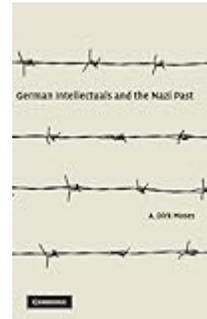




**A. Dirk Moses.** *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. ix + 293 pp. \$80.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-86495-4.



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## The Antinomies of German Memory

Just before the seventy-fifth anniversary of Adolf Hitler's assumption of power, *The New York Times* published an article by Nicholas Kulish about the most recent public discussions in Germany on how to memorialize the crimes of the Nazi regime. Kulish introduced the piece with these blunt lines: "Most countries celebrate the best in their past. Germany unrelentingly promotes its worst." His article reminded readers about the extent of the continued presence of the National Socialist past in the Federal Republic and the ways in which its commitment not to forget this past has helped reintegrate Germany into the international community. As an example of the latter, he quoted a speech by the former Israeli ambassador, Avi Primor, a few days earlier in Erfurt, commemorating the Soviet liberation of Auschwitz in January 1945. There, Primor praised the Germans' courage to be a "nation that erects memorials to immortalize its own shame." After summarizing plans for a series of new monuments and exhibitions on Third Reich extermination policies, Kulish asked why the obsession with National Socialism continues among Germans. One

answer he offered, if tentatively, was "the sense that the crime was so great that it spread like a blot over the entire culture." [1] Scholars have long noted the power of this tainted past to shape the course of democratization in West Germany. Since the Third Reich and its crimes remain the benchmarks for radical evil, the question of how Germans established a stable, even thriving, democratic order in the aftermath of genocide continues to provoke critical historical study. The travails of forging a post-Nazi national identity in the Federal Republic of Germany are the subject of this remarkable book by A. Dirk Moses. A distillation of several years of immersion in West German debates about *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, this ambitious monograph will surely elicit vigorous discussion of its major theses and its methodology. Due to its breadth, its ambition, and the richness of its argument, Moses's book will attract a great deal of scrutiny from researchers in German history and German studies—and deservedly so.

Moses's book enters a crowded field. Over the last decade, many outstanding works have appeared on pub-

lic and private attitudes to the Nazi years. Norbert Frei, Michael Geyer, Frank Stern, Robert Moeller, Elizabeth Heineman, Bill Niven, Jeffrey Herf, Harold Marcuse, Konrad Jarausch, Peter Reichel, Jeffrey K. Olick, Klaus Neumann, and Dagmar Herzog, among others, have placed the study of the politics of memory in West Germany on a solid archival footing. These scholars have challenged long-standing assumptions about remembering and forgetting in the post-1945 period, especially the Konrad Adenauer era (1949-63), by providing us with a sense of the diversity of the narrative strategies that emerged for coping with the memory of the Nazi period. They have also produced a robust framework for comparison with parallel developments in the GDR. Moses builds on the investigations of this group of scholars, while also proposing a radically different understanding of the six decades of debate in the Federal Republic over the confrontation with Nazi crimes.

Broken into twelve chapters, the book frames the entire postwar history of the German Federal Republic to 2005. Moses's point of departure is a deep dissatisfaction with recent claims about Germany's newly won status as a "normal" nation among others. This increasingly popular view of Germans' success in confronting the Judeocide—often made, one might add, in comparison to the history of Japanese memory of the 1930s and 40s—has taken, on, he thinks, the character of a Whiggish narrative of progress. Against this view, he shows that West Germans' support for liberal democracy cannot be grasped in terms of linearity or a collective learning process. Nothing, Moses argues, was inevitable about the German population's turn away from fascist ideology.

