

GHI RESEARCH

DEALING WITH THE PAST ABROAD: GERMAN IMMIGRANTS' VERGANGENHEITSBEWÄLTIGUNG AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH JEWS IN NORTH AMERICA SINCE 1945¹

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In the last two decades, Germans' manifold ways of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—"of effectively 'working through', 'coming to terms' with—or eliding—[their] immediate past, of collectively and individually assimilating and commemorating (or alternatively deflecting, neutralizing or repressing) it"²—have been well researched. Recent research on the subject has included comparative studies of East and West Germans, of members of three generations, and of people with different political sympathies and educational levels.³ But the attempts of one group of Germans to deal with their past have not been the subject of academic investigation so far: Germans who lived abroad, specifically those who left for North America after 1945. In the second half of the last century, mainly during the 1950s and 1960s, over 800,000 Germans migrated to the United States; another 400,000 to Canada. Moreover, especially since the mid-1980s, hundreds of thousands have lived in North America for longer periods of time as students, workers, and artists.

How have these Germans in North America dealt with their own, their families', and their nation's past? Has their *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* been similar to or different from that of Germans in Germany? How has the process of migration, intercultural exchange and, increasingly, transnational life shaped their negotiations of memory, history, and identity? How have different private and public interpretations of the past and present, and German migrants' understanding of them, shaped their social and personal relations? Was emigration a way to remove oneself physically from the country of guilt and shame in order to look away from the scene of the unbearable crime, to escape the ghost that has haunted the reconstruction of post-war and post-unification German identity? Or was emigration, as Renata Lefcourt, who left Germany in the

1950s at the age of 18, argued, a way to face the past in a constructive manner? Did German emigrants “tear the silence,” as Ursula Hegi, who was born in 1946 and came to the United States in 1964, has suggested in her collection of interview excerpts with German immigrants, because “[w]hen you leave your country of origin, you eventually have to look at it much closer”? Emigration might well have begun as an attempt to escape, but later have provided an impetus to take a second look at Germany. Sabine Reichel, born in Hamburg in 1946, wrote: “I left Germany without sadness when I moved to New York in 1975. Was I glad to have escaped! But being away from Germany had an unexpected effect on me. Slowly the past caught up with me.”⁴

These three German women—immigrants to North America and conscious members of the Second Generation—have strained to work through their national and personal past. Their efforts are nearly all we know of how migration and intercultural exchange are linked to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.⁵ Hence, the first objective of this study is to investigate how Germans abroad thought and talked about their personal and national past and dealt with their knowledge of World War Two and the Holocaust in the context of being outside of Germany and of being inside (albeit partially as outsiders) U.S./Canadian society. The study focuses on non-Jewish Germans of different ages, generations, social, regional, and religious backgrounds who migrated to urban centers and suburban regions in the United States and Canada between the late 1940s and 1990s.

In one way or another, the encounter with Jews in North America figured prominently in the three women’s negotiations of the past and present. Lefcourt converted to Judaism and was active in her local Jewish community. Hegi wrote about the importance of early meetings with Jewish employers and later encounters with Jewish readers of her best-seller novels. The first man Reichel fell in love with in New York was a Jewish artist. Encounters with Jews have also been conceived to be of major significance in young Germans’ education about their past, and in attempts at reconciliation.⁶ The second objective of this study then, is to explore the relations between Germans and Jews outside of Germany, specifically between three generations of Germans in North America and North American Jews, including German Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors and their children and grandchildren.

Scope of the Study

This study evolved from interviews I conducted for earlier projects with German men and women who migrated to North America in the late 1940s and 1950s. In their life stories there emerged three major differences

between—as one of my interviewees put it—“being a German in Germany and being a German in North America.” The first is an issue of insider-outsider and hinges on the power relations between Germans and the “Other.” The second is based on the differences between German and U.S./Canadian culture and society. The third is the fundamental difference between German-Jewish relations in Germany and in North America. Interviews specifically conducted for this study with non-Jewish German immigrants and Jewish Americans in New York City have confirmed the significance of these three differences in cultural interaction.

