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ARTICLE

"Other Germans": Exceptions and Rules in the Memory of Rescuing Jews in Postwar Germany

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Abstract

The rising German interest in rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust has been accompanied by an emphasis on their exceptionality among the wartime German population. Seen as aberrations, rescuers are used to present a simplified generalization of the German majority's wartime conduct by defining what it was not. This article argues that this view, as well as the common claim that rescue and rescuers of Jews were "forgotten" in the postwar Germanys, are based on a certain interpretative model concerning the relationship between exception and rule. I trace the different uses of this model and show that from 1945 to the present, many Jewish and non-Jewish Germans employed variously defined exceptions to trace and determine one's preferred image of the majority—as an object of desire or critique. The article presents the different conceptualizations and idealizations of rescue and their functions in imagining a collective self in commemorative and historiographical portrayals of past and current German societies.

Keywords: post-1945 Germany; cultural history; Holocaust; Jewish history; National Socialism

Introduction

> They existed, the "other soldiers" who opposed the Nazi dictatorship, but they were mere hundreds of the more than 17 million members of the *Wehrmacht*. Yet their example shows that different behavior and resistance were possible. Soldiers and officers were able to oppose rearmament, the war of extermination, and genocide. They could disagree; could try to prevent the planned war—and help persecuted Jews.[1]

This is the opening paragraph of an article that appeared in the German weekly *Die Zeit* in July 2018. Johannes Tuchel, the author, is head of the *Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand*, Germany's national memorial for the anti-Nazi resistance. Unlike similar memorials in other countries, which commonly celebrate anti-Nazi resistance and local rescuers[2] of Jews during World War II as ways to paint "the nation" in virtuous colors, Tuchel stresses their appallingly insignificant number in Germany.[3] Described as absolute exceptions,

[1] Johannes Tuchel, "Gegen den Strom; Sie retten Juden, verraten Angriffspläne, versuchen Hitler zu töten. Selbst in der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur handeln einige Soldaten so, dass sie noch heute Vorbild sein können," *Die Zeit. Geschichte*, July 3, 2018, 78–81, esp. 78. All translations from German are mine, unless otherwise noted.

[2] Because not all Jews who received the help of non-Jews survived the war, some scholars prefer the word *helper* to *rescuer*. Yet in studying the *memory* of this topic, speaking of "help" might conceal the moral image that many people envision when speaking of it. On the choice of terms, see Isabel Enzenbach, "Zur Problematik des Begriffes 'Retter,'" in *Überleben im Untergrund: Hilfe für Juden in Deutschland 1941–1945*, ed. Beate Kosmala and Claudia Schoppmann (Berlin: Metropol, 2002), 241–56.

[3] On postwar resistance narratives, see Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Henry Rousso, *The Haunting Past:*

these "other soldiers" thus point to the moral fault of the overwhelming majority of the German military and society. Because the minority demonstrates that resistance was possible, the lack of substantial popular opposition is commonly understood as proving that most of the population cared little about victims of the Nazis or even actively supported the regime's violent policies.[4] Yet Mark Roseman has recently shown that a retrospective view of rescue "may be misleading, because it implies that Jews' survival was the direct result of an intent to save them," thereby ignoring the complicated trajectories that led to survival, which cannot be reduced to Germans' actions and wishes alone.[5]

In stressing the scarcity of German rescuers during the Holocaust, various accounts therefore pursue a commemorative endeavor, as is apparent in the words of Beate Kosmala, a leading scholar of the rescue of Jews: "The helpers, a tiny minority, . . . refute the apologetic claims of many Germans after the war that one could not do anything against the [Nazi] terror."[6] In this way, positive role models serve to create a negative collective portrayal of wartime German society. What one defines as the exception (or the minority) is used to outline an image of the majority from what it is *not*. In other words, the lack of evidence on the behavior of the majority population (and often an unwillingness to accept this lack) is compensated by imagining it in relation to what one defines as exceptional.[7]

Exceptions therefore have an imaginative, constructive potential that allows people to envisage a desirable, ethical, collective self-image.[8] By generalizing in relation to what one defines as an exception, we draw conclusions based on idealizations: statements or theories that display a seemingly flawless explanation or depiction by ignoring evidence that contradicts it, or interpreting it as "exceptional" to fit the model, rather than to challenge the model's validity.[9] Idealizations are therefore "useful untruths" that provide guides for action and assist in communicating ideas and feelings, managing reality, and assigning meaning and order to the world we live in.[10]

Exceptions play a major role not only in evaluating Germans' wartime conduct, but also in assessing their postwar memorialization of the Holocaust. Historian Wolfram Wette, who has published extensively about German rescuers,[11] has called attention to these individuals'

History, Memory, and Justice in Contemporary France (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002). For current claims on the nation's moral virtue using references to rescuers, see Sarah Gensburger, "The Righteous among the Nations as Elements of Collective Memory," *International Social Science Journal* 62, no. 203–44 (2011): 135–46; Daniel Perez, "'Our Conscience Is Clean': Albanian Elites and the Memory of the Holocaust in Postsocialist Albania," in *Bringing the Dark Past into Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, ed. Paul Himka and Joanna B. Michlic (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 25–58; Steven F. Sage, "The Holocaust in Bulgaria: Rescuing History from 'Rescue,'" *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 31, no. 2 (2017): 139–45.

[4] In the heart of this understanding lies the assumption that people act in certain ways because they want to and believe their actions to be right. In contrast, sociologists argue that consciousness does not stand at the basis of human action and collective violence. See Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[5] Mark Roseman, *Lives Reclaimed: A Story of Rescue and Resistance in Nazi Germany* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019), 240.

[6] Beate Kosmala, "Stille Helden," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 14–15 (2007): 29–34, esp. 34.

[7] Thus, the definition of certain persons or phenomena as exceptional is drawn from people's assumptions on what is the norm or what it ought to be, yet much of the knowledge on the norm itself is based on what we consider to be exceptions. Richard Holton, "The Exception Proves the Rule," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 18, no. 4 (2010): 369–88.

[8] Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 12.

[9] Adam Toon, "Imagination in Scientific Modeling," in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination*, ed. Amy Kind (London: Routledge, 2016), 451–62.

[10] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *As If: Idealization and Ideals* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017). Appiah borrows the phrase "useful untruths" from Hans Vaihinger. See also Alkistis Elliott-Graves and Michael Weisberg, "Idealization," *Philosophy Compass* 9, no. 3 (2014): 176–85.

[11] Wolfram Wette, ed., *Retter in Uniform. Handlungsspielräume im Vernichtungskrieg der Wehrmacht* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002); Wolfram Wette, ed., *Zivilcourage. Empörte, Helfer und Retter aus Wehrmacht, Polizei*

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unsuccessful attempts to receive official recognition or compensation for their actions.[12] Wette and other scholars further claimed that the topic of rescue in general was silenced until 1994, when it was introduced into Germany from "outside" through the American film *Schindler's List*.[13]

But in condemning the lack of public awareness of the topic, Wette pointed to the "exceptional" initiatives that did commemorate these rescuers and that, according to him, stuck out in the overall silence surrounding this issue.[14] Because quite a few of these initiatives (from the 1950s onward) also asserted that the Germans "forgot" the rescuers of Jews and claimed that these figures should be celebrated as the real heroes during the Nazi period, a commemorative effort that Wette himself promotes, he willingly accepts them as reliable evidence for the existence of "collective forgetting." We could ask, however, whether the initiatives and publications that he surveyed exaggerated the extent of "forgetting" in order to advance their own commemorative agenda. Unlike Wette, we can contend that these pre-1990s accounts demonstrate that there actually were commemorations of rescuers in the postwar Germanys, although not necessarily in the same manner and extent that one is currently looking for.

In what follows, I show that upon close inspection of the existing source material one finds numerous postwar references to Germans helping Jews during the Holocaust in a whole array of East and West German media, from the immediate postwar years to the present. Although they often took the form of brief allusions within entire books, speeches, exhibitions, films, and so on, their recurrence across a broad spectrum of sources hints at social meanings that might be indiscernible to us today, but were clear for contemporaries. Rather than attempting a comprehensive account of German memories of rescue,[15] this article concentrates on a few key aspects and tendencies and asks how Germans of different orientations, experiences, and generations defined the rescuers in relation to the general population: Who are the exceptions in each case, and what norms were defined in contradistinction to these exceptions? Which relations of minority-majority did the exception outline? Which idealized images of German society did these exceptions advance? This article traces the diverse ways that Jewish and non-Jewish Germans defined and used exceptions as part of the memory of rescuing Jews and those exceptions' various functions in imagining the national collective.[16] When examining them, I will therefore not only ask "what false claims a theory treats as true, but also for what purposes this idealization occurs."[17] The article begins in the war years and proceeds back to the present, to further examine the current tendencies of discussing German rescuers of Jews, which tend to conceive Nazi, East, and West Germany as "negative histories," against which to define post-unification society.

und SS (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003); Wolfram Wette, ed., *Stille Helden. Judenretter im Dreiländereck während des Zweiten Weltkriegs* (Freiburg: Herder, 2005); Wolfram Wette, *Feldwebel Anton Schmid. Ein Held der Humanität* (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer, 2013).

[12] See, for example, Douglas K. Huneke, *In Deutschland unerwünscht. Biographie eines Judenretters* (Lüneburg: Zu Klampen, 2002), 277–304; Roseman, *Lives Reclaimed*, 202–25.

[13] Wolfram Wette, "Ein 'Mensch' in deutscher Uniform. Wilm Hosenfeld und 'der Pianist,'" *Freiburger Rundbrief* 13, no. 1 (2006): 37–42. See also Peter Steinbach, "'Unbesungene Helden'—ihre Bedeutung für die allgemeine Widerstandsgeschichte," in *Widerstand im Widerstreit: Der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus in der Erinnerung der Deutschen* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001), 215–33; Dennis Riffel, "'Unbesungene Helden.' Der Umgang mit 'Rettung' im Nachkriegsdeutschland," in *Überleben im Untergrund*, 317–34; Susanna Schrafstetter, *Flucht und Versteck. Untergetauchte Juden in München—Verfolgungserfahrung und Nachkriegsalltag* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015), 10.