Readers who anticipate a typical generational biography of the "forty-fivers," the cohort of West German thinkers born in the late 1920s and early 1930s, may be surprised by this work. Although that group plays a crucial role in the intellectual history Moses has written, as he warns early in his book, it no longer stands as the main topic of investigation. Instead, the book follows and deciphers a recurring discourse concerning national identity in post-Hitler Germany—what he calls an "underlying, transgenerational structure of political discourse and political emotions centered on questions of stigma, trauma, and basic trust in national traditions" (p. ix). According to Moses, this discursive structure, binary in character, has informed virtually all of the discussions in the Federal Republic about reckoning with the Nazi past. Indeed, it has been constitutive of German national identity since the Allied victory in 1945. Without a "structural" approach, he suggests, one attuned to questions of lan-

guage, the peculiarities of German memory will be misunderstood. The intermittent and vociferous controversies about the German past during this period should be grasped as "manifest enactments of an underlying structure," one "inscribed in the subjectivities of Germans as individuals because their past, and therefore their collective identity, had been polluted and stigmatized by the criminal deeds of the German regime between 1933 and 1945" (p. 5). In the book's earliest sections, Moses identifies a number of flawed approaches to the study of the Nazi past he believes his book avoids. The structural approach, he contends, allows the reader to "abjure the moralistic tone in some of the secondary literature. Like anthropologists, we are observing the workings of a foreign cultural system" (p. 5). He rejects as well the existing set of concepts used to analyze non-Jewish German narratives of the Third Reich, finding fault, especially, with the recourse to categories of guilt and shame.

The repeated appearance of terms like "inherited sin," "collective guilt," and "victimization" in controversies over the German past demands, Moses argues, an acknowledgment of the "exhaustion of secular vocabulary" (p. 19). In looking at the discourse on the burden of German history after Hitler, a different vocabulary, one better suited to the reality of monstrous evil and national trauma, is needed. In the place of "guilt" and "shame," Moses proposes the concepts of "stigma" and "sacrifice." This conceptual pair allows historians to comprehend much better the sense in the discourse of pollution, of a transgenerational curse that permanently taints German culture. The turn to stigma and sacrifice is but part of a much larger borrowing from the field of religious studies to overcome the deficiencies of "secular vocabulary." Thus, Moses urges historians to create a new lexicon receptive to the "subterranean biblical themes flowing beneath the surface froth of events" (p. 21). During the Federal Republic's memory wars, the theological and the political were always intertwined. According to Moses, though, only Norbert Elias and Michael Geyer have really grappled with the problem of stigmatization in contemporary German history.

In chapters 1-3, the most challenging sections of the book, Moses lays out the rest of his conceptual apparatus. Mobilizing an array of studies on genocide, group psychology, and trauma studies, he posits an existential choice faced by young Germans of the 1945 generation in the wake of the Shoah. They could and did choose between two "repair strategies," a term he takes from Gabriele Rosenthal. With the first option, one could defend the German group self from accusations of collec-

tive guilt and stigmatization. The second option was to forge a new beginning, purifying the group from contamination and winning approval from the court of civilized opinion. At the root, then, of the disparate controversies over German identity was a dualistic structure, a set of binary oppositions bound to the “repair strategies.” Moses explicitly mentions “forgetting versus remembering, denying the past versus working through the past, good Germans versus bad Germans, truth versus error, sin versus redemption, sacred versus profane, and so on” (pp. 31-32). Moses realizes he is not the first to describe these antinomies. He believes his structural perspective, though, can improve upon prior research by not only describing but also accounting for the emergence and persistence of the dualisms.

Most of the remainder of the book deals with the two dominant subject positions to arise from the underlying dualistic structure. These contrasting subjectivities, the “Non-German German” and the “German German,” first appeared and predominated among the forty-fivers. If not the most graceful of classifications, these concepts serve Moses well as he attempts to explain the dilemmas of collective identity in post-1945 Germany. Yet, the binary oppositions do not end there. The Non-German German, usually associated with the political Left, lines up with what Moses calls “redemptive republicanism.” The German German, its right-wing counterpart, is linked to an “integrative republicanism.” A formidable boundary-crosser between disciplines, Moses relies on political theory to develop his conception of these two republicanism. They are both “political languages,” worldviews that conditioned their adherents’ responses to the Federal Republic’s cultural and political development. The former position, derived from Isaac Deutscher’s notion of the Non-Jewish Jew, held the German nation to have been polluted indefinitely by the horrors of Nazism. Thus, Non-German Germans wished to “recast Germans as essentially non-German, that is, as European citizens of a republic, cut off from their pre-Nazi history” (p. 73). In contrast, integrative republicans labored mightily to present German history as not permanently stigmatized by Hitler. Their counternarratives, defensive in nature, “were designed to permit Germans to retain basic trust in one another and their history, and therefore to feel good about being German despite Nazism and the Holocaust” (p. 73). According to Moses, these oppositions complemented, even presupposed one another—and were vital to German democratization. The fierce rivalry between these perspectives was “culturally productive” for the Federal Republic, since “neither lan-

