

### Whither German *Erinnerungskultur*?

As a German born in the late 1990s, I have grown up with the new national *Meistererzählung* (master narrative) of a country rebuilt with the grace of the West, a country united after the cruelty of Socialism, and, most importantly, a country risen from the ashes of the sin of Nazism in so flawless a manner that repentance has turned into a source of national pride itself. At the same time, my biography seems exemplary for most Germans in that I was educated about the fragility of democracy, the Nuremberg race laws, and the horrors of the camps and yet do not know more about my family's history before 1945 than the fact that they suffered from economic instability before, the paternal side was displaced from West Prussia during, and my grandfather imprisoned for several years in Russia after the war. Wanting to discuss one's (grand-)grandparents' voting behavior or political beliefs beyond assurances of "they did not know better" is still not exactly appreciated when coming together for coffee and cake on Sundays.

Now that my grandparents are dead and the ethno-nationalist fringe is gaining ground, the silence of my own familial past is but deafening and, as I began to recognise this silence as a societally shared experience, my belief in and identification with what I have come to know and appreciate as German *Erinnerungskultur* (culture of remembrance) has slowly withered away. As a student of History in the Ruhrgebiet and, later, a student of Middle Eastern History in the UK and the US, I have become increasingly aware of the fissures and inconsistencies of this new national narrative and, most importantly, the self-righteousness and arrogance with which many Germans, myself included, look upon other countries' official and nationalist histories. Multiple recent events have amply illustrated the extent to which Germany's sense of superiority in matters relating to coming to terms with its Nazi past is misguided. Having watched from the UK as horror unfolded in Israel and Gaza following October 7, 2023, and mayhem ensued around the world shortly thereafter, I am setting out to comment on what I perceive as the perils of Germany's increasingly stiff and ritualised discourse of remembrance in the public realm.

#### Prelude

About ten years ago, when visiting an independent cinema in my hometown, Hagen, I took a photo of a sticker announcing a demonstration in nearby Dortmund. I did so to remember the title of the event: "Erinnern heißt kämpfen" (*remembering means fighting*). The slogan stuck as I embarked on my academic journey: To be a historian, after all, also entails fighting with the rigidity of one's archive. The slogan has become relevant for me again in reflecting on the implications of Merkel's 2008 speech at the Israeli Knesset in which she declared Israel's security and right to existence as a logical consequence of Germany's historical responsibility and, crucially, as Germany's *raison d'état* (*Staatsraison*). Doing so has had manifest consequences for public remembrance: By proclaiming it *Staatsraison*, Merkel similarly determined Germany's commitment to Israel's security to be nonnegotiable and thus withdrew it from the realm of democratic negotiation, debate, and the civil fight for remembrance. Simultaneously, the proliferation of right-wing extremism in Israeli politics since the 2000s, has led to the increasing questioning of Germany's unconditional commitment to the country as well as the parameters of its historical responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mairav Zonszein, "The mainstreaming of Israeli extremism," *Middle East Institute*, 18 December 2024, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/mainstreaming-israeli-extremism>.

Merkel's speech was the climax of a process underway since reunification. At the same time as the republic's centre moved back from Bonn to Berlin, the Bundestag resolved to build the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the new capital. The then president of the *Bundestag*, Wolfgang Thierse (SPD), referred to the memorial as the "first joint project of remembrance for reunified Germany" at its opening ceremony in 2005.<sup>2</sup> Situated in close proximity to the government quarter and right to the east of the former Berlin Wall, the memorial's physical location itself marks it as part of the post-1989 state's quest for a reunified identity. When the memorial was debated in parliament in the 1990s, Reinhart Koselleck had warned that the memorial's singular focus on Jews implied a hierarchy of the victims of the Nazi regime.<sup>3</sup> Both, the memorial's singular emphasis on Jews and Merkel's commitment to Israel exemplify the narrow interpretation of the state's historical responsibility. Hereby, I am by no means downplaying the horrors of the Holocaust or questioning the importance of the memorial but instead hope to draw attention to the extent to which both developments showcase the state's tendency to cherry pick responsibility.

The historians' debate (*Historikerstreit*) of the mid-1980s is crucial for understanding the post-reunification narrowing of official commitments to historical responsibility due to its chief contribution to establishing the Holocaust as the central event of German history and underlining its horrors as historically singular. Historian Ernst Nolte's interpretation of Nazism and the Holocaust as a reaction to the dangers and crimes of Bolshevism was vehemently opposed by liberal intellectuals spearheaded by Jürgen Habermas.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the debate and by the time Germany was headed towards reunification, West German public opinion concurred that the Shoa was a singular historical event committed by Germans.

Despite, or maybe as a result of, Germany's much lauded official culture of remembering the Holocaust as a German crime, however, important blind spots remain, especially with regard to the Nazi regime's colonial expansionist and murderous policy in Eastern Europe.<sup>5</sup> Historian Jürgen Zimmerer's ironical reasoning that, for the state, "responsibility therefore does not arise from crimes per se, but only from singular crimes," seems the logical conclusion.<sup>6</sup>

## 19 Months of Carnival

The reverberations of Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 in Germany amply illustrate the extent to which antisemitism and criticism of Israel have become to be understood as inherently intertwined as a result of the narrowing of Germany's official historical discourse.

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<sup>2</sup> "Rede von Bundestagspräsident Wolfgang Thierse zur Eröffnung des 'Denkmals für die ermordeten Juden Europas' am 10. Mai 2005 in Berlin," <https://webarchiv.bundestag.de/archive/2015/0626/bundestag/praesidium/reden/2005/007/244962.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, "Wer darf vergessen werden? Das Holocaust-Mahnmal hierarchisiert die Opfer," *Die Zeit*, 19 March 1998, <https://www.zeit.de/1998/13/holocaust.txt.19980319.xml>.

<sup>4</sup> See Ernst Nolte, "Die Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will. Eine Rede, die geschrieben, aber nicht gehalten werden konnte," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6. Juni 1986.