The first difference between Germans’ *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany and in North America is an issue of power relations. In Germany, Germans were insiders; they belonged to the nation and defined themselves in opposition to the Other, the “foreigners.”⁷ In North America, however, they were (at least at first) outsiders and themselves defined as the Other. The relations of power were reversed and this included the power to speak about the past. In Germany, Germans could feel strong or at least safe, because as insiders it was they who could choose to talk about the Holocaust or—as they did in public in the 1950s and 1960s and in families up to the present—to remain to a large extent silent. As people who had suffered displacement and personal as well as material losses during and after the war, members of the First Generation could and did easily present themselves as victims of the war and as a people betrayed by Hitler.

Evasion was not as easy in North America. From the very beginning, Germans were confronted with public discourses about Nazism and World War Two and later about the Holocaust⁸, and it was rather difficult—although not impossible—to demand to be seen as a victim or to ignore the discourse. Culturally shaped confrontations ranged from the blatant to the subtle and even the unintended. Some Germans were called “Nazi,” others, like Renate Freeman, who came to the USA as a “war bride” in the late 1950s, felt “exposed” in other ways: “If there was something about Jews on TV, the next day it would start: ‘Renate, did you watch TV last night?’ ‘No.’ ‘You ought to have seen it, shows what the Germans did to the Jews’, that continued till 1985. One of my colleagues in particular, Natalie, shouted through the whole office.”⁹ For some Germans, culturally shaped confrontations with the past became a process of learning. The first time Renate Freeman talked about the Holocaust with a family member was when her mother visited her in the United States in the early 1990s. Ursula Hegi remembered: “During my first year of living here [in the U.S.], I found out more about German history than in the eighteen years of growing up in Germany.”¹⁰ Some of Hegi’s and my interviewees related the same experience.

Such learning processes point to the diametrically opposed power relations in Germany and North America: Hegi's statement, while subjectively true, is misleading, because she implies that it was the silence in Germany that prevented her from learning about the past. While the silence in families and schools was pervasive, Germans could not claim that they could not find out about the Holocaust in Germany. While too young to be confronted with discourses about Nazi crimes in the early postwar years, in the years before her emigration in 1964, the desecration of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in West Germany, war crimes trials against Nazis (such as the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt in 1960 or the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961) and other incidents were widely publicized and sent shock waves through German society. If Hegi thus pleaded ignorance in 1964, she could not claim this to be based solely on the silence about the Holocaust in German families and schools. Had she wanted to find out, she would have been able to do so in West Germany. The reason she did not find out about German history was because West German society made it easy—but not impossible—to remain ignorant.

Nevertheless, German immigrants could not evade confrontations with their national past. For some, this applied to their personal or family's past as well. For nearly two decades, one German-American community that I visited in Michigan has been overshadowed by the story of one of its members, who after his immigration in the 1950s was tracked down in the early 1980s as a war criminal and has lived in hiding ever since. Sabine Reichel, after her migration in 1975, returned to Germany to ask her father: "What did you do in the war, daddy?"¹¹ Johanna Hegen-scheidt, a young dancer born in Bremen in 1970 and living in New York since the late 1990s, is deeply troubled by the mysterious stories about her paternal grandfather's role in the *Wehrmacht* and his suicide at the end of the war and by her father's unwillingness to be critical of his mother's glorifying tales about his father. She finds this uncertainty about her family's past to be even more distressing in the relations with her Jewish friends.¹²

One of this study's goals, therefore, is to reconstruct how in every day life German immigrants negotiated—in private and public, with their Jewish and non-Jewish, white, immigrant, or African-American lovers, children, employers, and colleagues—the power of speaking, listening, and remaining silent about the past, of showing, seeing, and looking away from it, of remembering the Holocaust and the war, of defining and naming victims, perpetrators, followers, and bystanders.

