This is a collection of innovative essays examining the role of Wilhelm II in Imperial Germany, focusing in particular on the later years of the monarch’s reign. The essays highlight the Kaiser’s relationship with statesmen and rulers, at home and abroad; his role in international relations; the erosion of his power during the First World War; and his ultimate downfall in 1918.

The book demonstrates the extent to which Wilhelm II was able to exercise ‘personal rule’, largely unopposed by the responsible government, and supported in his decision-making by his influential entourage. But it also shows that there was no lack of contemporary critics of Wilhelm and Wilhelminismus. The essays are based on the latest research and on a wide range of archival sources, and provide an up-to-date evaluation of the role and importance of this controversial monarch. They have been written to honour the innovative work of John Röhl, Wilhelm II’s most famous biographer, on his sixty-fifth birthday.

Annika Mombauer is Lecturer in European History, The Open University. Her previous publications include Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War (Cambridge 2001), and The Origins of the First World War. Controversies and Consensus (Longman 2002).

Wilhelm Deist was Honorary Professor in the History Department, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany. His many books include The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament (Macmillan 1981) and Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft (Oldenbourg 1991).
THE KAISER

New Research on Wilhelm II’s role in Imperial Germany

EDITED BY
ANNIKA MOMBAUER AND WILHELM DEIST
Dedicated to John C. G. Röhl
on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday
31 May 2003


## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes on contributors</th>
<th>page ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of abbreviations</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annika Mombauer and Wilhelm Deist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflections on John Röhl: a Laudatio</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Steinberg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Wilhelm II and ‘his’ navy, 1888–1918 | 12 |
| Michael Epkenhans                      |

2 Hollow-sounding jubilees: forms and effects of public self-display in Wilhelmine Germany | 37 |
| Bernd Sösemann                         |

3 The Kaiser’s elite? Wilhelm II and the Berlin administration, 1890–1914 | 63 |
| Katharine A. Lerman                    |

4 Wilhelm, Waldersee, and the Boxer Rebellion | 91 |
| Annika Mombauer                        |

5 Dreams of a German Europe: Wilhelm II and the Treaty of Björkø of 1905 | 119 |
| Roderick R. McLean                     |

6 The uses of ‘friendship’. The ‘personal regime’ of Wilhelm II and Theodore Roosevelt, 1901–1909 | 143 |
| Ragnhild Fiebig-von Hase                |
Military diplomacy in a military monarchy? Wilhelm II’s relations with the British service attachés in Berlin, 1903–1914
Matthew S. Seligmann

Wilhelm II as supreme warlord in the First World War
Holger Afflerbach

Germany’s ‘last card’. Wilhelm II and the decision in favour of unrestricted submarine warfare in January 1917
Matthew Stibbe

Military culture, Wilhelm II, and the end of the monarchy in the First World War
Isabel V. Hull

Rathenau, Wilhelm II, and the perception of Wilhelminismus
Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann

Structure and agency in Wilhelmine Germany: the history of the German Empire – past, present, and future
Volker R. Berghahn

Index
Notes on contributors

Holger Afflerbach is Dadd Professor of German History at Emory University, Atlanta. He has spent several years at German, Italian, and Austrian universities, as well as in spring 2001 as Visiting Fellow at the University of Sussex in Great Britain. Among his book publications are the political biography of the Prussian War Minister and Chief of General Staff Erich von Falkenhayn, Munich 1994, second edition 1996; his study of the Triple Alliance, entitled ‘Der Dreibund. Europäische Grossmach- und Allianzpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg, Vienna 2002; and his book on the history of the Atlantic published under the title Das entfesselte Meer, Munich 2002; an edition of the diaries and letters of two generals of the First World War under the title Kaiser Wilhelm II. als Oberster Kriegsherr während des Ersten Weltkrieges – Quellen aus der militärischen Umgebung des Kaisers is in preparation.