<sup>5</sup> See Franziska Davies, "Der 'vergessene Osten': Der deutsche Vernichtungskrieg gegen Polen und die Sowjetunion und die blinden Flecken der deutschen Erinnerung," in *Erinnerungskämpfe. Neues deutsches Geschichtsbewusstsein*, edited by Jürgen Zimmerer, 175-200 (Reclam: Stuttgart 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Jürgen Zimmerer, "Erinnerungskämpfe: Wem gehört die Deutsche Geschichte?" in *Erinnerungskämpfe. Neues deutsches Geschichtsbewusstsein*, edited by Jürgen Zimmerer, 10 (Reclam: Stuttgart 2023).

German chancellor Scholz himself was quick to reify Germany's commitment to Israel's security after the October 7 attack and reasoned it with the country's historical responsibility. Echoing Merkel's *Staatsräson* speech, he affirmed:

[T]he security of Israel is and will remain the prime motivation for the actions of the state of Germany. Our own history, the responsibility we bear as a result of the Holocaust, make it our permanent task to stand up for the existence and security of the state of Israel. This responsibility is our guide.<sup>7</sup>

On October 26, 2023, Scholz stated that due to Israel being “a democratic state led by very humanitarian principles” he had “no doubt” that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) would stick to international law in its campaign against Hamas in the Gaza strip.<sup>8</sup> By that time and within less than three weeks of the conflict military operations led by the IDF had already killed more than 7,000 Palestinians, close to 70% of which were children, women, and the elderly.<sup>9</sup>

Shortly thereafter, in November 2023, South African Jewish artist Candice Breitz's exhibition in the Saarland Museum was canceled. While the exhibition was set to feature her work *TLDR* on sex work activists in Cape Town, Breitz stated in an interview with the Guardian that the museum's director had suggested that her comments on the Israeli bombardment of Gaza were “inappropriate” and accused her of signing a letter in support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement (BDS) movement.<sup>10</sup> Breitz was just one of several Jewish artists and intellectuals whose work was affected and attacked in Germany on the basis of accusations of antisemitism following public statements about the Gaza war.

In December 2024, the Green-party affiliated Heinrich Böll Foundation announced that it would pull out from the Hannah Arendt Award ceremony due to the awardee Masha Gessen's comparison between the Jewish ghettos in Nazi-occupied Europe and the Gaza strip.<sup>11</sup> The foundation responded to an article of Gessen's in which she commented on what is also the topic of this essay: The “static, glassed in” culture of remembrance in Germany which has begun to feel “as though it were an effort not only to remember history but also to insure that only this particular history is remembered.”<sup>12</sup>

In February 2024, directors Yuval Abraham and Basel Adra were accused of antisemitism after they had criticised Israel at the Berlinale Film Festival. Receiving an award for their documentary “No Other Land,” they drew attention to current events in Gaza and referred to the Israeli military occupation in the West Bank as a system of apartheid.<sup>13</sup> Several German politicians thereafter called for defunding the international film festival and decried the directors' comments as “antisemitic.” Jewish Israeli Yuval

<sup>7</sup> The German Federal Government, “Government statement by the Federal Chancellor on Israel,” 12 October 2023, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/bk-government-statement-israel-2229864>.

<sup>8</sup> “Scholz zweifelt nicht an Einhaltung des Völkerrechts durch Israel,” *Die Zeit*, 26 October 2023, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2023-10/eu-gipfel-israel-olaf-scholz-ukraine-pedro-sanchez-viktor-orban-feuerpausen>.

<sup>9</sup> Zeina Jamaluddine, Francesco Checchi, and Oona M. R. Campbell, “Excess mortality in Gaza: Oct 7-26, 2023,” *The Lancet* Correspondence 402/10318 (2023): 2189-2190, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)02640-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02640-5/fulltext).

<sup>10</sup> Philip Oltermann, “A frenzy of judgement: artist Candice Breitz on her German show being pulled over Gaza,” *The Guardian*, 7 December 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/dec/07/a-frenzy-of-judgement-artist-candice-breitz-on-her-german-show-being-pulled-over-gaza>.

<sup>11</sup> Heinrich Böll Stiftung, “The Heinrich Böll Foundation has decided to pull out of the event during which Masha Gessen was to receive the Hannah Arendt Award,” 14 December 2023, <https://www.boell.de/en/2023/12/14/heinrich-boll-foundation-has-decided-pull-out-event-during-which-masha-gessen-was>.

<sup>12</sup> Masha Gessen, “In the Shadow of the Holocaust,” *The New Yorker*, 9 December 2023, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-weekend-essay/in-the-shadow-of-the-holocaust>.

<sup>13</sup> “Antisemitismusvorwürfe nach Berlinale-Preisverleihung,” *Tagesschau*, 26 February 2024, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/regional/berlin/rbb-politik-wertet-israel-kritik-bei-preisverleihung-als-schaden-fuer-die-berlinale-100.html>.

Abraham highlighted the absurdity of these responses: Not only had most of his paternal family been killed during the Holocaust, German politicians' comments had put his family at risk in Israel where their house was beleaguered by a mob of right-wing radicals.<sup>14</sup>

Two months later, in April 2024, the University of Cologne cancelled the annual Albertus Magnus Visiting Professorship and disinvited New School academic Nancy Fraser. The university's rector Joybrato Mukherjee reasoned the university's decision with Fraser's signing of an open letter in November 2023 which "questions Israel's right to existence as an 'ethno-supremacist state' since its founding in 1948," "relativises" October 7, and "calls for an academic and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions."<sup>15</sup> Germany's largest funding body for international academic cooperation, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), whose acting president Mukherjee is, was quick to express solidarity with Israeli partner institutions after October 7.<sup>16</sup> As the UN Human Rights Commissioner was drawing attention to Israel's scholasticide in the Gaza Strip, where no institutions of higher education remain as a result of targeted bombings, the DAAD acknowledged that Palestinian scholarship holders would have virtually no opportunity to leave the Gaza strip to study in Germany.<sup>17</sup>