[14] Wolfram Wette, "Verleugnete Helden," *Die Zeit*, November 8, 2007; Wolfram Wette, *Ehre, wem Ehre gebührt! Täter, Widerständler und Retter 1939–1945* (Bremen: Donat Verlag, 2015), 264–71.

[15] For a detailed reconstruction of references to rescue and rescuers in the postwar Germanys, see Kobi Kabalek, "The Rescue of Jews and the Memory of Nazism in Germany, from the Third Reich to the Present" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, June 2013).

[16] Throughout the piece I distinguish between "Germans" and "Jews" not to imply that German Jews were not Germans, but to reflect and analyze the collective designations used each time.

[17] Appiah, *As If*, 115.

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"I Protected Jews and Treated Them with Decency"

In February–March 1943, the British RAF threw thousands of copies of a leaflet over Germany that reprinted (in German translation) a sermon by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The text praised a few German clergymen who publicly rejected Nazi policies, but lamented the lack of widespread protest in Germany against the "*annihilation of the Polish people and against the gruesome slaughter of the Jews.*"[18] Such a direct plea to help the persecuted was not common in Allied propaganda campaigns directed at the German population during World War II. The Allies, assuming most Germans were antisemitic, generally preferred not to express too much sympathy toward Jews because such an attitude might reinforce the Nazi portrayal of the Allies as following Jewish interests.[19] Furthermore, the British Foreign Office asked to avoid moralizing arguments that might alienate the German public.[20] Allied wartime propaganda failed to provoke popular resistance to Hitler;[21] but by the end of the war, it gave Germans a basic idea of what the Allies expected of them: to reject Nazi ideology and return to the "family of civilized nations."[22]

Much of this inherently moral discussion was framed in national categories rather than explored as individual conduct. In the immediate postwar period, the Allies initially denounced the entire population as Nazi and contributed to an agitated discussion on collective guilt.[23] In many cases in which Germans discussed collective guilt, they did so to rebuff an overgeneralizing accusation that they felt others falsely raised against the entire German people.[24] By claiming that the thesis of a collective guilt did injustice to Germans and viewed them in national or even racist terms (which tolerated no exceptions), tackling the accusation of guilt could actually allow one to avoid admitting any responsibility for the Nazi regime and its crimes.[25]

References to rescuing Jews played a part in this discussion as well. Initially, this took place on an individual level, as several Nazi heads of state and generals tried in Nuremberg and elsewhere claimed they assisted Jews or opposed the regime's antisemitic policies.[26] The most prominent defendant who used this strategy was Hermann Göring, who argued to have objected to the deeds of "real antisemites" such as Josef Goebbels, and described his own alleged attempts to prevent violence against Jews.[27]

[18] Emphasis in the original. Klaus Kirchner, ed., *Flugblätter aus England: G-1943, G-1944* (Erlangen: Verlag D+C, 1979), 15–16.

[19] Shlomo Aronson, *Hitler, the Allies, and the Jews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[20] Jeremy D. Harris, "Broadcasting the Massacres: An Analysis of the BBC's Contemporary Coverage of the Holocaust," *Yad Vashem Studies* 25 (1996): 65–98, esp. 83.

[21] Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War 1939–1945: Organisations, Policies, and Publics in Britain and Germany* (London: Routledge, 1979); Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade against Nazi Germany* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1996); Karel C. Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda during World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[22] For example, Klaus Kirchner, ed., *Flugblätter aus England 1939/40/41* (Erlangen: Verlag D+C, 1978), 6–7.

[23] Cornelia Brink, *Ikonen der Vernichtung. Öffentlicher Gebrauch von Fotografien aus nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern nach 1945* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), 23–99; Cora Sol Goldstein, *Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[24] What this guilt actually referred to was not always clear, however. See Jeffrey K. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman: The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943–1949* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 139–40.

[25] Barbro Eberan, *Luther? Friedrich "Der Große"? Wagner? Nietzsche? … ? .. .? Wer war an Hitler Schuld? Die Debatte um die Schuldfrage, 1945–1949* (Munich: Minerva, 1983); Norbert Frei, *1945 und wir. Das Dritte Reich im Bewußtsein der Deutschen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2005), 145–55.

[26] See the testimonies of industrialist Friedrich Flick, propagandist Hans Fritzsche, and several Nazi generals in *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10*, vol. 6 (Washington, DC: US Government, 1952), 133, 604–37; *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 14 November–1 October 1946*, vol. 9 (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), 272–78, 652; Valerie Geneviève Hébert, *Hitler's Generals on Trial: The Last War Crime Tribunal at Nuremberg* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 99–127, 189–90.

[27] *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 14 November–1 October 1946*, vol. 17 (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1948), 178.

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The same practice is found in the denazification procedures. Germans whom the Allies arrested or dismissed from office in the first phase of occupation, and those who applied for public employment, were required to demonstrate that although they may have been "nominal" members of Nazi organizations, they had internally opposed Nazi ideology.[28] To do so, some claimed that they expressed solidarity with Jews, continued to buy in Jewish shops or go to Jewish doctors.[29] Others simply stated: "I protected Jews and treated them with decency."[30] This moral and judicial discussion provided formulas for confronting actual and perceived inquiries about one's wartime conduct, which German memoirists have since often adopted to present a favorable self-image.[31] In these cases it was often implied that it was not the "good Germans" who were the exceptions, but rather the Nazis, a small minority that "overpowered" the population, while pushing blame onto the dead or missing major Nazis, such as Goebbels, Himmler, and Hitler.[32] Although they frequently inferred an image of German national innocence, however, these testimonies were not concerned with collective evaluations, but with personal acquittals. The ideal image they created was primarily of themselves.

"What We Experienced … Are Powerful Proofs of the Opposite"

In contrast, the question of the collective is central to Jewish survivors' accounts published in the postwar years. Many of the German Jews who survived in the Reich itself managed to do so thanks to the help of non-Jews. For those who wished to stay, there arose the need to construct a general image of the German population within which one now lived. Unsurprisingly, after the war the relationships between Jews (most of whom were not born in Germany but arrived there during or immediately after the war) and non-Jewish Germans were often tense.[33] Antisemitic incidents were not rare, and the mere presence of Jewish survivors in Germany constituted a bitter reminder of the crimes of the Nazi regime and national accusations.[34] Mutual distrust caused Jews to restrict their contacts with non-Jews to necessary economic exchanges.[35]

Yet many survivors continued to communicate with their German helpers. Those Jews who owed their lives to Oskar Schindler, for example, supported him with gifts and accolades

[28] Clemens Vollnhals and Thomas Schlemmer, eds., *Entnazifizierung: Politische Säuberung und Rehabilitierung in den vier Besatzungszonen 1945–1949* (Munich: DTV, 1991); Armin Schuster, *Die Entnazifizierung in Hessen 1945–1954. Vergangenheitspolitik in der Nachkriegszeit* (Wiesbaden: Historische Kommission für Nassa, 1999); Hans Hesse, *Konstruktionen der Unschuld. Die Entnazifizierung am Beispiel von Bremen und Bremerhaven 1945–1953* (Bremen: Selbstverlag des Staatsarchiv Bremen, 2005).

[29] I found such assertions in Germany's different occupied zones. See, for instance, Landesarchiv Berlin, C Rep. 375-01-13, Nr. 5084 (NS-Archiv des MfS), Berlin ZB II, Karton 946, Akte 3; Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, München. MSo 3861 and MSo 4136; Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz, Bestand 856, Akte 020028.

[30] Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz, Bestand 856, Akte 210047. See also the denazification file of Hanover's Nazi mayor, Henricus Haltenhoff, Stadtarchiv Hannover, Akte 6788.

[31] See, for instance, Veit Harlan, *Im Schatten meiner Filme. Selbstbiographie* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1966); Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs* (London: Sphere Books, 1971); Leni Riefenstahl, *A Memoir* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1993). See also Ingo Piel, *Die Judenverfolgung in autobiographischer Literatur. Erinnerungstexte nichtjüdischer Deutscher nach 1945* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2001).

[32] This tendency aroused some internal criticism; see Marie Dubois, "Die 'Große Stunde' der 'Kleinen Leute,'" *Die Weltbühne* 2, no. 7 (April 1, 1947): 298–300; Willy Brandt, *Verbrecher und andere Deutsche. Ein Bericht aus Deutschland 1946*, ed. Einhart Lorenz (Bonn: Dietz, 2007), 181.

[33] Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz, eds., *We Are Here: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2010).