The picture of reversed power relations is in a way oversimplified. The social situations in which Germans in the United States and Canada were confronted with the past varied, depending on the time, the environment (small town or big city), their profession and circle of acquaint-

tances and friends, and on many other factors. By interviewing men and women of different backgrounds and ages, my study illuminates not only how German immigrants' *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* has been different from and similar to that of Germans in Germany, but also the diversity of German migrants' negotiations of confrontations with the past. Stereotyping, for example, was encountered by all three generations of German immigrants, but each generation reacted differently. Within each generation, there were different reactions, too, depending on their view of German history. While all German immigrants rejected negative stereotyping, such as being called "Nazi", their reactions to positive stereotypes, which were more prevalent, varied greatly. Also, definitions of "good" and "bad" stereotypes changed over time and differed between generations.

In postwar North America, a view of Germans as easily assimilable white North Europeans and good, hard workers was much more common than the equation of all Germans with Nazis. While materially and socially beneficial, this made some Germans uncomfortable. As one of Hegi's interviewees explained: "When people attach 'German' to 'clean and orderly,' those traits come across as negative to me, and I feel a little strange."¹³ Some older German immigrants, by comparison, believed in such positive stereotypes and embraced them. German immigrants of the Third Generation rejected such stereotyping, but felt more relaxed about them than the generation of their parents.

U.S. and Canadian cultures, however, offered Germans ways to deal with such confrontations that were different from those offered by German culture and society. In Germany, Germans could only remain Germans, whereas in North America they could become Americans or Canadians (at least in the form of citizenship). The study explores how German immigrants used this option: as a way to rid themselves of links with their German heritage and thus evade their past or as a means to feel freer to "tear the silence" that had numbed them in Germany? What other options did acculturation or assimilation offer German immigrants? While in West Germany, for instance, anti-Semitism (at least, if openly displayed) was a taboo, in the United States certain forms of anti-Semitism offered German immigrants a way of dealing with their past.¹⁴

Another part of the cultural issue is what Lutz Niethammer has noticed in the relationship between collective memory and individual remembering: what individuals remembered was partly informed and structured by what the collective commemorated. Thus, in East Germany, it was mainly the Soviets and more generally the Slavs that were remembered as victims of Nazi Germany, while in West Germany it was mainly the Jews.¹⁵ Whom, then, did Americans commemorate and whom did German immigrants remember? How have German immigrants negoti-

ated U.S. and Canadian commemorations of D-Day, V-E Day, the Battle of the Bulge, Veterans Day, etc.? How has that changed with the increasing awareness of the Holocaust in North American society and culture?

The third major difference lies in the fundamentally different German-Jewish relations in North America and Germany that are based on the presence and absence of Jews respectively. The German-Jewish relationship up to this day has been based on the virtual absence of Jews in Germany.¹⁶ The great majority of non-Jewish Germans have never met Jews in Germany, let alone worked or lived with Jews on a daily basis.

This experience was strikingly different for German immigrants in North America. The great majority of them met Jews and quite a number of them had more than fleeting personal contacts with Jews. Depending on when they were born, when they came to North America, and what their experiences had been before their migration, such encounters and relations varied very much. Without being asked or otherwise prodded, more than half (44 of 79) of the German immigrants I interviewed for earlier research on migration experiences talked about meeting a Jew within their first few weeks, months, or years in Canada or the United States. Twelve (particularly female domestic servants) were employed by Jews, a few shared personal friendships, and one Protestant pastor was engaged in theological dialogue with rabbis. Almost all of the interviewees talked about such encounters as a positive or at least not negative experience. Most did not explore it any further in their narratives, however, and few would have agreed with Ursula Hegi's interviewee Gisela, who talked about her friendship with Jews as a "healing gift."¹⁷