In November 2024, photographer Nan Goldin criticised Israel's conduct in Gaza at the opening of her exhibition in Berlin's Nationalgalerie: "What I see in Gaza, reminds me of the progroms [in Russia] my grandparents were escaping from."<sup>18</sup> In her speech, she referred to the events in Gaza and Lebanon as a genocide and drew attention to the fact that Germany is home to the largest Palestinian diaspora in Europe. In response to Goldin, Hermann Parzinger, president of the foundation that the museum belongs to, rejected her statements, calling them "unbearable" and "dangerously trivialising in their one-sidedness."<sup>19</sup>

These cases demonstrate that prominent Jewish academics and artists critical of Israel have joined Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims as the most common targets of accusations of antisemitism (or as the tabloid *Bild* would call it: "Judenhass," jew hatred) which exemplifies the misguided nature of the German discourse on Israel and Palestine. Preliminary findings of an inquiry by the Diaspora Alliance into the relation of deplatforming, event cancellations, and accusations of antisemitism in Germany indicate that a quarter of such cases affected Jews who make up less than one percent of the German population.<sup>20</sup>

What characterises all of the above mentioned cases is not only that they entail restrictions on individuals' right to free speech but that they are representative of contemporary discourses about societal belonging and citizenship in Germany. Prominent political or cultural institutions and their representatives

<sup>14</sup> "Israelischer Regisseur bezeichnet Antisemitismus-Vorwurf als absurd," *NDR*, 29 February 2024, <https://www.ndr.de/kultur/film/Israelischer-Regisseur-bezeichnet-Antisemitismusvorwurf-als-absurd,berlinale1104.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Universität zu Köln, "Absage der Albertus-Magnus-Professur 2024," 5 April 2024, <https://uni-koeln.de/universitaet/aktuell/meldungen/meldungen-detail/absage-der-albertus-magnus-professur-2024>.

<sup>16</sup> DAAD, "DAAD verurteilt Terror gegen Israel," 9 October 2023, [https://www.daad.de/de/der-daad/kommunikation-publikationen/presse/pressemitteilungen/daad-verurteilt-terror-gegen-israel\\_2023/](https://www.daad.de/de/der-daad/kommunikation-publikationen/presse/pressemitteilungen/daad-verurteilt-terror-gegen-israel_2023/).

<sup>17</sup> OHCHR, "UN experts deeply concerned over 'scholasticide' in Gaza," 18 April 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>; DAAD "Educational opportunities for Palestinians," 16 April 2024, <https://www.daad.de/en/the-daad/daad-journal/topics/educational-opportunities-for-palestinians/>.

<sup>18</sup> "Nan Goldin eröffnet Ausstellung mit Vorwürfen gegen Israel und Deutschland," *Der Spiegel*, 23 November 2024, <https://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gaza-krieg-und-kunst-nan-goldin-ausstellung-sorgt-fuer-eklat-in-der-neuen-nationalgalerie-a-73d24821-76c3-40e5-9057-1a0bd3327ae6>.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Grenier, "Wenn jüdische Künstler als antisemitisch bezeichnet werden," *Deutsche Welle*, 20 September 2024, <https://www.dw.com/de/wenn-jüdische-künstler-als-antisemitisch-bezeichnet-werden/a-70199671>.

define the boundaries of what is acceptable to be said about Israel as a Jewish state on the basis of German historical responsibility and *Staatsräson*. The Holocaust as a singular crime was committed by Germans as singular perpetrators who have internalised its horrors in a singular, unique way and are therefore fit to determine which comparison, which evaluation, which utterance is permissible about the state understood to singularly represent their victims.

The same logic that forbade Gessen to compare Gaza to the Jewish ghettos thus allowed Boris Pistorius to compare Putin's war in Ukraine with Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia.<sup>21</sup> The latter incident has caused next to no public outcry while even left-wing newspapers criticised Gessen for her audacity to allude to a "German McCarthyism" when it comes to criticism of Israel.<sup>22</sup> Pointing out this hypocrisy is all the more important amidst the ambivalent attitude towards International Law exhibited in Germany's response to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. While politicians and public figures incessantly and rightfully emphasise Putin's assault on Ukraine as "in breach of international law"

(*völkerrechtswidrig*), no equally stringent commitment is demonstrated in the context of Israel's war on Gaza. This is perhaps illustrated best by the fact that just hours after the general election in February 2025, chancellor-elect Friedrich Merz invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanjahu to Germany despite the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant.<sup>23</sup> While Germany criticises the increasing disregard of international institutions, politicians' dismissal of the court's decision should be understood as contributing to the ongoing erosion of a rights-based international order, however flawed it may have been, achieved in the aftermath of World War II.

### A Minor Problem

The conflation of antisemitism and criticism of Israel gained currency after several states, among them Germany and the USA, endorsed or adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)'s 2016 definition of antisemitism. The examples provided by the IHRA to facilitate the interpretation of the definition, in particular, assume the identity of Zionism and Judaism, for example by suggesting that "claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour" equals "denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination."<sup>24</sup> In Germany, this interpretive thrust of the IHRA definition was particularly impactful.<sup>25</sup> In 2019, for example, the *Bundestag* used the definition as the basis for a resolution condemning the BDS movement, modeled after the boycott of Apartheid South Africa, as antisemitic.<sup>26</sup> The IHRA definition is also the foundation of the new resolution "Never Again is Now: Protecting, Preserving, and Strengthening Jewish Life in Germany," passed in November 2024 in the aftermath of October 7 and state-wide protests against Israel's war in Gaza.<sup>27</sup> The resolu-

<sup>21</sup> "Pistorius vergleicht Putin mit Hitler," *t-online*, 11 April 2024, [https://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/deutschland/innenpolitik/id\\_100383630/krieg-gegen-die-ukraine-pistorius-vergleicht-kremlchef-putin-mit-hitler.html](https://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/deutschland/innenpolitik/id_100383630/krieg-gegen-die-ukraine-pistorius-vergleicht-kremlchef-putin-mit-hitler.html).

<sup>22</sup> Tania Martini, "Dissens als Tugend gescheitert," *taz*, 19 December 2023, <https://taz.de/Streit-mit-Hannah-Arendt-Preis-traegerin/15980783/>.