[34] Frank Stern, "Antagonistic Memories: The Post-War Survival and Alienation of Jews and Germans," in *Memory and Totalitarianism*, ed. Luisa Passerini (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 21–43; Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945–1953* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[35] Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 51–52, 117; Lynn Rapaport, *Jews in Germany after the Holocaust: Memory, Identity, and Jewish-German Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 162–204.

during his postwar financial failures.[36] Acts of gratitude on a communal level were, however, rather rare in the first postwar decade. From the late 1940s into the 1950s, on the occasional instances when a Jewish community's newspaper introduced a German rescuer to its readers, the article often combined praise of the individual with dissatisfaction concerning the actions of most Germans. Here, as in Tuchel's and Kosmala's conception discussed in this article's introduction, the rescuers were defined as exceptions that pointed to the moral failure of the majority. For example, a 1950 article in *Allgemeine*, the official newspaper of the Jewish communities in West Germany, reported on the visit to Israel of the rescuer and priest Hermann Maas, which concluded with the words: "One can only think with melancholy about where Germany and the Germans would stand today, had Dean Maas been the prototype of the German in the last few decades."[37]

Jews who pursued a more conciliatory stance, however, saw in these rescuers' actions a proof of the fallacy of German collective guilt, and thus argued for the continuation of Jewish-gentile coexistence, and merged this general message with their own personal gratitude toward their benefactors. Max Krakauer's 1947 memoir *Lights in the Darkness: Flight and Rescue of a Jewish Couple in the Third Reich* depicted the network of non-Jews from all over Germany who helped him and his wife Ines survive. Krakauer wrote that the book intended

> to show that in the Germany of those years, which cloaked itself . . . so totally in the clothes of the murderer, there were nevertheless many individuals, families, and institutions who . . . took it upon themselves to aid two human beings that the Gestapo persecuted.[38]

Krakauer did not relieve all Germans of responsibility and he did speak of widespread denunciations in the German society. Nevertheless, after describing a case in which a person the couple had never met before validated a fake identification card for the two at the local police station, thereby placing himself and his relatives in danger, Krakauer wrote:

> There were also such human beings (*Es gab auch solche Menschen*) in Germany of the year 1944, and I must stress that in order to counter the thesis according to which all Germans were Nazis, [and] that all Germans approved of everything that took place in Hitler's Germany. What we experienced . . . is powerful proof of the opposite.[39]

The formulation "*Es gab auch solche*" does not excuse the German population, but looks for some balance in the description of German society, focusing on the hope that individual rescuers embody. This is implied also in the book's title, *Lights in the Darkness*, which employs a common Ashkenazi Jewish concept used to evaluate non-Jews' attitudes toward Jews.[40] The concept, like its parallel, "Righteous among the Nations," allowed Jews to understand and regulate their place in Christian society.[41] It was based on the assumption that the surrounding world is hostile to Jews and considered gentiles who do not follow this pattern as

[36] David M. Crowe, *Oskar Schindler: The Untold Account of His Life, Wartime Activities, and the True Story Behind the List* (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2004). On other such cases, see Schrafstetter, *Flucht und Versteck*, 232–38.

[37] Dr. Ernst Linz (Jerusalem),"Ein guter Botschafter Deutschlands," *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland* (April 21, 1950): 18.

[38] Max Krakauer, *Lichter im Dunkel. Flucht und Rettung eines jüdischen Ehepaars im Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart: Behrendt, 1947), 21.

[39] Krakauer, *Lichter im Dunkel*, 96.

[40] Shay Wineapple, "'Orot MeOfel': Contemporary Rescue Acts," in *The Rescuers of 1929: Rescue Stories of Jews and Palestinians in Hebron and Jerusalem*, ed. Yair Auron (Haifa: Pardes, 2017), 131–52 [in Hebrew].

[41] Kobi Kabalek, "Border/Crossings of Jewish Identity: The Righteous Among the Nations," in *GrenzGänge—Border Crossings: Kulturtheoretische Perspektiven*, ed. Gerd Sebald, Michael Popp, and Jan Weyand (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2006), 141–61.

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precious exceptions, beacons of light in a terrifying darkness.[42] As we have seen, by referring to "lights in the darkness," one could support an idealized image where exceptional behavior "proves" the guilt of most, thereby presenting a hopelessly hostile world. But the very existence of these exceptions also supported an optimistic view, where enmity toward Jews is not inherent and coexistence is possible. Furthermore, the metaphor of light shining in the darkness carried Christian redemptive associations that must have been prevalent in the religious life of the Protestant Krakauers and their primarily devout Christian helpers.

In the immediate postwar years, similar survivor accounts were published in the different occupation zones.[43] They were part of postwar attempts to create a new relationship between Jews and non-Jews in the new Germanys. Some Jewish survivors joined rescuers such as Gertrud Luckner (Freiburg) and Hermann Maas (Heidelberg), who were publicly active in inter-religious dialogue.[44] They took part in the activities of the Societies for Christian-Jewish Cooperation (*Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit*) and other bodies, whose goal was to foster reconciliation between Jews and Christians and imagine a shared future.[45] The rescuers and their memoirs thus often played a mediating role in both East and West.[46] They made it possible to envision "good Germans" not as exceptions that pointed to a hopeless reality, but as indications for the existence of diverse forms of behavior, avoiding a black-and-white view and imagining a German society in which Jewish life after the Holocaust was conceivable.[47]

"Many Germans … Were Willing to Assist Their Jewish Fellow Citizens"

Idealizations allow for thinking about how the world could have been and acting as if it were actually so. Kwame Anthony Appiah observed this particularly in the political sphere.[48] As political activity in occupied Germany was renewed, so arose the need for idealizations of "the Germans" and their recent past. As Hans Habe, editor of *Die Neue Zeitung* in the American zone, wrote in August 1946, this also involved one's attitudes toward Jews: "The treatment of the Jewish question has become a symbol of humanity, a symbol of the treatment of all minorities—and thus a question of the political maturity of a people."[49] In order to achieve legitimacy for the new German states and their values, Germans on both sides of

[42] For instance, historian Heinrich Graetz wrote in his *Geschichte der Juden* about the theologian Johannes Reuchlin's pro-Jewish behavior as "the first weak, trembling ray of light after such a long gloomy night." Julius H. Schoeps, *Deutsch-jüdische Symbiose oder Die Mißglückte Emanzipation* (Berlin: Phlio, 1996), 260.

[43] See, for example, "Die Frau, Gespräch mit Valerie von Wolfenstein" (March 29, 1948), in *Judenverfolgung und jüdisches Leben unter den Bedingungen der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft*, vol. 2/1, *Tondokumente und Rundfunksendungen 1947–1990*, ed. Felix Kresing-Wuld and Eva-Maria Mühlmann (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1997), 16–17; Else Behrend-Rosenfeld, *Ich stand nicht allein. Erlebnisse einer Jüdin in Deutschland, 1933–1944* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1949); Lotte Paepcke, *Unter einem fremden Stern* (Frankfurter/Main: Verlag der Frankfurter Hefte, 1952); Jakob Littner, *Mein Weg durch die Nacht. Mit Anmerkungen zu Wolfgang Koeppens Textadaption*, ed. Roland Ulrich (Berlin: Metropol, 2002).

[44] Hans-Josef Wollasch, *Gertrud Luckner, "Botschafterin der Menschlichkeit"* (Freiburg: Herder, 2005); Markus Schlicher, "'Ich stehe bei Ihnen, nicht "trotzdem" Sie Jude sind, sondern "weil" Sie es sind.' Der evangelische Pfarrer Dr. Hermann Maas," in Wette, *Stille Helden*, 125–41.

[45] Josef Foschepoth, *Im Schatten der Vergangenheit. Die Anfänge der Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); Esther Braunwarth, *Interkulturelle Kooperation in Deutschland am Beispiel der Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit* (Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2011).

[46] Helene Jacobs, "Illegalität aus Verantwortung. Dr. Franz Kaufmann zum Gedächtnis," *Unterwegs* 3 (1947): 10–19; Gertrud Staewen, "Bilder aus der Arbeit der illegalen Judenhilfe," *Unterwegs* 3 (1947): 20–27; Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1938–1945* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1947); Harald Poelchau, *Die letzten Stunden. Erinnerungen eines Gefängnispfarrers* (Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1949).

[47] This impulse received an explicit commemorative form in the first anthology of German rescuers; see Kurt Grossmann, *Die unbesungenen Helden. Menschen in Deutschlands dunklen Tagen* (Berlin-Grunewald: Arani Verlag, 1957).

[48] Appiah, *As If*, 114–43.

[49] Quoted in Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992), 266–67.

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the Iron Curtain created political myths that fashioned idealized images and reduced the complexity of events with the goal of producing "concentrated loyalties" and introducing populations with ways to start anew as a collective.[50]

Such idealizations appeared on local and national levels when public figures and politicians used the rescue of Jews to associate themselves or their party with moral conduct. In some cases it took place by embracing celebrated individual rescuers. Hence in 1952, the mayor of Heidelberg granted Hermann Maas (whose wartime help of Jews received some international attention in those years) honorary citizenship in the city and publicly celebrated the man "who assisted the persecuted in a dark period."[51] Others, however, preferred to speak not of specific rescuers, but about rescue in broader terms. For example, Willi Fuchs, a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union), held a radio speech on November 8, 1945, on the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, in which he maintained that "the Christian churches courageously raised their voice against racial hatred" and actively helped "wherever they could."[52] Fuchs's speech reflects efforts to draw votes by presenting the churches as moral authorities and overtly exaggerating their actions on behalf of the persecuted, as well as by ignoring instances of the churches' collaboration with the Nazi regime.[53]

A similar idealized depiction received great publicity in a speech Konrad Adenauer, West Germany's first chancellor, gave before the *Bundestag* on September 27, 1951, when he presented the planned *Wiedergutmachung* (reparations) agreement with the state of Israel. It was his first public statement to address directly the mass murder of the Jews.[54] The genocide was a topic that the chancellor avoided during his first two years in office, as he prioritized postwar democratization over a critical self-examination of the Nazi past.[55] Adenauer, who wished to project an image of (West) Germany's democratic renewal, stated that reaching the reparations agreement was a "moral, political, and economic necessity," a way of presenting the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)'s different character from that of Nazi Germany, and a price to be paid in order to enter the Western alliance.[56] Paying this price allowed Adenauer to portray a very flattering image of the German population under Hitler:

> In an overwhelming majority, the German people abhorred the crimes committed against the Jews and did not participate in them. During the period of National Socialism there were many Germans, acting on the basis of religious belief, the call

[50] Claus Leggewie, "Der Mythos des Neuanfangs—Gründungsetappen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: 1949–1968–1989," in *Mythos und Nation*, ed. Helmut Berding (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 275–302; Herfried Münkler and Jens Hacke, "Politische Mythisierungsprozesse in der Bundesrepublik. Entwicklungen und Tendenzen," in *Wege in die neue Bundesrepublik. Politische Mythen und kollektive Selbstbilder nach 1989*, ed. Herfried Münkler and Jens Hacke (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2009), 15–31.