guage of republicanism was able to impose itself, leading to a gradual discursive moral refoundation of the polity within the institutional structures of 1949” (pp. 37, 73).

Among the major figures in the Generation of 1945, Moses lists Jürgen Habermas, Ralf Dahrendorf, Hans-Magnus Enzensberger, Reinhart Koselleck, Ludwig von Friedeburg, Hermann Lübbe, Wilhelm Henis, Günter Grass, Martin Walser, M. Rainer Lepsius, and Kurt Sontheimer. To be clear, this is a work on intellectuals, specifically academics. It is not a study of the West German everyman, much less everywoman. Given the patriarchal character of the times, few women are included. Moses defends his reliance on intellectuals, contending that because of “the high level of reflection in their thinking for and against the nation, intellectuals are more likely to develop internally consistent and coherent positions, and, consequently, we can ‘read off’ the logic and structure of their political emotions from their writings” (p. 38). While Grass and Walser receive their due, literary figures are not his focus in the discussion of these culture wars, but rather academics, many of whom had once been devoted National Socialists. Historians, especially, will appreciate his treatment of members of their guild, including Ernst Nolte, Hans and Wolfgang Mommsen, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Joachim Fest, Karl Dietrich Bracher, Eberhard Jäckel, Andreas Hillgruber, and Thomas Nipperdey. In Moses’s analysis, these scholars become historical subjects, makers of history in their own right. They undertook the difficult work of scrutinizing German intellectual and cultural history that Moses so clearly admires. This investigation of “professors and politics” is one of the most fascinating aspects of the book. Although German academics have certainly been studied before, Moses introduces readers in chapters 6 and 8 to an extraordinary series of debates among the forty-fivers over the vitality of the Humboldt tradition, over “critical education theory,” co-determination in university decision-making, and the formation of an anti-authoritarian curriculum.

For describing this group, Moses prefers the term “forty-fivers” to Harold Marcuse’s “forty-eighters” and to its other appellations—“skeptical,” *Flakhelfer*, or “Auschwitz”—because “forty-fiver” accents the importance of the fall of the Nazi state as the key event of their lives. After an interesting discussion of Karl Mannheim’s work on the concept of generations, Moses demarcates the forty-fivers as those born between 1922 and 1932. They shared an “experiential matrix of war, ideological fanaticism, and political and social breakdown” with the defeat of the Third Reich (p. 57). Moses notes how

many older leftists in the immediate postwar years placed their hopes for a revolutionary refounding of the German polity on this generation. Writers such as Eugen Kogon and Walter Dirks of the *Frankfurter Hefte* and Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter of Gruppe 47 were gravely disappointed by the forty-fivers. Two decades later, many student radicals accused them of complicity in the “silence” about the Nazi years associated with Adenauer and Christian Democratic politics.

Moses offers a thoughtful rebuttal to these claims. Concurring with Klaus Naumann’s description of them as West Germany’s “first political generation,” he responds to the influential critiques of the forty-fivers brought from the Right by Helmut Schelsky and from the Left by Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich. For Moses, though they were much derided by their elders and by their successors, the forty-fivers ensured democracy’s survival in West Germany. Their intra- and inter-generational duels in print and at the podium over the meaning of German nationality, the burden of the Holocaust, and the role of universities supplied a critical, intellectual framework where democratic life could potentially flourish. In Moses’s account, “West German democracy is a discursive achievement,” and the forty-fivers made it possible (p. 10).

