, 278
Agricola, Rudolf 237–240, 243, 245, 258, 260–262, 315, 359, 368
Alander, Bo 155
Albonico, Lotte 203
Almgren, Birgitta 14
Andersen Nexø, Martin 312
Andreyeva, Nina 338
Andropov, Yuri 336
Arnholtz, Arthur 156
Arvidson, Stellan 117f, 145, 190, 200, 285f
Ash, Mitchell G. 19, 29–32, 35, 367, 369,
Aumüller, Johannes 190
Baden, Max von 67
Baetke, Walter 131f, 278, 307
Balk, Norman 93
Barthel, Günther 329f
Baumann (councillor of the consistory) 100
Becker, Carl Heinrich 11, 24, 45, 48–52, 55, 59, 66, 69, 77, 91, 97, 105, 107, 127, 133, 313, 354f, 369,
Becker, Heinz 296,
Bendz, Gerhard 149
Bergsträsser, Ludwig 58

Bethke, Artur 269, 287, 310–312, 345, 371
Bethmann-Hollweg, Theobald von 41, 43
Beyer, Wolfgang 120
Bismarck, Otto von 196, 326
Bourdieu, Pierre 32–35, 363
Brackmann, Albert 166–170
Brandell, Gunnar 276
Braun, Gustav 57–68, 71f, 74, 75, 78, 81–90, 92f, 95f, 98, 105–107, 109, 113–117, 122, 124, 177, 190, 200, 276, 355f, 365, 368
Briesemeister, Dietrich 22
Broby-Ilg, Aud 231, 293, 296
Broby-Johansen, Rudolf 293
Brändström, Elsa 69
Brüské, Hermann 110, 114f, 118, 194
Bock, Hans Manfred 53
Bruch, Rüdiger vom 18
Böök, Frederik 149, 154
Callesen, Gerd 293
Carlsson, Gotfrid 150, 153, 159
Carlsson-Lenz, Marianne 230
Cellarius, Alexander 185
Certeau, Michel de 369