[51] WS, "Ein Wald bei Nazareth trägt seinen Namen. Verdiente Ehrungen für Kreisdekan Maas—Bürgermeister Amann übergab Ehrenbürgerbrief der Stadt Heidelberg," *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung*, August 6, 1952, in Stadtarchiv Heidelberg, ZGS 2/142. See also "Kreisdekan Maas Heidelberger Ehrendoktor," *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* (August 7, 1947); Ika, "Ehrenbürger Prälat Hermann Maas 80 Jahre alt," *Heidelberger Tageblatt*, August 5, 1957, both in Stadtarchiv Heidelberg, ZGS 2/142.

[52] Christoph Classen, *Faschismus und Antifaschismus. Die nationalsozialistische Vergangenheit im ostdeutschen Hörfunk (1945–1953)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 130.

[53] Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1964* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Matthew D. Hockenos, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

[54] Adenauer's speech was accepted with enthusiasm by associations of Christian-Jewish reconciliation. See a booklet published shortly after: Aktion Friede mit Israel, *Versöhnung mit den Juden: Ein Beitrag zur Wiedergutmachung* (Hamburg, 1952), in Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, B10, 1.540.

[55] Claudia Fröhlich, "Rückkehr zur Demokratie—Wandel der politischen Kultur in der Bundesrepublik," in *Der Nationalsozialismus—Die zweite Geschichte. Überwindung—Deutung—Erinnerung*, ed. Peter Reichel, Harald Schmid, and Peter Steinbach (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2009), 105–26.

[56] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 285–87. See also Steve Wood, "*Das Deutschlandbild*: National Image, Reputation, and Interests in Post-War Germany," *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 4 (2018): 651–73.

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> of conscience, and shame at the disgrace of Germany's name, who at their own risk were willing to assist their Jewish fellow citizens. In the name of the people, however, unspeakable crimes were committed which require moral and material restitution.[57]

It seems that Adenauer, who encountered difficulties in approving the reparations even within his own party, attempted to garner support by providing a favorable collective image, thereby hinting at the international benefits the agreement promised.[58] His vague reference to the "many" who assisted Jews made all Germans into possible rescuers. Notably, Adenauer preferred not to commend any specific rescuers by name, which might have led him to admit that there were not so many rescuers after all. In other words, the image of the German population under Nazism, as Adenauer described it, had to stay vague to be politically useful.

In contrast to Adenauer's vagueness, in East Germany's political scene, the idealization associated with helping Jews focused on concrete examples and portrayed them as indicative of the collective whole. Let us look closely at one of them.[59] From 1948 to 1988, when representatives of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) and East German publications addressed Jewish audiences, they often referred to an issue of the communist newspaper/leaflet *Rote Fahne* that appeared in November 1938, shortly after *Kristallnacht*.[60] The leaflet, entitled "Against the Disgrace (*Schmach*) of the Jewish Pogroms," contained a declaration by the central committee of the wartime German Communist Party (KPD) that saluted the many brave Germans "who tried, under difficult circumstances, to protest against the Jewish pogroms and render humane assistance to the persecuted Jews." It then appealed to its readers: "*Help our tortured Jewish fellow-citizens with all means!*"[61]

German Democratic Republic (GDR) officials mentioned this text especially in ceremonies and publications commemorating *Kristallnacht*, which in the first postwar decades took place on a modest scale.[62] This changed on the 1978 anniversary of the pogrom, which became another arena in the postwar competition between the German states over which was the "moral Germany."[63] In 1979, the much-debated screening of the US-American miniseries *Holocaust* aroused highly emotional responses in West Germany (more on that later).[64] In justifying the GDR's decision not to screen it, Alexander Abusch, East Germany's former

[57] Quoted in Herf, *Divided Memory*, 282. The state printed and distributed the speech in a brochure that includes a collection of supportive voices from the West German and international press, as well as Jewish communities. Press- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, ed., *Deutschland und das Judentum. Die Erklärung der Bundesregierung über das deutsch-jüdische Verhältnis* (Bonn: Deutscher Bundes-Verlag, 1951).

[58] On the negotiations, see Constantin Goschler, *Wiedergutmachung. Westdeutschland und die Verfolgten des Nationalsozialismus 1945–1954* (Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1992), 225–305; Dan Diner, *Rituelle Distanz. Israels deutsche Frage* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2015).

[59] Most well known are the stories and various commemorative initiatives that surrounded the rescue of a Polish Jewish boy by the socialist and communist resisters in Buchenwald. Bill Niven, *The Buchenwald Child: Truth, Fiction, and Propaganda* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007).

[60] See, for instance, Harald Schmid, *Antifaschismus und Judenverfolgung. Die "Reichskristallnacht" als politischer Gedenktag in der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecth Verlage, 2004), 29–30; *Zur Geschichte der deutschen antifaschistischen Widerstandsbewegung, 1933–1945. Ein Auswahl von Materialien, Berichten und Dokumenten* (Berlin: Verlag des Ministeriums für Nationale Verteidigung, 1957), 126–28; Siegbert Kahn, "Dokumente des Kampfes der revolutionären deutschen Arbeiterbewegung gegen Antisemitismus und Judenverfolgung," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 2, no. 3 (1960): 552–64.

[61] Emphasis in the original. "Gegen die Schmach der Judenpogrome!" *Rote Fahne* 7, November 1938, Archiv Sachsenhausen, NMG Mus K1 J4.

[62] Schmid, *Antifaschismus und Judenverfolgung*.

[63] This moral competition had already started in the first postwar decade. Matthias Steinle, "Visualizing the Enemy: Representations of the 'Other Germany' in Documentaries Produced by the FRG and GDR in the 1950s," in *Framing the Fifties: Cinema in a Divided Germany*, ed. John E. Davidson and Sabine Hake (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 120–36.

[64] Peter Märthersheimer and Ivo Frenzel, eds., *Im Kreuzfeuer: Der Fernsehfilm Holocaust. Eine Nation ist betroffen* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979); Oliver Marchart, Vrääth Öhner, and Heidemarie Uhl,

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Minister of Culture, wrote that although West Germans only now started to approach the issue, "we"

> opposed the inhuman actions of the fascists . . . already in the days of "*Kristallnacht*" in 1938. This fact is and will remain for all time a glorious page in the history of German communists' real humanism. Tens of thousands non-Jewish Germans risked their lives to distribute throughout Hitler's empire the "special edition against Hitler's Jewish pogrom" (1938/no. 7) of the illegal "*Rote Fahne*"—the only newspaper . . . whose first page cried out "against the disgrace of the Jewish pogrom!"[65]

By the 1980s, in order to overcome the GDR's deteriorating economic situation, the SED sought new partners abroad, especially the United States. The party's assumption was that this could be achieved also through the East German Jewish communities that, it was assumed, "enjoy[ed] high esteem internationally."[66] In June 1988, meeting with the Association of Jewish Communities in the GDR, the SED's general secretary, Erich Honecker, celebrated the communist resistance, which in spite of being persecuted, "condemned the murderous excesses of the brown pests, called for solidarity with Jewish citizens, and stood by their side."[67] He did not forget to mention the KPD's 1938 leaflet as proof.[68] What he did neglect to note was, for instance, the GDR's own antisemitic campaign in the early 1950s.[69] The collective "we" that these statements articulate drew on the state's antifascist myth, which asserted that "the GDR was the direct product of a popular anti-Nazi resistance struggle carried out with tragic loss of life under the leadership of the KPD."[70]

The references to rescuing Jews from West and East German political contexts examined in this section avoided speaking of exceptions. They presented, instead, a model for positive collective identification, an optimistic view of Germans' conduct during the Nazi years, and made it available to all citizens who accepted the political framework in question. In establishing the antifascist myth, the GDR offered a morally positive collective identification, in which even former Nazi officials who joined the SED could retroactively become antifascists.[71] In the West, Adenauer's continuous attempts to establish a democratic Germany by appealing to the population's needs rather than demanding a harsh moral reckoning are evident also in his handling of the reparations agreement. Rather than taking a step toward internal scrutiny concerning the genocide against the Jews, the image of Germans

"*Holocaust* Revisited—Lesarten eines Medienereignisses zwischen globaler Erinnerungskultur und nationaler Vergangenheitsbewältigung," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 31 (2003): 307–34.

[65] Alexander Abusch, "'Holocaust'—und die Zusammenhänge," Bundesarchiv Berlin, DY 30/IV 2/2.037/014. For the East German official response to the miniseries, see Katrin Hammerstein, "Geteilte Erinnerung? Zum Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Bundesrepublik, DDR und Österreich in transnationaler Perspektive," in *Diktaturüberwindung in Europa. Neue nationale und transnationale Perspektiven*, ed. Birgit Hoffmann et al. (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2010), 103–16.

[66] "Information über den Verlauf der Gedenkveranstaltung des Verbandes der Jüdischen Gemeinden in der DDR (Berlin 18.11.1985)," Bundesarchiv Berlin, DO/4/1341.

[67] "Empfehlungen für ein Gespräch des Generalsekretärs des ZK der SED und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Genossen Erich Honecker, mit dem Präsidium des Verbandes der Jüdischen Gemeinden in der DDR (30.5.1988)," Bundesarchiv Berlin, DO 4/1346.

[68] Schmid, *Antifaschismus und Judenverfolgung*, 109–10; Jutta Illichmann, *Die DDR und die Juden. Die deutschlandpolitische Instrumentalisierung von Juden und Judentum durch die Partei- und Staatsführung der SBZ/DDR von 1945 bis 1990* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1997), 260–87.

[69] Mario Keßler, *Die SED und die Juden—zwischen Repression und Toleranz. Politische Entwicklungen bis 1967* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995); Moshe Zuckermann, ed., *Zwischen Politik und Kultur. Juden in der DDR* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2002).

[70] Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945–1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 93–94. See also Herfried Münkler, *Die Deutschen und ihre Mythen* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2009), 421–53.