<sup>23</sup> Kai Amboss, "Rechtsbruch mit Ansage: Warum ein Deutschlandbesuch von Ministerpräsident Netanjahu sowohl mit dem Völkerrecht als auch mit der Gewaltenteilung in Konflikt gerät," *Verfassungsblog*, 25 February 2025, <https://verfassungsblog.de/rechtsbruch-netanjahu-merz-festnahme-haftbefehl-rechtswidrig/>.

<sup>24</sup> International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, "Working definition of antisemitism," 26 May 2016, <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>.

<sup>25</sup> Hebh Jamal, "IHRA definition is silencing Palestine advocacy across Europe, says report," *+972 Magazine*, 7 June 2023, <https://www.972mag.com/elsc-ihra-antisemitism-palestinians-europe/>.

<sup>26</sup> Katrin Benhold, "German Parliament Deems B.D.S. Movement Anti-Semitic," *New York Times*, 17 May 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/17/world/europe/germany-bds-anti-semitic.html>.

<sup>27</sup> "Bundestag beschließt Resolution gegen Antisemitismus," *Tagesschau*, 7 November 2024, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/bundestag-resolution-antisemitismus-100.html>.

tion is heavily opposed by artists and academics based in Germany, many of whom are Jewish, who have warned that it “may lead to a surreal situation where Jewish and Israeli human rights groups are deemed antisemitic by the German state.”<sup>28</sup> While the resolution, which requires state authorities to slash funding for cultural and scientific projects deemed antisemitic based on the IHRA definition, is not legally binding it is nonetheless expected to inform juridicial decision-making.<sup>29</sup> Civil society organisations have widely criticised the resolution and expressed the fear of being penalised for expressing solidarity with Palestinians or for criticism of Israel’s conduct in its assault on Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria.

The *Bundestag* passed the resolution only a few months after investigative journalists had published emails proving that the Ministry for Education and Research reviewed internally whether it was possible to withdraw funding from researchers not following the ministry’s policies.<sup>30</sup> The inquiry was initiated after several hundred academics had publicly criticised the evacuation of a pro-Palestine protest camp by the police at Freie Universität in Berlin and affirmed their support of students’ right to protest and voice their opinion.

Months before October 7, historians Stefanie Schüler-Springorum and Wolf Gruner had already expressed “discomfort” with what they perceived as “growing dogmatism” in the “political instrumentalisation” of Holocaust remembrance in Germany and its restrictive impact on freedom of speech and, in particular, academic freedom.<sup>31</sup> They write:

[I]f the moral fundament of united Germany is based on the collective acknowledgment of a supposedly unique mass crime, then any attempt to advance our understanding of the historical event itself through comparison with other Germans crimes or other genocides can be perceived as an attack on the very foundation of the new nation-state and, thus, receives fierce blowback by politicians and media representatives who dedicated their professional life to establish this new identitarian dogma.<sup>32</sup>

Germany’s commitment to Israel and its upholding of the IHRA definition of antisemitism at the expense of freedom of expression should be understood in this light. Historical responsibility qua *Staatsräson* as the signpost of a successful reckoning with Germany’s brutal past have become enshrined as an integral part of the country’s post-1990 official identity. Similarly, the insistence on the singularity of the Holocaust has served to ensure Germany’s status as a watchdog nation for antisemitism disguised as criticism of Israel both domestically and internationally.

The centrality of Holocaust memory to German identity post-reunification is furthermore crucial to understanding the unspoken requirements for German citizenship today. Boundaries of belonging are also determined by one’s relation to Germany as a nation of (supposedly) atoning perpetrators. An important reason for the debates triggered by October 7 is another recent shift in the culture of remembrance. Beginning in the 2000s, Germany’s Muslim minority has figured prominently in the country’s antisemitism discourse. Triggered by the confluence of global events, including the Second Intifada

<sup>28</sup> David Issacharoff, “Absurdist: Jewish Artists Warn Against Germany’s New Antisemitism Resolution,” *Haaretz*, 12 November 2024, <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/2024-11-12/ty-article-magazine/.premium/jewish-artists-warn-against-germanys-new-absurdist-antisemitism-resolution/00000193-1ff2-d707-a9d3-7ffb787f0000>.

<sup>29</sup> Ali Ighreiz, Svenja Kantelhardt, Kilian Schayani, and Joschka Selinger, “Resolution auf Kosten der Grundrechte,” *Verfassungsblog*, 13 November 2024, <https://verfassungsblog.de/antisemitismus-resolution-grundrechte/>.

<sup>30</sup> “Was bisher zur Fördergeld-Affäre bekannt ist,” *Tagesschau*, 10 September 2024, <https://www.tagesschau.de/investigativ/ndr/stark-watzinger-foerdergeld-100.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Wolf Gruner and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, “Two German Perspectives on a German Discussion,” *Central European History* 56 (2023): 278–282.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

(2000-2005) and 9/11, as well as the rise in anti-Muslim racism it entailed, Muslims and Muslim men in particular have been identified as major obstacles to Germany's commitment to fight antisemitism.<sup>33</sup> It is no coincidence that the concept of *Staatsräson* first surfaced in the context of the Second Intifada in a 2005 text by Rudolf Dreßler, German ambassador to Tel Aviv between 2000 and 2005, in which he addressed Germany's distinct responsibility for Israel's security.<sup>34</sup> The early 2000s and the US's war on terror significantly contributed to the hardening of civilisational narratives pitting a 'Judeo-Christian West' against a 'Muslim Middle East' with immense consequences for the global perception of both the Palestinian issue and Muslims.<sup>35</sup> This development furthermore coincided with the historical juncture at which German society began to grapple with the fact of having become an 'immigration country' (*Einwanderungsland*).