Answering the charge that they were complicit in the silence about the continuing influence of many former Nazis, he emphasizes the precarious state of democratic values in the Federal Republic in the early postwar years. After all, Hitler’s genocidal regime had not collapsed due to an uprising by the German people, but under pressure from without. Far too many Germans had not relinquished their sympathies for the ultra-nationalism of the NSDAP. This state of affairs compelled the forty-fivers, according to Moses, to accommodate older Germans who had not surrendered their affection for National Socialism. As unfortunate as this “unwritten contract of discretion” was, Moses depicts it as unavoidable (p. 69). The Generation of 1945 was simply not in a position of strength sufficient to inaugurate a process of radical change in West Germany. What they could do was initiate a revolution in thought. Moses values their trenchant criticisms of German intellectual and cultural traditions, especially those that facilitated the rise of Hitler. Still, he admits the “cost of the functionally necessary silence in the 1950s was the intergenerational transfer of the psychological consequences of pollution and stigma” (p. 69). The absence of redemptive republican sociocultural and political transformation and the presence of many former Nazis in positions of authority entailed a new round of

controversy and conflict about the recent past. Thus the revolt of the sixty-eighters, Moses implies, was over-terminated.

Moses sets aside two chapters for case studies of forty-fivers. He assigns political theorist Wilhelm Hennis a role as a representative integrative republican—though Hermann Lübbe receives almost as much attention. Not surprisingly, Jürgen Habermas is the exemplary redemptive republican, and he draws a great deal of scrutiny in Moses’s account from chapter 5 on. Despite the differences between their positions, Habermas, Hennis, and their respective allies found much common ground in the Adenauer years against the remnants of an old, anti-democratic Right. “Weimar syndrome,” the unrelenting anxiety that the new constitutional state suffered from the same flaws as the Weimar Republic, haunted redemptive and integrative republicans alike in the late 1950s and early 60s, compelling them to downplay their differences. Moses points to the series of Nazi trials and to the notorious *Spiegel* affair of 1962 as unifying moments for the forty-fivers. This uneasy alliance would not last, however. The upheavals of the late 1960s fractured cooperation, putting redemptive republicans on the defensive and pushing integrative republicans to the Right.

In the wake of recent commemorations of the global upheavals of 1968, Moses’s analysis of that year in West Germany and its aftermath admittedly strikes a discordant note. He shows how the assaults by some sixty-eighters on the legitimacy of the Federal Republic, whether verbal or literal (in the case of the “German Autumn” of 1977), bitterly divided the forty-fivers. He does concede that the sixty-eighters’ repudiation of the FRG resulted from outrage over the continuing pollution of German social and political life by ex-Nazis, an instance where the “moral blindness of integrative republicanism became most apparent” (p. 197). The New Left’s anti-authoritarian radicalism also launched far-reaching and needed changes in the German private sphere. Yet Moses describes their politics as essentially illiberal and focuses on the divisions among the forty-fivers caused by the young radicals’ rhetorical excesses, dogmatism, and actionist politics. Moreover, he reminds readers of their profound lack of success, of the inability to overthrow “those dimensions of the West German consensus that the sixty-eighters regarded as dubiously authoritarian—representative democracy, the social market economy, intellectual pluralism, and *Westbindung*” (p. 9). The forty-fivers, not the Generation of 1968, warrant the lion’s share of credit for the long-term stabil-

ity of liberal democracy in West Germany. Whether intentional or not, Moses's history of West German memory underscores the epochal failures of the radical Left in 1949, 1968, 1977, and 1989-90. The Federal Republic was founded as and remained a liberal, not a socialist, democracy.