411
Chernenko, Konstantin 336
Coenders, Albert 58, 60, 65, 70f
Curschmann, Fritz 132
Dalberg-Acton, John 196
Dalman, Gustaf 58, 60–63, 65f,
71–74, 82, 106
Dornseiff, Franz 138f
Drougge, Gunnar 154
Dzulko (alt: Dzulko-Axmann), Ruth
209–211, 213, 275f
Düwell, Kurt 28
Egermann, Franz 118
Emmel, Hildegard 211, 303
Engel, Carl 132, 155, 203f
Engeström, Sigfrid von 151f
Erdmenger, Klaus 229
Essén, Rudger 153
Falk, Günther 40, 117, 139,
144–148, 159, 179f, 184,
192, 280, 368
Felse, Edeltraut 316, 326, 343
Fingerhut, Otto 144, 146, 178f,
192, 195
Finke, August 181
Fischer, Klaus 15, 370
Fleischmann, Max 95
Frick, Wilhelm 172
Frieser, Wilhelm 229, 303
Frings, Josef 193
Fritsch, Wolfgang 301, 325
Fritze, Christine 311
Geerdts, Hans-Jürgen 221, 236
Gislason, Gylfi 279
Glagau, Hans 99, 123
Goltz, Eduard von der 95f, 112f
Gomolka, Alfred 348
Gorbachev, Mikhail 338f
Grellmann, Hans 90, 115, 117,
121f, 124, 126–128, 131, 133f,
136, 139–141, 143f, 146, 156,
161–163, 169f, 181–184,
189–191, 201, 203, 206, 356f, 365
Gribel, Franz 87f
Grimme, Adolf 102
Grothe, Fritz 311
Grothewohl, Otto 219, 313
Gullion, Edmund 25
Gustavus II. Adolphus 94, 98, 100f,
113, 119, 134
Göring, Carin 153
Haenisch, Konrad 45, 51, 68f
Hager, Kurt 212f, 338
Hamsun, Knut 131, 312
Harnack, Adolf von 41
Hartnack, Wilhelm 115f
Hedin, Sven 153f
Hehn, Jürgen von 172f, 177
Heinsohn, Wilhelm 144, 146
Herborg, Mette 14
Himmler, Heinrich 172, 176f, 202
Hitler, Adolf 109
Hochmann, Franz 220, 281, 294
Hoffmann, Theodor 298f
Hoffmann, Walter 172
Hofmeister, Adolf 123, 132, 138, 150
Honecker, Erich 253, 329, 335
Hubrich, Eduard 59f
Höfler, Otto 133f, 141f
Höflich (City Councillor for Culture)
336
Höjberg Christensen, A.C. 156
Höll, Rainer 13, 301
Ibsen, Henrik 309
Jaekel, Otto 60
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mertens, Lothar</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metzner, Paul</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer, Ernst A.</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaelsen, Per</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikkola, Jooseppi Julius</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misgeld, Klaus</td>
<td>319–321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mjöen, Jon Alfred</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molin, Pelle</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molitor, Erich</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morbach, Hermann</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgenroth, Wolfgang</td>
<td>210, 303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muschik, Alexander</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Müller, Wolfgang</td>
<td>147, 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Müller (StHF)</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Møller, Mogens</td>
<td>231, 237, 283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nansen, Fridtjof</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevanlinna, Rolf</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noack, Ulrich</td>
<td>189, 196–200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordström, Clara</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norum, Trygve</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nye, Joseph</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberholzer, Otto</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohlmarks, Åke</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osten, Mr. Von</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxenstierna, Erik</td>
<td>154f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papen, Franz von</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papritz, Johannes</td>
<td>169f, 174, 176f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pechau, Manfred</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers, Odorich de</td>
<td>206, 210–214, 229f, 246, 281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersen, Alfred</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petershagen, Rudolf</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrick, Fritz</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petzsch, Wilhelm</td>
<td>131f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce, Franklin</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pijur, Dieter</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philipp, Peter</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politt, Günther</td>
<td>220, 230, 234, 239, 259, 291, 294, 314f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preugschat, Helga</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putensen, Gregor</td>
<td>291, 294, 315, 322f, 343f, 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quisling, Vidkun</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehberg, Ursula</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiher, Herbert</td>
<td>210, 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reschke, Karl</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribbentropp, Joachim</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richter, Werner</td>
<td>63, 65, 77f, 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritterbusch, Paul</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg, Eric</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg, Alfred</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenfeld, Hans-Friedrich</td>
<td>132, 169, 214f, 220f, 223f, 226f, 246, 275f, 303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenquist, Arvid</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rust, Bernhard</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rörig, Fritz</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scharrff, Alexander</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheel, Otto</td>
<td>167f, 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schildhauer, Johannes</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schirdewan, Karl</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schirmer, Gregor</td>
<td>252, 269f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlaak, Olaf</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schmidt-Ott, Friedrich</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schmitt, Carl</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schmitt, Kurt</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schneider, Guido</td>
<td>203f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schubert, Friedrich Wilhelm</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schulz, Tobias 36
Schwalm, Hans 179
Schwarz, Rosemarie 139, 146–148, 169f, 172, 175
Schwering, Leo 193
Schürer von Waldheim, Max 150–152
Seraphim, Peter-Heinz 140f
Signitzer, Benno 27
Sigurðsson, Olafur Jóhann 311
Six, Franz Alfred 183
Sjögren, Torsten 153f
Skodvin, Magne 179
Skorina, Diane 40
Smith, Adam 370
Smith, Lennart 159
Sokoll, Gabriele 294, 298, 300, 309
Sokoll, Klaus 325
Solheim, Svale 281, 284
Spranger, Eduard 49–52, 66, 105, 131, 139
Staa, Wolf Meinard von 104f
Stammler, Wolfgang 122f, 128, 131, 138, 190
Stefánsson, Halldór 311
Stepanek, Brigitte 316
Stepanek, Franz 300f, 325
Stern, Willy 230, 234, 242, 259, 286, 324f
Strindberg, August 312
Svensson, Elin 169
Szanton, David 21
Sönke, Jürgen 118–120, 125, 145
Talvio, Maila 156, 163
Tarkiainen, Viljo 163
Thorild, Thomas 275, 285
Timm, Ernst 125f
Tobler, Berit 14
Toynbee, Arnold 196
Trommler, Frank 28
Trott zu Solz, August von 45
Tschirch, Fritz 208–210
Tuch, Hans N. 25
Tunberg, Sven 149
Törnquist, Nils 151f
Ulbricht, Lotte 293
Ulbricht, Walter 252, 255, 266
Unwerth, Wolf von 56, 58, 60f, 63, 65, 92
Vahlen, Theodor 110
Vieweg, Kurt 244f, 293–295, 297f, 300, 315
Vogel (SED Rostock) 235
Vogt, Oskar 353
Wagner (StHF) 236
Walter, Ernst 244, 300, 306–308, 334, 371
Walter, Theodor 153, 159
Weber, Max 16
Wegener-Friis, Thomas 14, 298
Wehner, Herbert 293
Weidemann, Diethelm 340f
Weingart, Peter 17, 253
Weizsäcker, Ernst-Ulrich von 348
Wellander, Erik 153
Wennerström, Torsten 153, 162
Wessén, Elias 153, 275
Wickbom, Maja 153
Wilhelm-Kästner, Kurt 193
Wilhelmus, Irene 264, 317
Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, Fanny von 153
Winkler (cleaning lady) 210
Witte, Klaus 296, 299, 316
Wolf, Hansjürgen 294, 301
Wolf-Rottkay, Wolf-Helmut 196
Wurmbach, Max Otto 203
Ziegler, Konrat 110f
Åkerlund, Andreas 36, 40
17. Renata Ingbrant, *From Her Point of View: Woman’s Anti-World in the Poetry of Anna Świrszczynska*, 2007
19. Petra Garberding, Musik och politik i skuggan av nazismen: Kurt Atterberg och de svensk—tyska musikrelationerna, 2007
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Inspired by the need to increase general awareness of foreign sentiments and cultures, the Prussian Parliament decided in 1917 to found Area Studies Institutes. In the University of Greifswald, the reform saw the establishment of the Nordic Institute, an interdisciplinary institute that was to study Northern Europe in a wide variety of aspects and disciplines. Beholden to interdisciplinarity and implicitly political tasks, the Nordic Institute and its successor institutions remained an oddity in the university, existing in a field of tension between politics and academia.

This study tracks the development of the Nordic Institute under four different political regimes, the interaction between scholars, their academic environment, and the political system. It asks for the motivation and outcome of scholarly cooperation with the regimes, and tries to contextualize the specific problems of Area Studies in German academia.

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