[71] Herf, *Divided Memory*, 13–39.

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as possible rescuers served as a "useful untruth"—part of the chancellor's attempt to integrate the FRG into the liberal West.[72]

"There Were Also Others"

On April 10, 1961, the eve of the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem, Adenauer (still the chancellor) delivered a speech that emphasized West Germany's friendship with Israel and asserted that "in the moral life of the German people today there is no more National Socialism."[73] Although Adenauer preferred this time not to speak of German rescuers, the same was not true of the West German media.[74] During the trial, the news magazine *Stern* published a series of articles entitled "*Es gab auch andere*" ("There Were Also Others"), which collected stories of rescuers, told by the people they had helped save. The series introduction stated the motivation behind it:

> Eichmann may again signal an occasion to lump all Germans together. But we find that this is the time to prove that our people, even in the darkest days of its history, did not consist only of the criminal and indifferent. There were also others. There were Germans who risked their lives against inhumanity . . . we give the floor to those people whom Germans threatened—until other Germans saved them.[75]

This paragraph speaks neither of the majority nor the "many" Germans who helped the Jews. Its ideal image is modest; to argue that *not all* Germans took part in the Nazi crimes or stood idly by, that there were exceptions—thus implicitly defining much of the German population as complicit in or indifferent to the persecution of Jews. Using a similar formulation to the one from Krakauer's 1947 book, *Stern*, too, aimed to insert some *balance* into the depiction of Germany and the Germans by emphasizing acts of rescue and naming the rescuers. An article in *Das Parlament* (the Bundestag's newspaper), similarly reminded its readers that although the Eichmann Trial "once again" demonstrated to the world "which crimes members of our people were capable of doing under the Nazi regime," it also aimed to be "the place to commemorate those Germans, who, at the time, passionately fought against the brown disgrace. . ."[76] Thus, just like Krakauer, whose memoir responded to the growing accusations against "the Germans" in the immediate postwar years, so too did these publications about German rescuers appear when the name of Eichmann, a German perpetrator, occupied the headlines.

The Eichmann Trial marked a high point in the public "discovery" of perpetrators in West Germany and internationally. During the 1950s, many depictions of Nazism in both Germanys focused on presenting Germans as victims of the war.[77] But beginning in the late 1950s, artists, writers, and intellectuals looked more critically at the behavior of the German population under the Nazi regime and condemned what they saw as the

[72] Thomas Banchoff, "Historical Memory and German Foreign Policy: The Cases of Adenauer and Brandt," *German Politics and Society* 14, no. 2 (1996): 36–53; Johannes Paulmann, "Representation without Emulation: German Cultural Diplomacy in Search of Integration and Self-Assurance during the Adenauer Era," *German Politics and Society* 25, no. 2 (2007): 168–200.

[73] "'Wir sind ein Rechtsstaat geworden.' Bundeskanzler Dr. Adenauer zum Eichmann-Prozeß," *Das Parlament* (April 19, 1961): 5.

[74] On Adenauer's response, see Christina Große, *Der Eichmann-Prozess zwischen Recht und Politik* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1995), 134–69.

[75] "Es gab auch andere. An dieser Wand wollten sie uns erschießen," *Stern* 16 (1961): 26–32, esp. 26–27.

[76] Hajo Knebel, "Jugend im Widerstand. Zum 20. Todestag von Robert Oelbermann," *Das Parlament* 16 (April 19, 1961): 5.

[77] Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Gilad Margalit, *Guilt, Suffering, and Memory: Germany Remembers Its Dead of World War II* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

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continuation of Nazi tendencies in the Federal Republic.[78] The Ulm *Einsatzgruppen* Trial (1958) and a series of subsequent trials revealed that hundreds of perpetrators lived undisturbed in the republic. Critics pointed to the role of former Nazi judges, who had held on to their positions in West Germany, in preventing the prosecution of Nazi perpetrators.[79] Their criticism corroborated contemporaneous public campaigns by the GDR, which blamed the FRG for harboring former Nazi officeholders and *Blutrichter* (blood judges) and exposed the West German state as "fascist."[80] The discussion surrounding Eichmann intensified the preoccupation with the topic and drew greater attention to the number of German individuals and institutions known to have taken part in the persecution of Jews.[81]

Protestant priest Heinrich Grüber, the only German witness of the prosecution to testify against Eichmann, received much attention in the West German press. In 1938–1940, Grüber organized a support network in Berlin that enabled Christians of "Jewish race" to leave Germany, for which he spent two and a half years in the Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps. He became an outspoken moral figure in East and West Berlin and was one of the first Protestant clergymen devoted to constructing a new postwar relationship with Jews.[82] Many West German press reports made references to the impact Grüber's testimony would have on the FRG's international reputation.[83] Eugen Gerstenmaier (CDU), president of the Bundestag (1954–1969), wrote in the conservative weekly *Christ und Welt* that Grüber's appearance in Jerusalem "curbed the hatred against Germans in the world."[84] Grüber himself rejected such intentions, and other West Germans urged their countrymen to accept Grüber not for representing the behavior of the majority under Hitler (i.e., the past), but as an example for *future* conduct, primarily for the youth.[85] Many teenagers and young adults participated in the series of antisemitic incidents across West Germany in 1959–1960, raising public concern over the moral responsibilities of youth supposedly acting under the influence of rock 'n' roll and Western consumerism. A common reaction of young Germans at the time was to denounce the persecution of the Jews while simultaneously dissociating themselves from the Nazi past.[86] But many also felt deep responsibility and also curiosity —especially toward Israel.

[78] Manfred Durzak, "Die zweite Phase des westdeutschen Nachkriegsromans," in *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Wilfried Barner (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2006), 368–434; A. Dirk Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160–72.

[79] Michael Kohlstruck, "Das zweite Ende der Nachkriegszeit. Zur Veränderung der politischen Kultur um 1960," in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung: Modelle der politischen und sozialen Integration in der bundesdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte*, ed. Gary S. Schaal and Andreas Wöll (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1997), 113–27; Marc von Miquel, *Ahnden oder amnestieren? Westdeutsche Justiz und Vergangenheitspolitik in den sechziger Jahren* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004).

[80] Illichmann, *Die DDR und die Juden*, 136–48; Michael Lemke, "Kampagnen gegen Bonn. Die Systemkrise der DDR und die West-Propaganda der SED 1960–1963," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 14, no. 2 (April 1993): 153–74.

[81] Peter Krause, *Der Eichmann-Prozeß in der deutschen Presse* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2002), 198–208.

[82] Jörg Hildebrandt, *Bevollmächtigt zum Brückenbau. Heinrich Grüner, Judenfreund und Trümmerpropst—Erinnerungen, Predigten, Berichte* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlags-Anstalt, 1991); Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 143; Irena Ostermeyer, *Zwischen Schuld und Sühne. Evangelische Kirche und Juden in SBZ und DDR 1945–1990* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 2002), 279–80.

[83] "Eichmann war ein Eisblock, sagt Propst Grüber: Der Berliner Geistliche als Zeuge vor dem Jerusalemer Gericht," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 17, 1961, 4.

[84] Eugen Gerstenmaier, "Heinrich Grüber: Ein Mann mit heißen Zorn, aber ohne Haß," *Christ und Welt*, June 23, 1961, 3. On Gerstenmaier's attempts to improve Germany's image in the world, see Jenny Hestermann, *Inszenierte Versöhnung. Reisediplomatie und die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen von 1956 bis 1984* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2016), 77–88.

[85] Krause, *Der Eichmann-Prozeß in der deutschen Presse*, 121–23; B[ernd]. N[ellessen]., "Propst Grüber im Zeugenstand: 'Eichmann war wie ein Eisblock'—Der Geistliche erhielt Schmähbriefe," *Die Welt*, May 17, 1961, 5; Hermann Schreiber, "Wir sind allzumal Deutsche. Ein Lesebrief zum Eichmann-Prozeß und eine Antwort darauf," *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, June 16, 1961. Reprinted in Hans Lamm, ed., *Der Eichmann-Prozeß in der deutschen öffentlichen Meinung* (Frankfurt/Main: Ner-Tamid-Verlag, 1961), 39–41, 64–70.

[86] Werner Bergmann, *Antisemitismus in öffentlichen Konflikten: Kollektives Lernen in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik 1949–1989* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1997), 235–50; Axel Schildt, "Die Eltern auf der Anklagebank?

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The Eichmann Trial was the first extensive media encounter Germans had with Israel.[87] It raised questions about how Israelis would look at "us," which also allowed Germans to imagine their own society.[88] In his memoirs, Grüber recalled German journalists thanking him after his testimony because they could now "walk differently through the streets of Jerusalem. Until now we were Eichmann's countrymen (*Landsleute*), now we are Heinrich Grüber's countrymen."[89] The priest was, in the words of one journalist, "a German whom one perceives as worthy of imitation. [Grüber] has contributed to some brightening up here of Germany's bleak image from those days."[90] Grüber's example thus offered a figure with which to identify and from which visualize a different collective self.