Through the last four chapters, Moses traces this discourse from the beginning of the Helmut Kohl era in 1982 to the drama surrounding reunification and the battles over German nationality. He points out how many leftist and liberal intellectuals had won tremendous influence in German cultural life by the early 1980s. After Kohl's victory, conservatives assailed the redemptive republican imaginary with their own project of moral and cultural renewal. Integrative republicans' insistence on relativizing Nazi crimes through comparison with those under Joseph Stalin and their calls for equal time for claims about World War II-era German victimhood forced a new round of confrontation between forty-fivers, exemplified in the *Historikerstreit*. In the process, the redemptive republicans rendered, according to Moses, "the Holocaust an internationally recognized stigma," becoming "managers of this stigma by excoriating anyone who doubted the Holocaust's uniqueness" (p. 220). Their efforts, backed by an array of U.S., British, and Israeli scholars, consolidated a burgeoning republican consensus. Moses notes how worries among Non-German Germans about conservative appeals for "normalization" came as much of the public, including former sixty-eighters and a third generation, began to display genuine confidence in the constitutional state.

In the discussion of post-unification debates over multiculturalism and immigration, laid out in chapters 10 and 11, Moses's arguments take some surprising twists. Amidst renewed domestic and international concern after 1990 over the "German question," left-wing and liberal intellectuals implored Germans to forsake a national orientation altogether. Auschwitz had defiled forever any recourse to a traditional national identity for German citizens. Germans, given their tainted past, should lead the way for the other European countries by supporting policies of socioeconomic justice, promoting peaceful resolution of conflict, and embracing a post-national identity. Consistent with his importance for earlier chapters in the book, Habermas and his concept of constitutional patriotism garner much of Moses's attention. In several passages, Moses draws out the contradictions in and the increasingly anachronistic quality of Habermas's Non-German German perspective. He contends that Habermas in the 1990s "asked the Germans to remember their

continuing responsibility for Auschwitz, which meant demanding that they understood themselves historically as a prepolitical national community. But, on the other, he was insisting that Germans should understand themselves politically as an ahistorical, democratically self-willed, political collective" (p. 237). The (problematic) logic of this argument entails the end of Germanness, the "self-liquidation of the German nation via critical reflection and immigration in the same way as the Non-Jewish Jew would mean the end of the Jewish people if all Jews adopted this identity" (p. 238). In short, Moses exposes the Non-German German plea for a post-national identity as an exercise in asking the impossible.

Moses does not halt his criticism of redemptive republicanism there. He justifies his earlier claims about the theological impulses lurking underneath the public debates on the Nazi past. Taking explicit aim at the view of the Holocaust as barring recourse to a national consciousness, he argues, in some of his strongest language, that the Non-German Germans clung, unconsciously, to a "substitutionary theology in which the Jews were killed so that a new Germany can be born" (p. 240). Many thinkers in the Generation of 1945's left wing identified with annihilated European Jews, just as devout Christians identified with the crucified Jesus. In a statement about Berlin's Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe, he reaches his rhetorical crescendo: "For the Non-German Germans," he states, "the Berlin memorial thus works as stigmata, the divine sign of grace and of Jesus's sacrifice, rather than as a stigma, a source of shame" (p. 240). Constant demands to remember Jewish victims of Nazism are bound to a "sinful but repentant community" that "needs to keep resacrificing the Jews in regular, national rituals in the same way as Christians regularly celebrate the Eucharist. The memory of the murdered Jews thereby serves as a permanent resource for collective regeneration" (p. 240).

Moses then turns, in chapter 11, to the writings of integrative republicans after 1990. The German German perspective, he demonstrates, carried its own bundle of fears in the wake of unification. Relying mainly on the works of Michael StÄ¼rmer, Gregor SchÄ¼llgen, Nolte, and Walser, Moses looks at the desperation with which conservatives fought the anti-national worldview of the redemptive republicans. Although they still did not consider Germany a part of the "West," they understood and accepted the Federal Republic's bonds with it. As Moses shows in this and the subsequent chapter, theology animated conservative politics as much as it did that of their leftist and liberal opponents. If the Non-German

Germans defended an “anamnesic memory culture committed to retrospective solidarity with the victims of the Holocaust,” the German Germans advocated an “amnesiac memory that expressed the needs of the ‘perpetrator collective’” (p. 263). Moses demonstrates how the German German “repair strategies” of the 1950s continued to be elaborated, albeit in a quite different context, in the 90s. For instance, he references StÄ¼rmer’s reading of contemporary German history, in which Hitler is portrayed as a “radically untraditional ruler who breached all the limitations on power of the nation’s institutions and political culture” (p. 248). Interpreting Hitler as an aberration allowed him to reaffirm the soundness of German cultural and political traditions.