The nature of Germany's culture of remembrance and its focus on members of the nation as perpetrators of the Holocaust has had a significant impact on immigrants' societal inclusion. Despite the German Ministry of the Interior concluding already in 2011 that there is no distinctly Muslim antisemitism, this demographic group is consistently identified as the main reason for the continued existence of the problem in Germany in public discourses today.<sup>36</sup> Esra Özyürek, in her study on Holocaust Memory and Muslim belonging in Germany, notes that antisemitism prevention programmes targeting German Muslims are based on the assumption that their main point of cultural reference is the home country of their ancestors.<sup>37</sup> To understand antisemitism among German Turkish youth, therefore, one of the first civil society organisations active in the field sent researchers to Turkey with the presumption that first-generation immigrants had passed on a distinct kind of antisemitism.<sup>38</sup> It was thus based on the general assumption that a distinctly Muslim antisemitism had absolutely no relation to antisemitic stereotypes prevalent in German society, not even among second- or third-generation Muslim Germans whose main point of cultural and social reference is Germany. While one should not underestimate antisemitic agitation promoted by institutions affiliated with Turkish ultranationalism and transnational radical Islamism in Germany, such generalisations deny the diverse lived realities of Germany's Muslim communities and reinforce the assumption that they are totally detached from the culture and media of majority society.

This logic is mirrored in German politicians repeated references to antisemitism as an 'imported' phenomenon. In the aftermath of October 7, vice-chancellor and former Green Party leader Robert Habeck appealed to German Muslims and demanded that they "clearly distance themselves from antisemitism so as to not undermine their own right to tolerance."<sup>39</sup> While it is true that radical Islamist

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<sup>33</sup> See Esra Özyürek, *Subcontractors of Guilt. Holocaust Memory & Muslim Belonging in Postwar Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023).

In this context, one should note revisionist attempts to connect the Palestinians with Nazism. In the context of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, for example, prosecutors repeatedly stressed relations between local Arabs and Nazi leaders and retroactively depicted the former mufti of Jerusalem as a "prominent designer of the Final Solution and a major Nazi criminal" (Idith Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 100).

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Marwiecek, *Germany and Israel. White Washing and State Building* (London: Hurst. & Company, 2020), 194.

<sup>35</sup> Reece Jones, "Border security, 9/11 and the enclosure of civilisation," *The Geographical Journal* 177/3 (2011): 213-217.

<sup>36</sup> Bundesministerium des Innern, "Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Erscheinungsformen, Bedingungen, Präventionsansätze. Bericht des unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus," 31 August 2011, 12, <https://www.publikationen-bundesregierung.de/pp-de/publikationssuche/antisemitismus-in-deutschland-2233620>.

<sup>37</sup> Özyürek, *Subcontractors of Guilt*, 87f.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 88.

<sup>39</sup> Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, "Robert Habeck zu Israel und Antisemitismus," 2 November 2023, <https://youtu.be/ZBtAtsdco-8?si=vbWPJxzq1aVqfAZr>.



groups took to the streets after the attacks on October 7, Habeck's address is illustrative of the general suspicion with which German society regards its Muslim members' attitude towards Jews. German Muslims feature prominently in discourses about the country's identity as a highly generalised and stereotyped demographic group on which societal expectations are projected, often to assure the majority society of its inherent liberalism and superiority. Ethnic Germans' ability to detect and call out antisemitism as the result of having drawn the right lessons from their history turns into a decisive marker for societal belonging in this context and underlines the *völkisch* basis of German national identity which excludes Muslims, Jews, and other minorities equally.

That this reasoning is fundamentally misguided is encapsulated in the 2023 antisemitism affair surrounding Hubert Aiwanger, the leader of the right-wing *Freie Wähler* party in Bavaria. In August 2023, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) reported that Aiwanger had supposedly circulated a flyer in the late 1980s which announced a fictional competition to find the "greatest traitor to the fatherland" and promised the winner a "free flight through the chimney of Auschwitz."<sup>40</sup> Aiwanger deflected the accusations by blaming his brother for having drafted the flyer. His party was subsequently able to mobilise the incident in its favour by suggesting that it was part of a concerted effort by mainstream media to discredit right-wing politicians and gained 4.2 percent in the September elections, making the *Freie Wähler* the third largest party in the Bavarian state parliament.<sup>41</sup> Afterwards, Aiwanger suggested that the publication of the flyer and ensuing critiques by politicians, journalists, and civil society actors equalled a witch hunt and, in a conversation with *Welt*, indicated that he was convinced the SZ had intended his political downfall and thereby "abused" the Shoah "for party-politics."<sup>42</sup> Schüler-Springorum has rightly drawn attention to the fact that his allusion to the reporting having been part of a systematic campaign to discredit him and his party knowingly played with the antisemitic stereotype of Jews as hidden conspirators.<sup>43</sup>

On October 31, 2023, about three weeks after Hamas's attack and two months after the scandal, Aiwanger commented on supposedly "antisemitic" anti-war protests in Germany to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), stating that the country had "turned a blind eye for too long" and that "now people can see that we brought nonsense into the country," namely individuals "from those cultures where antisemitism is shown and presented in a completely open manner."<sup>44</sup> The affair perfectly showcases the lacking willingness among German politicians, political parties, and the electorate to problematise antisemitism as a general societal phenomenon, instead relying on it as a talking point to other minorities and push for more radical anti-immigration policies. We must also not ignore the fact that Jewish citizens themselves often play a subordinate role in public discourses about antisemitism. Their lived experiences are generalised in a way similar to the antisemitism habitually assumed to be most rampant among Muslim communities. With meanwhile more than twenty percent of the German electorate

<sup>40</sup> Hans von der Burchard, "Nazi leaflet overshadows Bavarian state election," *Politico*, 28 August 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/hubert-aiwanger-bavaria-state-election-antisemitic-leaflet/>.

<sup>41</sup> "Ich sag: seit dem Erwachsenenalter—kein Antisemit," *Der Spiegel*, 30 August 2023, <https://spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/hubert-aiwanger-ich-bin-weder-antisemit-noch-extremist-sondern-ein-demokrat-a-9dc23c6b-25f4-4d91-9a95-e162a9376a63>.

<sup>42</sup> Tim Röhn, "Ich sollte politisch vernichtet werden," *Welt*, 31 August 2023, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/plus247222320/Hubert-Aiwanger-im-Interview-Ich-sollte-politisch-vernichtet-werden.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, "In der Falle der Loyalität," *Verfassungsblog*, 13 September 2023, <https://verfassungsblog.de/in-der-falle-der-loyalitat/>.