The relationship between exception and rule implied in the case of Grüber becomes explicit in the following example. Christa G., a West German student who stayed in Israel in 1960–1961, wrote down her experiences during the trial. She lamented that East and West Germany "used the trial, of all things, for mutual slander," and added:

> From within the gray-on-graynthat Germany offered, came Provost Grüber . . . his testimony in the trial gave him, and the rest as well, the opportunity to manifest a small light that lit up the darkness, and so there was hope that one could believe in humanity again. Yes, "[believe] also in Germany," said Shulamit, my [Israeli] roommate, who was otherwise very skeptical, "even when only 5% of the Germans are like him."[91]

Rather than presenting help to Jews as a widespread phenomenon within the German wartime population, many West Germans now seemed satisfied to show that there were at least a few exceptions. The exceptions could neither confirm nor refute the "rule" of Germans' collective guilt or responsibility, but challenged its totality and helped reject crude generalizations. The small number of such exceptions was offered not as criticism, but for consolation, moral orientation, and hope.[92] The message of hope was embodied in the metaphor of light in the bleak darkness of Germany's Nazi legacy, which confronted even younger generations with a persistent national stigma.[93]

"Hateful Depiction of Germans"

In March 1979, the popular West German women's magazine *Bunte* published a series of articles dedicated to German rescuers of Jews under the title "The Other Germans."[94] The series

Zur Thematisierung der NS-Vergangenheit im Generationenkonflikt der bundesrepublikanischen 60er Jahre," in *Erinnerungskulturen: Deutschland, Italien und Japan seit 1945*, ed. Christoph Cornelißen et al. (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2003), 317–32; Detlef Siegfried, "Don't Look Back in Anger: Youth, Pop Culture, and the Nazi Past," in *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955–1975*, ed. Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 144–60.

[87] West German newspapers reported extensively about positive Israeli reactions toward Germany during the trial. Jürgen Wilke et al., *Holocaust und NS-Prozesse: Die Presseberichterstattung in Israel und Deutschland zwischen Aneignung und Abwehr* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1995), 92.

[88] Hilla Lavie has just shown this in the case of German documentary films. Hilla Lavie, "Imagining a Jewish State after the Holocaust: Representations of Israel in West German Films of the 1950s and 1960s" (PhD diss., Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 2020) [in Hebrew].

[89] Propst Heinrich Grüber, *Erinnerungen aus sieben Jahrzehnten* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1968), 410.

[90] Schw., "Propst Grüber hinterläßt einen tiefen Eindruck. Anerkennende israelische Stimmen nach den Aussagen im Eichmann-Prozeß," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 17, 1961), in Bundesarchiv Koblenz, ALL, Proz. 6/153.

[91] Christa G., "Bericht über einen Studienaufenthalt in Israel (Sommer 1960 bis Sommer 1961)," October 26, 1961, Geheimes Archiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Nachlass Heinrich Grüber, Akte 311.

[92] This is apparent also in early anthologies of rescuers; see Michael Horbach, *Wenige. Zeugnisse der Menschlichkeit 1933–1945* (Munich: Kindler, 1964); Heinz David Leuner, *Als Mitleid ein Verbrechen war. Deutschlands Stille Helden, 1933–1945* (Wiesbaden: Limes, 1967).

[93] A. Dirk Moses, "Stigma and Sacrifice in the Federal Republic of Germany," *History and Memory* 19, no. 2 (2007): 139–80.

[94] See the opening article of the series: Willi Tremper, "Die anderen Deutschen," *Bunte*, March 8, 1979, 44–53.

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resembled the 1961 article series in the *Stern* not only in showing that "there were also others," but in its timing, too. After the Eichmann Trial, a common tendency was established that when German perpetrators or collective moral fault were discussed, exceptions had to be mentioned, as well. Thus in February 1966, a journalist who reported on the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial argued that German rescuers constituted "moral capital" for the FRG's reputation and called for them to be officially honored by the "nation."[95] The *Bunte* rescuers series appeared a month and a half after the West German screening of *Holocaust*, a US-American miniseries (NBC, 1978) that presented, in melodramatic form, a fictional German Jewish family and the family of a Schutzstaffel (SS) man. In West Germany, the responses to the screening ranged from shock, empathy, and painful acceptance to denying the image of the event presented—an event that, moreover, now and for the first time had a name.[96]

Authors of some of the thousands of letters that West Germans sent to the television network focused on presenting themselves as exceptions to the grim image *Holocaust* depicted, by describing the wartime assistance they had rendered to Jews.[97] Yet other references to rescue sought to counter *collective* accusations. Many older and younger Germans objected in their letters to what they saw as a one-sided portrayal that neglected to mention cases in which Germans such as Grüber helped the persecuted.[98] One woman found it unfortunate that *Holocaust* did not show "Germans who risked their lives trying to save Jews," and a man enclosed two newspaper clips reporting on Yad Vashem's 1962 honoring of Oskar Schindler as a way of countering the miniseries's "hateful depiction of Germans."[99] Similarly, in a West German school, tenth grade students said they missed seeing more "positive" German figures.[100]

It seems that many viewers felt disturbed by the absence of solace and morally favorable figures to identify with in the miniseries, not least because they had become accustomed to more balanced accounts and had come to expect them. As we have seen, since the first postwar years, rescue and rescuers made an appearance in a variety of public depictions of the Nazi past, such as memoirs, activities of Jewish-Christian reconciliation, as well as film, literature, and diverse print publications. The gradual rise of the Holocaust's public presence in both German societies was therefore entangled with a growing interest in rescuers. The increasing international attention to Holocaust survivors' voices since the 1960s and especially 1970s was evident in Germany.[101] On West German television starting in 1977, viewers encountered Jews primarily within survival stories, which oftentimes mentioned their non-Jewish helpers, and we can find a similar focus in East German productions from the early 1970s, although not to the same extent.[102] In some of the East German media in these years, tracing the fates of individual Jews even meant pushing the antifascist resistance into the background and focusing on Jewish victims and not primarily on German resisters.[103] The rescue of Jews played a role in autobiographical writings, but also in fictional

[95] Dietrich Strothmann, "Suche nach den unbesungenen Helden. Auch das gab es in Deutschland. Hunderte von Judenrettern," *Die Zeit*, February 25, 1966, 2.

[96] Peter Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung: Weltkrieg und Judenmord im Film und Theater* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2004), 249–63.

[97] Archiv des Zentrums für Antisemitismusforschung (AZfA), *Holocaust* letter 3776/2.

[98] For instance: AZfA, *Holocaust* letter 520/01; 14/2; 880/4.

[99] AZfA, *Holocaust* letter 16/1; AZfA, *Holocaust* letter 81/2.

[100] Gerda Marie Schönfeld, "Nach 'Holocaust' in Klasse 10," in Märthersheimer and Frenzel, *Im Kreuzfeuer*, 287–94, esp. 288.

[101] Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[102] Wulf Kansteiner, "Entertaining Catastrophe: The Reinvention of the Holocaust in the Television of the Federal Republic of Germany," *New German Critique* 90 (Autumn 2003): 135–62; Mark A. Wolfgram, "The Holocaust through the Prism of East German Television: Collective Memory and Audience Perceptions," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 57–79; Lisa Schoß, "Politik, Unterhaltung und Romantisierung: Juden und 'Juden' im DDR-Fernsehen," in *Das war spitze! Jüdisches in der deutschen Fernsehunterhaltung*, ed. Ulrike Heikaus (Munich: Klartext, 2011), 115–25.

[103] See the case of radio plays in the 1970s and 1980s: Manuela Gerlof, *Tonspuren. Erinnerungen an den Holocaust im Hörspiel der DDR (1945–1989)* (Berlin: de Gruyter 2010), 239–345.

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depictions (such as the film *David*, directed by Peter Lilienthal, 1979), based on the memoirs of survivors.[104] A second edition of Krakauer's 1947 memoir was published in 1975 and a third in 1979, and other memoirs and diaries by and about German rescuers were reprinted in East and West as well.[105] Jewish survivor Lotte Paepcke reassured readers that her motivation in republishing her memoir was to contribute to the memory of the Holocaust, not to arouse hatred and anger against Germans.[106] These accounts of Jewish survivors thus presented a nuanced and less threatening depiction of German society under Hitler and were often welcomed as fair, unlike such emotionally burdening works of fiction as *Holocaust*. Hence a reviewer of Inge Deutschkron's Holocaust memoir in early 1979 emphasized that her book, which recounted her persecution but also rescue in wartime Berlin thanks to Otto Weidt, came right on time to present those Germans who helped Jews publicly.[107]

By the late 70s, the rescue of Jews was a recognizable component in diverse public arenas, a trend that continued into the next decade. In 1980, Hans Rosenthal (1925–1987), the successful host of light entertainment programs on West German radio and television, published his autobiography. Rosenthal's story of survival thanks to non-Jewish German women moved from persecution by "bad Germans" to personal realization and public acceptance in West Germany, the land of the "good" ones. The book was widely accepted.[108] In the same year, Deutschkron gave a talk at the central West German memorial for the resistance against Hitler, located on Stauffenberg Street in West Berlin, and spoke of the many non-Jews who helped her and her mother survive.[109] Connecting survival and rescue accounts to a memorial, which at the time was dedicated primarily to military opposition, testifies to the broadening definition of resistance in West Germany.[110] In 1983, when the memorial assumed the name Memorial of German Resistance (*Gedenkstätte deutscher Widerstand*), it also included helping persecuted Jews in its publication series on local opposition in Berlin.[111] On July 20, 1989, the memorial inaugurated a new and extensive exhibition with sections about Jewish resistance and on rescuing Jews.[112] Academic research about rescuers received a boost, too.[113] In 1983, Herbert A. Strauss, head of the newly founded Center for the Study of Antisemitism (*Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung*) at the Technical University in West Berlin, initiated a project to "document the fate of the Berlin Jewish community and its relationship with its [non-Jewish] surroundings, good and bad."[114] The

[104] *David* is based on Ezra Ben Gerschom, *Den Netzen entronnen. Die Aufzeichnungen des Joel König* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967). The book was republished in 1979.

[105] Krakauer, *Lichter im Dunkel*; Else Behrend-Rosenfeld, *Ich stand nicht allein. Erlebnisse einer Jüdin in Deutschland 1933-1944* (Cologne: Europäische Verlangsanstalt, 1979). In the GDR: Andreas-Friedrich, *Der Schattenmann*.

[106] Lotte Paepcke, "Nachwort," in *Ich wurde vergessen. Bericht einer Jüdin, die das Dritte Reich überlebte* (Freiburg: Herder, 1979 [1952]), 125–28.