Moses’s account of the contortions of rightist thinkers in their explanations for Hitler’s assumption of power makes for fascinating reading. Some conservative intellectuals argued, presciently, that National Socialist race theory actually implied a transnational notion of political community. Others rejected specific German origins for Nazism or emphasized the highly specific crisis situation of the 1920s and 30s. Just as he does with the Non-German Germans, Moses deftly analyzes conservatives’ remarks on Auschwitz. For StÄ¼rmer, as an undeniable part of German history, the Shoah could not be forgotten, but should not paralyze Germans’ faith in their culture or imply a perpetual defilement of German nationhood. Undoubtedly Walser, who is usually associated with the Left, has come to typify this resentment towards “the moralization of the Nazi past aimed against the German national ideal” (p. 258). After his 1998 Paulskirche speech, where he inveighed against the use of the Holocaust as a “moral cudgel,” Walser has been blasted by critics for his supposed shift to a rightist, if not antisemitic, outlook. Moses argues, compellingly, that Walser has long represented a distinctive form of German German ideology. His earlier suspicion of elites, once tied to a commitment to socialism, shifted in the 1980s and thereafter to the leftist and liberal intelligentsia, whom he saw as foisting a continued guilt on Germans for criminal acts committed six or seven decades earlier. Through a close reading of Walser’s speeches and writings going back to the early 1960s, Moses uncovers a number of unsettling themes in Walser’s critique. He concludes his discussion of the novelist by revealing how Walser’s “unconscious historical large-group fantasy was that Jews and Non-German Germans would cease trying to stigmatize the German people. Or that they disappear altogether” (p. 262). What Walser did not expect, according to Moses’s analysis, was the erosion of this sense of pollution with-

out the “disappearance” of the aforementioned groups. The power of the stigma over German society had dissipated in a way not necessarily envisioned by either integrative or redemptive republicans.

In the last chapter, Moses contends that this underlying binary structure has dissolved with the emergence of the fourth generation, whose members have little direct connection to the Nazi years. Their historical and political orientation belongs primarily to the Federal Republic. By the turn of the century a “basic trust”—a deceptively simple term—in democratic institutions had become an integral feature of German public life. German citizens, thanks largely to the passion and persistence of the forty-fivers, partake of a consensus about the legitimacy of their state. For Moses, the Non-German German and German German subject positions now belong to a past that has truly passed away. Although he does not neglect lingering concerns in the early twenty-first century about Germany’s unmasterable past, Moses believes the fourth generation has a fundamentally different relationship to its national history. “Younger Germans,” he states, “are no longer vulnerable to such attempts to revive German stigma in the service of partisan geopolitics. People living in Germany continue to negotiate their identity dilemmas around the axes of ethnicity and immigration—just like any other country” (p. 283). Moses leaves his readers with a sense of new cultural and political possibilities for the Berlin Republic. Henceforth, the problem of German national identity will not be dominated by the antinomies of the old discourse.

To buttress such a complex thesis, Moses draws on an extensive array of source materials. In addition to sifting through an imposing number of primary sources, he reveals a thorough command of the historiography on the Federal Republic since 1945, no small feat, since certain areas of this literature have become subfields in their own right. Most impressively, Moses marshals recent works in social psychology, religious studies, and anthropology with relative ease. Though the book lacks a bibliography, its extensive footnotes will prove of great value to researchers.