<sup>44</sup> "Das hat man zu lange totgeschwiegen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31 October 2023, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/anti-israel-demos-hubert-aiwanger-fordert-haerteres-durchgreifen-19280560.html>.



supporting an ultra right-wing party, however, it is difficult to imagine how exactly cancelled exhibitions and lectures by Jewish artists and academics or banning the use of Arabic and Hebrew at protests will contribute to actually protecting Jewish life in Germany.<sup>45</sup>

The Aiwanger affair and other politicians' condemnation of 'Muslim' or 'imported' antisemitism therefore primarily revolve around cementing the fault lines of German identity. While the country reckons with its growing immigrant population, the parameters for belonging to German society continue to be framed in ethno-nationalist terms, rendering belonging a complicated matter for Germans "with migration background" (*mit Migrationshintergrund*) and other minorities. The intricacies of discourses about the prerequisites for acceptance in German society are illustrated by the keyword 'Leitkultur' (*guiding culture*) which suggests a predetermined and dominant way of life to which immigrants have to subordinate in order to claim full membership in society.<sup>46</sup> The tabloid *Bild*, part of the Springer conglomerate, which is so committed to Israel that it runs ads for illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank, took the pro-Palestine demonstrations after October 7 as an opportunity to publish a manifesto enshrining "guiding principles (*Leitidee*) for what holds our liberal society together."<sup>47</sup> The fifty principles include statements like "29. One does not have to be a virgin to get married," "34. Here with us, knives belong in the kitchen and not in one's pant pockets," or "40. Cheers, Germany! In this country, beer and wine are part of our culture and this should be respected [...]."<sup>48</sup> Similar to prior contributions to the exclusionary "Leitkultur" debate, the manifesto played with anti-Muslim stereotypes widespread among German society not least since Thilo Sarrazin's 2010 book "Germany Abolishes Itself," in which the SPD politician had infamously claimed that Germany was becoming "poorer and stupider" due to rising immigration, especially from Muslim majority countries.<sup>49</sup> Invocations of a guiding German culture or guiding societal principles are therefore not meant to facilitate integration or to rethink 'Germanness' against the background of the citizenry's increasing diversity, but are predominantly based on prejudices against minorities that belie their actual lived realities.

### **The Mythology of German *Wiedergutmachung***

That many politicians describe antisemitism as if it were an imported, a Muslim, and thus a minor issue in Germany today obscures the fact that the post-1989 centering of the Holocaust and the commitment to Israel in the context of German citizenship discourse is the result of a fairly recent historical development. Daniel Marwiecki, in his study on German-Israeli relations post-1949, instructively attests to the retroactive moralistic interpretation of early relations between both countries with German historians, predominantly and against the international scholarly consensus, maintaining that West Germany turned to Israel primarily for moral reasons.<sup>50</sup> Marwiecki, instead, analyses the emergence of bilateral relations as being driven by Germany's attempt to whitewash its Nazi past and thereby ensure

<sup>45</sup> Hanno Fleckenstein, "Deeskalation sieht anders aus," *taz*, 9 February 2025, <https://taz.de/Sprachverbote-auf-Palaestina-Demos/!6064999/>.

<sup>46</sup> On German debates about "Leitkultur," see Ozan Zakariya Kesinkılıç, "Wem gehört die 'Leitkultur'? Islamdebatten und Almanyas verborgene Erinnerungen," in *Erinnerungskämpfe. Neues deutsches Geschichtsbewusstsein*, edited by Jürgen Zimmerer, 458-475 (Reclam: Stuttgart 2023).

<sup>47</sup> Hanno Hauenstein, "German Media Giant Axel Springer makes money on Israel's illegal settlements," *The Intercept*, 5 February 2024, <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/05/axel-springer-israel-settlement-profit/>.

<sup>48</sup> "Deutschland, wir haben ein Problem!," *Bild*, 29 October 2023, <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/deutschland-wir-haben-ein-problem-hier-lesen-sie-das-bild-manifest-85895408.bild.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (München: DVA, 2010).

<sup>50</sup> Marwiecki, *Germany and Israel*, 6.

the country's reentry into the fold of Western nations, on the one hand, and Israel's need for outside financial and military resources to build its state and economy and to ensure its existence, on the other. The FRG's 1952 Reparations Agreement with Israel, lauded as an early step of *Wiedergutmachung* (reparation), was a first symbolic attempt to distance the young republic from its Nazi past in order to gain credibility in international politics. Notably, the conditions of Germany's reparations policy continue to influence the perception of victims of the regime until today. Individual claims to financial recompensation for Jewish victims of the Holocaust were restricted to those with a connection to the pre-1937 territory of the German state even though most were neither German nor Austrian.<sup>51</sup> Other groups of victims, for example the Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, political dissidents, and victims of occupation and war in Eastern Europe and elsewhere never received any form of compensation. As a result of West Germany's Red Scare, communists and socialists who resisted the Nazi regime did not become part of the official culture of remembrance. Marwiecki therefore suggests that it is highly questionable that the focus on Jews as victims of the Nazi regime in West Germany's reconciliation efforts arose from considerations regarding the specificity of the Shoah or a special moral responsibility. Instead, he argues that Israeli statehood and its claim to uniquely represent Jewish survivors was unique among the victims.<sup>52</sup> Konrad Adenauer's infamous 1965 statement that one should not underestimate "the power of the Jews even today, especially in America" when asked about his reparations policy highlights how antisemitic stereotypes about global Jewish power were part of German foreign policy calculations. In the 1960s, when Germany, meanwhile a respectable member of the Western bloc, sought to 'normalise' its relation to Israel, the country's desire to uphold its special character was perceived by the German Foreign Ministry as driven by Israel's exploitation of the Holocaust for its own financial gain, a trope that lives on in right-wing conspiracy theories.<sup>53</sup> Such rhetoric should not be surprising considering the Foreign Ministry's implication in Nazi crimes between 1933 and 1945, continuities in personnel post-1945, and the institution's long-lasting commitment to obscuring these connections.<sup>54</sup> Since Adenauer's chancellorship, the German narrative about the Third Reich has also carried the explicit assumption that the regime's crimes had been opposed by a majority and, in fact, that the German population featured among its victims.<sup>55</sup> This trope featured even in President Richard Weizsäcker's 1985 speech on May 8 which similarly represented an important step in the development of the culture of remembrance. In it, Weizsäcker referred to the day on which Germany surrendered unconditionally as a "day of liberation" and a "new beginning." Liberation, however, seems to suggest that Germans had not identified with, had not themselves supported the "inhumane system of National Socialist tyranny" and thereby did not clearly invalidate narratives that stress German victimhood.<sup>56</sup> It was Weizsäcker, too, who suggested in his speech that while the past cannot be "overcome" (*bewältigen*) one should strive for "reconciliation" (*Versöhnung*) and, referring to a Jewish saying, "redemption" (*Erlösung*) whose secret lies in remembrance.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, 23.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 133.