[107] Inge Deutschkron, *Ich trug den gelben Stern* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1978); Rolf W. Schloss, "Den unbesungenen Helden: Inge Deutschkrons ungewöhnliches Überleben in schrecklicher Zeit," *Die Zeit*, March 9, 1979.

[108] Hans Rosenthal, *Zwei Leben in Deutschland* (Bergisch-Gladbach: Lübbe, 1980); Anne Giebel, "Alltagsbilder, Fernsehikone, Zeitzeuge. Der Spielmeister Hans Rosenthal in der deutschen Gesellschaft," in *Das war spitze!*, 41–57.

[109] Inge Deutschkron, *Berliner Juden im Untergrund* (Beiträge zum Thema Widerstand, Nr. 15) (Informationszentrum Berlin: Gedenk- und Bildungsstätte Stauffenbergstrasse, 1980). The first publication on the topic appeared five years earlier; see Ilse Rewald, *Berliner, die uns halfen, die Hitlerdiktatur zu überleben* (Beiträge zum Thema Widerstand, Nr. 6) (Informationszentrum Berlin: Gedenk- und Bildungsstätte Stauffenbergstrasse, 1975).

[110] Nevertheless, there were precursors for that in both East and West depictions of rescue among resisters. Kabalek, "The Rescue of Jews and the Memory of Nazism in Germany, from the Third Reich to the Present."

[111] See, for example, Hans-Rainer Sandvoß, *Widerstand in einem Arbeiterbezirk (Wedding)* (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 1983).

[112] For information on the memorial, see *Die Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand* (http://www.gdw-berlin.de/).

[113] The pioneering study of American political scientist Manfred Wolfson took place already in the mid-1960s, and at least one article he wrote appeared in West Germany in 1971. See Emil Walter-Busch, "Entstehungszusammenhang und Ergebnisse von Manfred Wolfsons Retterstudie (1945–1975)," in *Überleben im Untergrund*, 335–61.

[114] "I.A an den Senator für Inneres, Berlin [West] (23.12.1983)," AZfA, Retterprojekt, Ordner 1.

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project interviewed primarily "people who survived due to the help of the Berlin underground [and] people who were active as helpers."[115]

The growing attention to German rescuers of Jews was the result of an accumulation and multiplicity of diverse commemorative efforts in both Germanys since the immediate postwar years, rather than a centrally directed policy dedicated to celebrating rescuers. Mentions of these rescuers also occasionally drew on international sources and initiatives, as demonstrated in the 1979 reference to Yad Vashem's honoring of German rescuers, which from the 1960s were occasionally published in the German press.[116] Although references to rescue followed different rationales and served diverse interests, together they helped make Germans' rescue of Jews into a publicly recognizable part of the Nazi years. Moreover, they seem to have established expectations on how to address this difficult past and offered interpretations that did not necessarily frame the Holocaust within a "hateful depiction of Germans," but rather incorporated exceptions for balance.

"The Other Schindlers"

In the early 1990s, new publications on rescuers of Jews, which continued projects begun in East and West Germany, provided positive role models and ways to avoid focusing solely on the bleakest aspects of the Nazi past.[117] Given this background, it could have been expected that Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* (1993), a tale of a German saving Jews, would be well integrated into the existing framework, especially given that "good Germans" belonged to a tradition in German postwar films on Nazism.[118] And yet, the responses to the film contributed to and reflected a change in public views of the Holocaust, and of rescuers. On March 3, 1994, *Schindler's List* premiered in Germany. Its dramatic individualization of the victims and close look at the extermination had not been seen in Germany since the miniseries *Holocaust*.[119] German reviewers were divided in their evaluation of the film. Some expressed their relief that it discussed the Holocaust through the story of a German rescuer: "Was Schindler the only German who saved Jews?—No, there were very many (*Es waren sehr viele*)."[120] Yet others stressed that Schindler was part of a minority and his actions could not collectively absolve Germans of their responsibility.[121] Once again, the conflict of interpretations revolved around the question of minority and majority, exception and rule.

Given that 3.4 million viewers saw the film in Germany within two months of the premiere, scholars attempted to explain itsappeal.[122] Some claimed that those who went to see a "good German" in a US film by a Jewish director demonstrated a willingness to accept an offer of exculpation from a national burden. Others argued that the film compelled

[115] "Oral History Project. Bericht über die bisher geleistete Arbeit und die zukünftigen Vorhaben, Juni 1984," AZfA, Retterprojekt, Ordner 3, page 2.

[116] See, for instance, "Yad-Vashem-Medaille verliehen. Botschafter Ben-Natan übergab vier Deutschen die hohe Auszeichnung," *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*, April 1, 1966, 1; Gt, "Berliner hatte Jüdin jahrelang vor Gestapo versteckt. 'Unbesungener Held' für mutige Tat geehrt," *Berliner Morgenpost*, July 23, 1983.

[117] Christine-Ruth Müller, *Dietrich Bonhoeffers Kampf gegen die NS-Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden* (Munich: Kaiser, 1990); Bernd Schmalhausen, *Bertold Beitz im Dritten Reich. Mensch in unmenschlicher Zeit* (Essen: P. Pomp, 1991); Irene Runge and Stephan Neuss, *Onkel Max ist jüdisch. Neun Gespräche mit Deutschen, die Juden halfen* (Berlin: Dietz, 1991); Günther B. Ginzel, ed., *Mut zur Menschlichkeit. Hilfe für Verfolgte während der NS-Zeit* (Cologne: Rheinland-Verlag, 1993).

[118] Tobias Ebbrecht, *Geschichtsbilder im medialen Gedächtnis. Filmische Narrationen des Holocaust* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011), 267–80; Kobi Kabalek, "Commemorating Failure: Unsuccessful Rescue of Jews in German Film and Literature, 1945–960," *German History* 38, no. 1 (2020): 96–112.

[119] Liliane Weissberg, "The Tale of a Good German: Reflections on the German Reception of Schindler's List," in *Spielberg's Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler's List*, ed. Yosefa Loshitzky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 171–92.

[120] "Schindlers Liste: Der Film. Die Fragen. Die Antworten," *Super Illu*, February 28, 1994.

[121] Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 309–14.

[122] Martina Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film* (Münster: LIT, 2001), 431.

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viewers to ask whether what Oskar Schindler accomplished was not also possible for many other Germans, thus denying such self-exculpation.[123] The division between (and sometimes mixture of) these two main reactions—one promoting at least momentary relief from a perceived collective stigma and the other emphasizing Germans' moral commitment never to allow such relief—reflects two main approaches to the Holocaust in Germany in the 1990s and since.

A major concern of publications about *Schindler's List* was to evaluate what had been done so far to commemorate rescuers. In addressing this question, references to "exceptions" played a significant role, too. A long article entitled "The Other Schindlers," which appeared in *Die Zeit* a month after the film's premiere, opened with the following:

> Tree number 14 in the Alley of the Righteous in Yad Vashem receives many visits currently. The ground around it has been leveled by the feet [of visitors]. With tree number 14 the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem remembers Oskar Schindler. Not far from there stands tree number 208, planted for Eberhard Helmrich. The ground around it is neat and tidy, showing no sign of footsteps. No one is interested in tree number 821 either. Then who knows Loni and Anton Harder? And who [knows] Elisabeth Abegg, Otto Busse, Max Liedtke, Otto Weidt?[124]

The article's authors stated that although Israel had honored 276 Germans as "Righteous among the Nations," they were forgotten in Germany. But it then mentioned the honoring of about 700 local rescuers by the West Berlin Senate between 1958 and 1966 and hundreds more with the FRG's highest decoration (the *Bundesverdienstkreuz*) since 1976.[125] And yet, rather than view these initiatives as demonstrating the longstanding interest in German rescuers, the authors insisted that these were exceptions that do not challenge the rule: "Such honors interrupt the general forgetting only for a short time." Here, "exceptional" were those cases of honoring rescuers, which pointed to an idealized view of a postwar "silence"; or, in Wette's later formulation: "the long repression (*Verdrängung*) of the rescue-resistance in Germany."[126] In other words, the exceptionalism that had thus far been applied to the wartime behavior of the German population was now being utilized in relation to postwar commemorations of rescue and to honoring German rescuers as well. The evaluations of both history and memory followed the same basic model of exception and rule and pointed to the prevalence of this pattern for conceiving (and reducing the complexities of) social realities.

We thus see the emergence of the claim (later adopted by others) that presents existing commemorations of and accolades given to rescuers as not enough, as not amounting to remembering and honoring these "forgotten heroes."[127] Such alleged forgetting is designated a moral failure because the rescuers were the ones who, under the Nazis, "lived the idea of humanity" and should have been celebrated as national heroes.[128] The conscious focus on memory was part of global processes that emerged at the end of the Cold War, but also drew on public controversies about the Nazi past from the 1980s, which had revolved around Helmut Kohl's attempts to "normalize" Germany's past.[129] The 1994 *Zeit* article's criticism was based on the logic of what Ralph Giordano called (in 1987) a "second guilt":

[123] Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen*, 439–43; Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 308–18.

[124] Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff and Dirk Kurbjuweit, "Die anderen Schindlers," *Die Zeit*, April 1, 1994, 13–15, esp. 13.

[125] Dennis Riffel, *Unbesungene Helden: Die Ehrungsinitiative des Berliner Senats 1958 bis 1966* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007); "The Rescue of Jews and the Memory of Nazism in Germany, from the Third Reich to the Present," 239–55.

[126] Wette, *Feldwebel Anton Schmid*, 178.

[127] "Vergessener Held," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 2, 1994, 41.

[128] Kleine-Brockhoff and Kurbjuweit, "Die anderen Schindlers," 15.

[129] Jeffrey K. Olick, "What Does It Mean to Normalize the Past? Official Memory in German Politics since 1989," *Social Science History* 22, no. 4 (1998): 547–71; Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Sins of the Fathers: Germany, Memory, Method* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 289–394.