As a history of the West German public sphere, the work demonstrates powerfully the antipode to the “unpolitical German.” The focus on the university, too, should inspire scholars reflecting on the role of universities in democratic societies, not only in Germany but elsewhere. But the book will find its most attentive readers among intellectual historians. Moses not only contextualizes the writings of such luminaries as Habermas,

but also provides thoughtful introductions to the ideas of much less well-known intellectuals, such as Lübbe, Hennis, Sontheimer, and Friedeburg. Aside from appreciating his treatment of particular thinkers, historians of ideas should profit from his trenchant considerations on a number of topics vital to the subfield: the usefulness of psychological categories, the concept of “generation,” and controversies over modern technology, theories of education, and debates over multiculturalism and identity. More fundamentally, the book registers the impact of the “linguistic turn” of the 1980s and 1990s on intellectual history. Along with his recent retrospective on the writings of Hayden White, Moses’s work should compel some further rumination on the value of history writing grounded in discourse analysis.[2] Moses’s lucid, graceful style is enviable. Theoretically informed but careful in its delineation of difficult concepts, his work refutes general prejudices about the incompatibility of theory and clear prose.

Even so, almost every aspect of the book seems likely to arouse controversy. Some readers may conclude that Moses engages in a kind of discursive determinism. The claim that democracy’s triumph in the Federal Republic was a “discursive achievement” deserves long and thorough consideration from German historians. Other scholars will legitimately take issue with his almost exclusive focus on academics. Moses’s choice of an “ethnographic” perspective for examining debates over mastering the Judeocide is also sure to incur serious disagreement. His contentious remarks about the theological dimensions of both republican perspectives, noted above, will certainly incite passionate retorts too.

Questions arise as well about the ramifications of his research. How would he approach the problem of East German intellectuals and the Nazi past? The burgeoning comparative literature on the two Germanys makes the omission of the GDR from this interpretive study all the more conspicuous. A few brief remarks suggesting avenues of research on the GDR would have been useful. In addition, given his rigorous treatment of the forty-fivers, Moses’s harsh comments about the sixty-eighters demand careful evaluation. The author’s emphasis on their actionism, dogmatism, and “illiberal” politics, not to mention their willingness to employ violence, suggests an extremely narrow view of this generation. Moses is silent on several important characteristics of German New Left protest—the movement against nuclear weapons, mobilizations against the Emergency Laws, demonstrations against the shah of Iran, and Vietnam solidarity campaigns. In light of these omissions,

Moses’s book will not be the last word on the Generation of 68’s role in the formation of a democratic political system in West Germany.

Another potential concern, based on an appeal to the counterfactual, relates to Moses’s interpretation of what was politically possible in the Federal Republic during the 1950s. Given the extremely close nature of the 1949 election, the course of West German intellectual life as related to politics can be seen as rather contingent, and one could imagine a very different cultural and political climate for *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the FRG had Kurt Schumacher, and not Adenauer, prevailed. What Moses calls a “functionally necessary silence” might not have been so necessary under a Social Democratic government. Schumacher, a democratic Marxist and concentration camp survivor, favored a direct confrontation with the Third Reich’s crimes, especially the Shoah, but also rejected the thesis of collective guilt. While Herf and Olick assess Schumacher’s place in the history of West German memory in detail, he only earns a single reference in Moses’s book. Where Schumacher and his synthesis of nationalism and Marxism might fit in Moses’s account is left to speculation.

Finally, Moses’s research—perhaps unintentionally—has the potential to reopen the *Sonderweg* discussion. His book suggests that this model is quite applicable to the tormented discourse of German memory after 1945. Although his work will likely contribute, as he hopes, to an important comparative literature on memory and democratization in former dictatorships, Moses’s investigations reaffirm the peculiarity of Germany’s transition to democracy. Here, a protracted comparison between his book and Konrad Jarausch’s *After Hitler* (2006), a study of the “recivilizing” of Germans as a collective learning process, could be profitable to scholars still weary from previous rounds of *Sonderweg* polemics.

This brief list of comments and questions, however, merely glosses the evocative quality of this book. Moses has given historians of central Europe, if not the larger historical profession, much to mull over in their writing, research, and teaching on contemporary German history. No scholar will approach the topic of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* again without first coming to terms with this book.

#### Notes

[1]. Nicholas Kulish, “Germany Confronts Holocaust Legacy Anew,” *The New York Times*, January 29, 2008.

[2]. A. Dirk Moses, "Hayden White, Traumatic Nationalism, and the Public Role of History," *History and Theory* 44 (2005): 311-332.

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