<sup>54</sup> Eckart Conze, Norbert Frei, Peter Hayes, and Moshe Zimmermann, *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit. Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Munich: Karl Blessing Verlag, 2010).

<sup>55</sup> Marwiecki, *Germany and Israel*, 28.

<sup>56</sup> "Weizsäcker-Rede zum Kriegsende im Wortlaut: 'Der 8. Mai war ein Tag der Befreiung,'" *Tagesschau*, 8 Mai 2015, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/rede-vonweizsaecker-wortlaut-101.html>.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

Weizsäcker addressed the nation only few days after Helmut Kohl had visited the German soldier cemetery and its fifty-nine graves of members of the *Waffen-SS* with Ronald Reagan in Bitburg. Kohl's chancellorship and his focus on the necessity of a "spiritual and moral turn" (*Geistig-moralische Wende*) have more generally led to a "de-concretisation" of the remembrance of the Nazi regime and its victims, thereby blurring the distinction between dissident groups and the targets of racially and politically motivated persecution, on the one hand, and the acquiescent or supporting majority of German society on the other. State-led public history projects under Kohl, like the *Neue Wache*, the *Haus der Geschichte* museum, and the *Volkstrauertag*, contributed to breaking down the specificities of remembrance.<sup>58</sup> One may conclude that historical debates during the 1980s already offered Germans institutionalised ways to identify with the country's rehabilitated identity without prompting them to question the implication of state institutions and, crucially, one's own family in the politics of the regime. Despite the recentering of historical responsibility in public remembrance since the 1990s, a process which could be argued to have begun with Kohl's consent to parliamentary deliberations about the Holocaust monument, Germany's Nazi past remains a taboo within the majority of German families, including my own.<sup>59</sup>

### Remembering... what exactly?

Many Germans' unwillingness to confront their own family's role between 1933 and 1945 is facilitated by the insistence on the regime and its crimes' singularity. For something to be singular, after all, means excising it from its historical context and understanding it as an accident, an aberration, a meander. What has often been termed the *Historikerstreit 2.0* and its questioning of the usefulness of the singularity paradigm is therefore more than a debate merely among historians and has stirred considerable backlash precisely because questioning the Nazi regime and the Holocaust's dehistoricised singularity contravenes a central pillar of German post-reunification identity.<sup>60</sup> Hans Zimmerer, a historian of German colonialism in Africa, is a central figure in this context. His research has uncovered crucial continuities between the two German genocides, the first being the mass killings of Herero and Nama in Southwest Africa in 1904–8.<sup>61</sup> German colonialism has long been treated as a singular event itself in that Germany's 'late and short' dabble in the Scramble for Africa was understood to have had next to no implication for the understanding of the country's history as such. Zimmerer and other scholars, however, draw this lazy logic into question and emphasise the multiple linkages in the military, expansionist, and racial logic underpinning both colonial and Nazi violence. Efforts to discredit historians' efforts to interpret German history in postcolonial terms and to understand Nazism and the Holocaust within its historical context highlights what is at stake. Looking back, after all, would similarly necessitate looking forward and understanding 1945 not as an all-encompassing "liberation" but as a node initiating a period that did transform but not eradicate totalitarian, anti-semitic, and *völkisch* tendencies in German society. Would looking forward not similarly mean reflecting on Germany's implication in the fate of the Palestinians, many of whom are now part of German society as stateless refugees and citizens? And would contextualising the Third Reich not require acknowl-

<sup>58</sup> Sabine Moller, *Die Entkonkretisierung der NS-Herrschaft in der Ära Kohl: Die Neue Wache, das Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas, das Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Hannover: Offizin, 1998).

<sup>59</sup> See Roger Frie, *Not in My Family: German Memory and Responsibility After the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>60</sup> Zimmerer, "Erinnerungskämpfe," 24f.

<sup>61</sup> See Jürgen Zimmerer, *From Windhoek to Auschwitz? Reflections on the Relationship between Colonialism and National Socialism* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2024).

edging that the German crime must be thought as arising and not aberrating from the fundamental logics of modernity itself? Today, Nazism and the Holocaust feature in official discourse in Germany without past, without future, remembered for the sake of self-reassurance that what was singular is over, should be remembered but does not necessarily have to be confronted, with *Nie wieder* (Never Again) as the ritualised mantra repeated while *Brandmauern* (firewalls) fall.<sup>62</sup>

### The New Old Right

In February 2025, the German electorate voted with record participation for a new *Bundestag* whose second largest faction is a party actively redrawing how Germany relates to its past. One of the Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany, AfD)'s chief propagandists, Maximilian Krah, who has served as MP in the EU parliament since 2019, was kicked out of the ID parliamentary group in 2024 after declaring in an interview with the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* that not all members of the SS were criminals.<sup>63</sup> In 2018, Alexander Gauland stated that "Hitler and the nazis only amount to bird poop in the 1000 year-long successful history of Germany."<sup>64</sup> If one looks at the electoral map, one cannot deny that the results in the federal states of the former GDR and the increase of the party's vote share in West Germany demonstrate the failure of the culture of remembrance as a reunifying project.

