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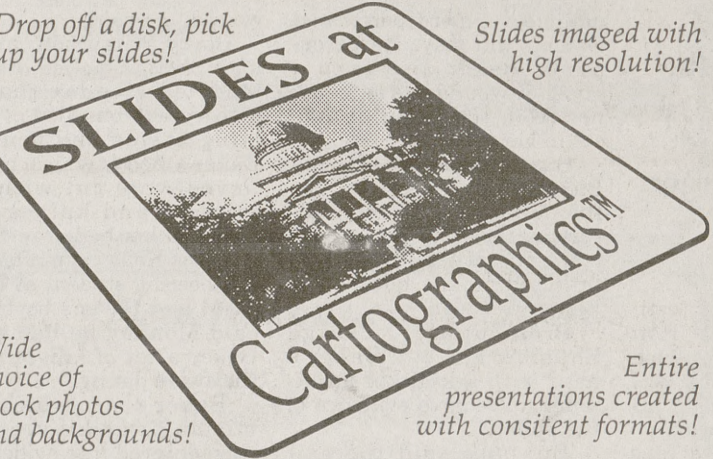
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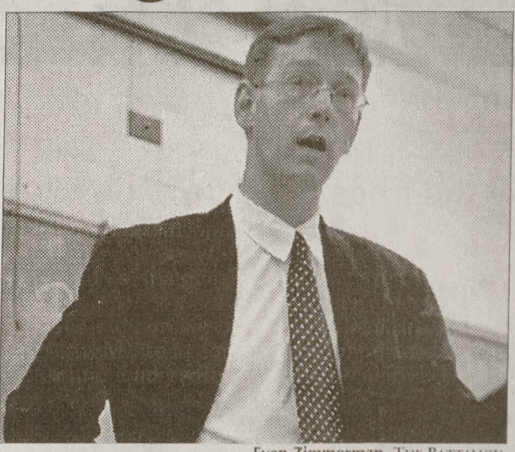
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Visiting lecturer gives foreign viewpoint

□ Dr. Eckart Conze, an invited speaker from Germany, spoke about the influence of Cold War America on European politics.



Evan Zimmerman, THE BATTALION

By James Bernsen
 THE BATTALION

The aftermath of World War II profoundly changed world diplomacy and the social structures of European countries, especially Germany, a visiting professor from that nation told a group of about 25 people Tuesday.

Dr. Eckart Conze, from the University of Tuebingen, said the 19th century diplomacy of multiple alliances in Europe was destroyed in favor of a polar arrangement of power between the United States and the Soviet bloc.

"The year 1945 is beyond any doubt one of the great epochal years of world history," he said. "The Second World War and the Cold War put an end to Europe as it was.

"The time for Europe had passed, and we have seen the emergence of a new principle of international order."

Conze said the traditional system of the 19th century, which had survived until the 1940s, was one of competing territorial demands and issues. The Cold War transformed conflict into a global one based on ideologies, he said.

"Europe had escaped German domination, but the cost was its independence," he said. "The countries of Western Europe became junior partners of the U.S., but that is nothing compared to what happened to the countries in the east."

"Even if Winston Churchill tried to get in every photograph with Roosevelt and Stalin, the crucial decisions were made in Moscow

Dr. Eckart Conze speaks of the "Americanization" of Germany and the rest of Europe after World War II.

and Washington," he said. "They alone had sufficient resources to maintain and extend their power and to confront each other.

Conze said the American ideal of democracy and that of Soviet-sponsored communism dominated the world geopolitical landscape like no issue before, turning every conflict into a battle for the two sides.

"Almost every country in the world aligned itself with one of the two capitals," he said. "The time of limited war aims was over. The new wars ... now added an ideological dimension.

"The Cold War brought former enemies together as friends," he said. "A Germany alienated to the U.S. could never have become an ally to Western democracy."

Conze said the German defeat and the "Americanizing" influence broke down party

structures from their basis of religious nominations and erased the idea of the state, which had traditionally been authoritarianism in German governments.

"The importance of local conflicts came down because of the Cold War, but the way they were addressed in the United States and Soviet spheres of influence were different.

"The Western governments dealt with them with compromises," he said. "Eastern countries were kept in line."

Dr. Charles Johnson, head of the Department of Political Science, said there was a good discussion of Germany's post-Cold War world.

Christoph Steppich, a German who lived through the Cold War in Germany, said the lecture was about things he knew first-hand.

Steppich said the previous attempt at democracy in Germany in the 1920s failed because people didn't know how to make one work.

"Democracy before the Second World War was still very weak and superficial. It wasn't ingrained in the Germans."

Dr. Arnold Kramer, an A&M professor, said he invited Conze to give students a different viewpoint of the world.

"When we only study American history from America, with American scholars, don't see the whole thing."

Johnson agreed that having a German professor give his view of historical events was important.

"We're at a university, and the main thing is about ideas," he said. "Foreigners bring with them an understanding that enriches the students."

"They're looking at the same things, but with a different set of lenses and have to understand what those lenses

Legend of Aston lives on with influence, pride

□ The "ultimate Aggie" passed away Oct. 2 after suffering two strokes.

By Tara Wilkinson
 THE BATTALION

James W. Aston, Texas A&M Class of '33 and namesake of Aston Hall, passed away on Oct. 2, but left a legacy as a devout Aggie.

Though best known as the former president of Republican National Bank and as a key player in the development of Dallas-Ft. Worth International Airport and UT Southwestern Medical Center, Aston's interests were not limited to the Dallas-Ft. Worth area.

Described as the "ultimate Aggie" by his stepgranddaughter, Lindsay Harris, a sophomore

general studies major, Aston lived with A&M at heart.

"Everything about him was Aggie," Harris said. "He lived A&M. It was so much of his house, his life, his stuff and what he gave his money to."

Aston's financial contributions to the University include the establishment of the Aston Endowed Chair of Institutional Development and a President's Endowed Scholarship.

He served on the Easterwood Trust Fund committee, a Dallas-based group that provides financial support to members of the Corps of Cadets.

Dr. Robert Walker, A&M vice president for development and Aston Professor of Institutional Development, said Aston was one of the University's strongest supporters.

"He was always supportive of the good things A&M stood for, such as character and leadership,"

Walker said. "He was very supportive of the Corps of Cadets."

Aston was cadet colonel, the highest rank in the Corps, and captain of the Aggie football team during his days as an A&M student.

Confined to a wheelchair after a series of strokes, Aston used a golf cart painted maroon and white and plastered with A&M stickers to ride outside for fresh air.

Last year, in celebration of Aston's 83rd birthday, the Aggie Band formed Aston's name on Kyle Field while playing "Happy Birthday."

Aston died after suffering two strokes in one month, and was buried wearing an A&M tie.

After graduating from A&M with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, Aston became city manager of Bryan in 1939.

In 1941, he joined the Army Air Corps and eventually became a colonel. He was awarded

two bronze stars and a Legion of Merit award for his service during World War II.

After the war, Aston lived in Dallas' youngest city neighborhood at 27.

Harris said she and her sister, Katie, Class of '94, became first Aggies in their families because of Aston's influence.

Harris said she was named after Aston as she is to her grandfather, and described him as a sincere, religious man who loved to tell stories.

"You knew he was in control down to the end," she said. "He never let anyone win in conversation. It was just his that didn't function; his was still so sharp."

Harris said she considers it a responsibility of carrying on Aston's devotion to A&M a proud claim him as a blood relative.

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THE BATTALION

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