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which stated that Germans not only turned a blind eye to Jews' fates under Nazism, but also refused to commemorate Jewish suffering after the war.[130] Most recently, president Joachim Gauck reiterated the message in his speech on January 27, 2015, International Holocaust Remembrance Day:

> The "second guilt" that Ralph Giordano spoke of, the unwillingness to face up to working through (*Aufarbeitung*) the crimes and to compensate the victims, this second guilt existed twice in Germany—in the early Federal Republic as well as in the GDR.[131]

The exaggerated claim concerning the earlier forgetting castigated both Nazi Germany and the memory politics of the two postwar German states. Its simplified view of the Nazi period paralleled the public debates of the mid-1990s, which further challenged familiar attempts at promoting balancee and sketched a stark collective condemnation of wartime Germans. The publication of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (1996) and the wandering exhibition of the Hamburg Institute for Social Study, "War of Extermination: Crimes of the Wehrmacht, 1941 to 1944" (which ran between 1995 and 2004), pointed to the implication of many "ordinary" German citizens in the Nazi regime's actions and threatened to annul the politically useful distinction between "Germans" and "Nazis."[132] The exhibition drew much criticism from soldiers' associations and individual protestors and was withdrawn for corrections in 1999. The revised exhibition opened in early 2002 and added, as balance, a section on anti-Nazi soldiers, which included Anton Schmid, a Wehrmacht sergeant who helped save more than 300 Jews in the Vilna Ghetto and was executed for it.[133] Two years earlier, Schmid (who was actually from Vienna) had been "recruited" to improve the standing of German soldiers also outside the exhibition, when a camp of the Bundeswehr (the German army) was named after him.[134] But while the interest in rescuers was steadily on the rise, so was the emphasis on their being extreme exceptions.

Wolfram Wette's publications in the 2000s collected the findings of a research project on primarily rescuers of Jews who served in the German military, police, and SS. Wette stressed that these soldiers were definitely not "ordinary," but rather a "tiny minority" within the Wehrmacht who "swam against the stream" and explicitly objected to using rescuers to counter the findings of the Wehrmacht exhibition.[135] One can also find a similar characterization of most Germans' wartime behavior in the exhibition of the national memorial "Silent Heroes" (*Stille Helden*—inaugurated 2008 in Berlin). Dedicated to rescue during the Holocaust, the memorial's website states that the example set by these helpers shows that

[130] Ralf Giordano, *Die zweite Schuld oder von der Last ein Deutscher zu sein* (Hamburg: Rasch und Röhring, 1987); Aleida Assmann, "Looking Away in Nazi Germany," in *Empathy and Its Limits*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Ines Detmes (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 128–48.

[131] "Tag des Gedenkens an die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus im Deutschen Bundestag," *Der Bundespräsident*, January 27, 2015 (http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Joachim-Gauck/Reden/2015/01/150127-Bundestag-Gedenken.html).

[132] Julius H. Schoeps, ed., *Ein Volk von Mördern? Die Dokumentation zur Goldhagen-Kontroverse um die Rolle der Deutschen im Holocaust* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1996); Detlef Bald, Johannes Klotz, and Wolfram Wette, *Mythos Wehrmacht. Nachkriegsdebatten und Traditionspflege* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001); Robert Shandley, ed., *Unwilling Germans? The Goldhagen Debate* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Volker Ulrich, "Es ist nie zu Ende. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Die spektakuläre Ausstellung wird jetzt in Hamburg zum letzten Mal gezeigt. Ein ZEIT-Gespräch zieht Bilanz," *Die Zeit*, January 22, 2004, 39.

[133] Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht: Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges 1941–1944. Ausstellungskatalog* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002), 623–27; Bill Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London: Routledge, 2002), 130–35.

[134] Wolfram Wette, "Die Bundeswehr im Bahne des Vorbildes Wehrmacht," in *Mythos Wehrmacht*, 17–115, esp. 104–5.

[135] Wolfram Wette, "Helfer und Retter in der Wehrmacht als Problem der historischen Forschung," in Wette, *Retter in Uniform*, 11–31; Wette, *Zivilcourage*.

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"even in Nazi Germany there was room for maneuver and for supporting the persecuted."[136]

The rescuers are therefore used to point to what was possible and what most Germans did not do. Because both East and West German states were founded on principles that decidedly rejected the values of the preceding Nazi state, the unification of Germany allowed people to imagine and build a new society, based on one's relation to the previous Germany.[137] Within this frame, references to rescuers of Jews function to distance Germans critically from the Nazi past *and* from the "insufficient" postwar *Aufarbeitung* by rejecting them as all (or mostly) bad, and by providing orientation for a "fresh start" in the new Germany.[138] Just as the postwar states described themselves in opposition to the Nazi regime, the unification of Germany marked another dividing line over two additional German pasts.[139] These German pasts are increasingly conceived in Germany as "negative histories" against which to define oneself and orient oneself toward others.[140] Indeed, since the early postwar years, we have seen recurring references to German rescuers as "other Germans" who point to an existing or desired "other" Germany, that is, one different from Nazi Germany, a message that was fundamental to both East and West Germany as well as to the state that succeeded them. This vision of a different Germany is thus constituted, among others, in relation to abstract Germanys of the past as well as to visualizing how (imagined and real) others think of "us."

Conclusion

An increasing number of studies show the ambivalent and complex characterizations of many rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust and explain their actions in terms that go beyond the deeds of exceptional individuals. These studies highlight chance and local contextual factors, such as physical proximity, organization, and shared social circles and networks, in creating conditions, possibilities, and motivations for rescue rather than reducing it to people's attitudes toward Jews.[141] But still today, depictions of the rescue of Jews in Germany continue to stress the exceptionality of German rescuers in order to create

[136] "Die Gedenkstätte Stille Helden" (https://www.gedenkstaette-stille-helden.de/gedenkstaette).

[137] Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2006), 275–77.

[138] In the book and in his tours through Germany, Goldhagen stated that the antisemitism that led to the Holocaust dissolved in the postwar years and thus offered a way for many younger Germans to redeem themselves by condemning the entire adult generation of the Nazi years. See Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, 130–35.

[139] Saul Friedlander, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 89–90.

[140] Wette explicitly embraced Koselleck's double view of "negative history," meaning either "that the content stored in it is repulsive, unwelcome, despicable," as in the case of the Holocaust and the Nazi past, or refers to a refusal "to take note of the negative" parts of one's history. See Reinhard Koselleck, "Formen und Traditionen des negativen Gedächtnisses," in *Verbrechen erinnern. Die Auseinandersetzung mit Holocaust und Völkermord*, ed. Volker Knigge and Norbert Frei (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2002), 21–32, esp. 21; Wolfram Wette, *Ernstfall Frieden. Lehren aus der deutschen Geschichte seit 1914* (Bremen: Donat Verlag, 2017), 554–64.

[141] Michael L. Gross, *Ethics and Activism: The Theory and Practice of Political Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jacques Semelin, Claire Andrieu, and Sarah Gensburger, eds., *Resisting Genocide: The Multiple Forms of Rescue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Clemens Kroneberg, "Die Rettung von Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Eine Handlungstheoretische und empirische Analyse," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 64 (2012): 37–65; Marten Düring, *Verdeckte soziale Netzwerke im Nationalsozialismus. Die Entstehung und Arbeitsweise von Berliner Hilfsnetzwerken für verfolgte Juden* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015); Christian Gudehus, "Helping the Persecuted: Heuristics and Perspectives (exemplified by the Holocaust)," in *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, 2016 (https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/helping-persecuted-heuristics-and-perspectives-exemplified-holocaust.html); Susanne Beer, *Die Banalität des Guten: Hilfeleistungen für jüdische Verfolgte 1941–1945* (Berlin: Metropol, 2018); Charles H. Anderton and Jurgen Brauer, "The Onset, Spread, and Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Perspectives from Formal Network Models," *Journal of Genocide Research* 21, no. 4 (2019): 481–503; Laia Balcells and Daniel Solomon, "Violence, Resistance, and Rescue during the Holocaust," *Comparative Politics* 53, no. 1 (2020): 161–80.

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idealizations of German society during and after the Nazi period, thereby testifying to this model's persistent usefulness. We have seen how, despite diverse opinions and circumstances, many references to German rescuers of Jews in the postwar Germanys addressed the same basic question concerning the relationship between exception and rule in relation to the Nazi past and its postwar commemoration. Jewish and non-Jewish Germans defined exceptions to articulate what is not easily attained, to trace and determine the elusive notion of majority—as an object of desire or critique.

Using idealizations, people make observations based on a model: an abridged and intelligible image, description, or object. I would like to suggest that here, as in other forms of model-based theory, "we see attempts to understand complex actual systems by analyzing simplified analogues of those systems, analogues that do not, as far as anyone knows, actually exist."[142] The discussions of memory in Germany, as elsewhere, tend to focus on collective judgments and national imagery and thus often prefer one-dimensional categories over nuance and contradiction. But Rogers Brubaker reminds us that the questions that we ask "are about seeing the social world and interpreting social experience, not simply about classifying social actors"—in our case, as "good" or "bad" Germans.[143] Idealizations are valuable tools that we cannot do without and should not dismiss. Yet, like other generalizations, they run the risk of becoming oversimplifications, which efface, ignore, or downplay those cases that contradict or challenge them.[144] When uncritically adopted, these oversimplifications might assume the status of absolute truths and defy opposing perspectives. Therefore, when employing idealizations, it might be useful to adopt Appiah's suggestion: "Once we come to see that many of our best theories are idealizations, we will also see why our best chance of understanding the world must be to have a plurality of ways of thinking about it."[145]

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[142] Peter Godfrey-Smith, "Models, Fictions, and Conditionals," in *The Scientific Imagination*, ed. Arnon Levy and Peter Godfrey-Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 154–77, esp. 155.

[143] Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 77.

[144] Caroline Levine, "Model Thinking: Generalization, Political Form, and the Common Good," *New Literary History* 48, no. 4 (2017): 633–53, esp. 635.

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