Wilhelm Deist was Emeritus Professor at the University of Freiburg, Germany, and chaired the Arbeitskreis Militärgeschichte until 2002. His numerous publications include Flottenpolitik und Flottenpropaganda. Das
Notes on contributors


Michael Epkenhans is director of the Otto-von-Bismarck Stiftung in Friedrichshruh, and teaches history at the University of Hamburg. His publications include Die wilhelminische Flottenrüstung 1908–1914. Welthmachtstreben, industrieller Fortschritt, soziale Integration, Munich 1991; ‘Die kaiserliche Marine im Ersten Weltkrieg: Welthmacht oder Untergang?’, in Wolfgang Michalka (ed.), Der Erste Weltkrieg, Munich 1994; and ‘Military-Industrial Relations in Imperial Germany’, War in History, forthcoming. He is currently working on a biography of Admiral von Tirpitz and on an edition of the private papers of Vice Admiral Hopman.


Isabel v. Hull teaches History at Cornell University. Her publications include The Entourage of Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1888–1918, Cambridge 1982; German Nationalism and the European Response, 1890–1945, co-edited with Carole Fink and MacGregor Knox, Norman, OK 1985; and Sexuality, State and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815, Ithaca, NY 1996, as well as numerous articles (Central European History, Journal of Contemporary History, etc.).
Notes on contributors

History) and chapters in edited volumes. She is currently writing a book entitled Military Culture and 'Final Solutions' in Imperial Germany.


Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann teaches nineteenth- and twentieth-century European History at the University of Oxford and


Jonathan Steinberg is Walter H. Annenberg Professor of Modern European History at Pennsylvania University, and an expert in the history of the German and Austrian Empires, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy,

**Matthew Stibbe** teaches European history at Sheffield Hallam University. He completed his doctorate with John Röhl in 1997, and his research interests are in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century German history. His publications include *German Anglophobia in the First World War*, Cambridge 2001; ‘Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Hohenzollerns at War’, in M. Seligmann and M. Hughes (eds.), *The First World War. Personalities in Conflict*, Barnsley 2000; and articles in historical journals. He is now working on a history of women in Nazi Germany, due to be published by Arnold in 2003.
Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank their editor at Cambridge University Press, William Davies, for his enthusiastic support of this volume, and Diana Göbel for her help in proof-reading the manuscript.

Even a Festschrift is subject to strict word limits, and the editors regret that it was unfortunately not possible to approach everyone who would have liked to add a contribution to this volume as a way of congratulating John Röhl on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday.

A. M. and W. D.
May 2003

Postscript

Sadly, Wilhelm Deist did not live to see the completion of this volume. Until the end, he worked tirelessly on this and other projects, and despite his severe illness, he was determined to contribute to the making of this Festschrift for his friend John Röhl. Wilhelm Deist’s death in June 2003 is a great loss to his family, friends, and colleagues, but also to German history. It has been a privilege and a pleasure working with him, and I am extremely grateful to him for his enthusiastic support of this volume over the last two years.

Annika Mombauer
July 2003
Abbreviations

AA Auswärtiges Amt
AA-PA Auswärtiges Amt, Politische Abteilung
AEG Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft
BA Bundesarchiv
BA-MA Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv
BD British Documents on the Origins of the War
DDF Documents Diplomatiques Français
EK Eulenburgs Politische Korrespondenz
FO Foreign Office
FRUS Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States
GLA General-Landesarchiv
GP Die Große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871–1914
GStA Geheimes Staatsarchiv
HHSA Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv
HP Holstein Papers
HSA Hauptstaatsarchiv
IWM Imperial War Museum
LC Library of Congress
MGM Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen
N, NL Nachlass
NA National Archives
NAZ Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung
NFMG Notes from Foreign Missions, Germany
NPZ Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung
OHL Oberste Heeresleitung
PA Politisches Archiv
PAAA Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes
PRO Public Record Office
RA Royal Archives
SA Staatsarchiv
SPD Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
VStNA Vereinigte Staaten von Nord-Amerika