In addition to the resentment Jewish, Sinti, Roma, homosexual survivors continued to face after 1945, several events in Germany's post-war history illustrate the continuities of right-wing violence of which the AfD's normalisation is but the climax.<sup>65</sup> In the late 1960s, West Germany was swept by antisemitic incidents which the government comfortably blamed on secret GDR agents.<sup>66</sup> In 1980, the Rabbi and publicist Shlomo Lewin and his wife were killed by a neo-nazi in their home in Erlangen. Beginning in the 1980s, right-wing extremist groups were responsible for numerous offenses of battery and damage to property, predominantly targeting refugees and immigrants.<sup>67</sup> The 1990s, the years immediately following reunification were characterised by extreme right-wing violence which, while concentrated in the East, swept across the whole country and have entered collective memory as the *Baseballschlägerjahre* (Years of the Baseball Bats).

In recent years, several violent crimes underline the systematic and organised nature of right-wing violence in Germany whose perpetrators have their very own culture of remembrance with regard to the Third Reich. The National Socialist Underground (NSU), a terrorist organisation which grew out of East Germany's neo-Nazi milieu in the 1990s, committed several murders, murder attempts, and bomb

<sup>62</sup> The term *Brandmauer* has been invoked by German democratic parties to declare their commitment to isolate the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) party in communal, state, and national parliaments. With the party's successes in elections this commitment has become increasingly porous, culminating in the CDU passing a resolution to restrict migration with the AfD in January 2025.

<sup>63</sup> Tonia Mastrobuoni, "La versione di Krah: 'Non prendo soldi dai russi. Le SS criminali? Sbagliato generalizzare,'" *La Repubblica*, 18 May 2024, [https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2024/05/17/news/candidato\\_elezioni\\_europee\\_afd\\_maximilian\\_krah\\_estrema\\_destra-423009349/](https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2024/05/17/news/candidato_elezioni_europee_afd_maximilian_krah_estrema_destra-423009349/).

<sup>64</sup> Rupert Wiederwald, "'Vogelschiss in der Geschichte,'" *Deutsche Welle*, 2 June 2018, <https://www.dw.com/de/gauland-bezeichnet-ns-zeit-als-vogelschiss-in-der-geschichte/a-44054219>.

<sup>65</sup> Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Unerwünscht. Die westdeutsche Demokratie und die Verfolgten des NS-Regimes* (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 2025).

<sup>66</sup> Marwiecki, *Germany and Israel*, 86.

<sup>67</sup> Fabian Virchow, "Rechte Gewalt in Deutschland nach 1945," *APuZ: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 2 December 2022, <https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/rechte-gewalt-in-den-1990er-jahren-2022/515770/rechte-gewalt-in-deutschland-nach-1945/>.

attacks targeting immigrant communities between 2000 and 2007. In June 2019, provincial CDU politician Walter Lübcke was assassinated due to his welcoming attitude towards Syrian refugees in the context of Merkel's open border policy in 2015 by an attacker with ties to the AfD.<sup>68</sup> Few months after Lübcke's assassination, Halle's Jewish community was targeted by a right-wing terrorist on Yom Kippur. In February 2020, nine individuals were killed and several wounded in a right-wing extremist attack in Hanau. The manifestos of the latter two attackers denied the holocaust and invoked conspiracy theories blaming an all-powerful Jewish elite for the replacement of Europe's white peoples and feminism.<sup>69</sup>

Despite successive governments' assurances that crimes and offenders are individual cases (*Einzelfälle*) and individual offenders (*Einzel Täter*), representatives of their ideology have been members of the *Bundestag* since 2017, the year in which the AfD first entered the German national parliament.<sup>70</sup> Just last month, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution declared the party, now the second largest faction in said parliament, "evidently right-wing extremist."<sup>71</sup>

## Coda

Whither German *Erinnerungskultur*? Fate has it that as the last remaining witnesses of the 1930s and 1940s die we are witnessing the global rise of a new authoritarianism with ever more powerful tools of control and surveillance at its disposal. In response to Russia's assault on Ukraine and Trump's return, German politicians and a large part of the country's intelligentsia enthusiastically uphold the importance of European rearmament. Amidst these developments, one cannot but remark with bitterness that it is in the context of Germany's much lauded culture of remembrance of totalitarianism's deathliness that the state's illiberal tendencies are most visible today. The amalgamation of *Erinnerungskultur* and *Staatsräson* has led to fundamental restrictions on free expression and debate which were so crucial for the hard-won emergence of official remembrance in the first place. The fight for pluralistic, multidirectional memory can therefore not rely on state structures but must continue at the grassroots level. I am leaving you, dear reader, with a quote by the late Ralf Dahrendorf: "In the end, it is probably the blend of humanistic theory and practical inhumanity that makes Germany so unbearable at times."<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Julian Feldmann and Nino Seidel, "Lübcke Mord: Tatverdächtiger unterstützte AfD-Wahlkampf," NDR, 21 January 2020, <https://www.ndr.de/fernsehen/sendungen/panorama3/Luebcke-Mord-Tatverdaechtiger-unterstuetzte-AfD-Wahlkampf,luebcke170.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Roland Sieber, "Anschlag von Halle. Inszeniert wie ein Ego-Shooter," *der rechte rand* 180 (2018), <https://www.der-rechte-rand.de/archive/5454/halle-anschlag-ego-shooter/>; Frank Jansen, "Rechtsextremist gesteht Mord. Stephan E. erschoss Lübcke aus Hass auf dessen Flüchtlingspolitik," *Tagesspiegel*, 26 June 2019, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/stephan-e-erschoss-luebcke-aus-hass-auf-dessen-fluechtlingspolitik-4077730.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Darius Muschiol, *Einzel Täter? Rechtsterroristische Akteure in der alten Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2024).

<sup>71</sup> Michael Götschenberg and Holger Schmidt, "AfD 'gesichert rechtsextremistisch,'" *Tagesschau*, 2 May 2025, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/verfassungsschutz-afd-102.html>.

<sup>72</sup> Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967).

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