Among the Germans in New York that I interviewed specifically about their relations with Jews, I encountered reactions from explicit anti-Semitism to sincere and successful attempts at reconciliation. Whatever the reactions, however, unlike Germans' reactions to Jews in Germany, German immigrants' reactions were based on actual, daily encounters with Jews, be it as lovers and spouses, employers, neighbors, or colleagues. Those with good friendships with American Jews have found this encounter to be the most significant part of their identity as Germans. This included giving specific meanings to such friendships and positive encounters, particularly with Jewish refugees from Europe and survivors. Thus, some German immigrants have interpreted the welcome of their Jewish friends as "absolution" from collective guilt. The study explores the different reactions and interpretations of German-Jewish relations, their role in dealing with the past, and their attendant problems, shortcomings, and promises.

The complex issues deriving from the three key differences in the socio-cultural relations within which German immigrants had to grapple with identity—meeting Jews, confronting the past, breaking the silence,

reconfiguring memory, knowledge, and identity—are vividly captured in Sara Varsintzky's reflections on her experiences as a German immigrant. Born into a Protestant working-class family in 1931 and growing up in Lower Silesia, she fled from the Red Army in 1945 to the U.S. Zone in western Germany. In 1953, she migrated to Canada, where her first job was as a maid in a household to pay off her loan for her overseas passage to the Canadian government:

And I didn't know it at first, but I moved in with a Jewish family. And they were so nice to me. And I remember thinking: 'How come they're nice to me? How can they be nice to me?' And I had to sort of struggle with this. I don't struggle with it anymore today, but at that age. And I remember going to a movie, it was the first American movie I saw where there were Nazis, and I was so upset that they portrayed our soldiers so badly that I ran out half way through, crying. So that was the first time I sort of came face to face with that there was another side, you know. And this was difficult, because as children all during the war we were sheltered, we weren't told anything that was going on, you know. So I had to, finally, I heard more and more and adjusted more about this problem and I could sort of try to come to grips with it, and I'd tell myself: 'Oh, I haven't done anybody any harm, my dad wasn't in the party,' but then they all said: 'Oh yeah, nobody is ever in the party,' that's how the Canadians would talk, you know.¹⁸

For German immigrants, then, struggles over the past and their identity could be triggered by small incidents such as watching a movie and by big incidents such as living with and working for a Jewish family. Such incidents could occur both in private and in public. Some incidents, for example encounters with employers, colleagues, neighbors, friends, or lovers, confronted German immigrants as individuals and triggered an individual identity crisis and response. Other incidents, such as public(ized) discourses on Nazism, World War Two, and the Holocaust would affect German immigrants as a collective, and although individual responses might differ, there could be a collective response.

There have been many such incidents in North America in the last five decades that confronted German-Americans and German-Canadians with their personal and national past. Some were the same as in Germany, but were experienced in a different socio-cultural context. These events included Germany's reparation politics in the 1950s, the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem (1961), Chancellor Willy Brandt's kneeling at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial (1970), the U.S. television mini-series

Holocaust (1978/79), Ronald Reagan and Helmut Kohl's visit to the Bitburg military cemetery (1985), and the movie *Schindler's List* (1993/94).

Other incidents were specific to the North American context, above all the presence of Jews, but also the different public representation and collective memory of the German past. In the first three postwar decades, the American media portrayed Germans stereotypically as brutal soldiers and perverted SS officers—both from dramatic and comedic angles. Thus, Germans in North America watched *Hogan's Heroes* on television; but they did not watch the movies emphasizing German suffering viewed by the (West) German audience.¹⁹ While West Germans annually commemorated the protest of East Germans in Berlin on June 17, 1953 as the "Day of German Unity"²⁰ and on November 9 were reminded of the pogroms of 1938, did German immigrants take part in U.S. and Canadian Memorial Days? How did Germans in North America experience the reunification of Germany in 1989/90, the celebrations of V-E Day in 1995, 1985, and before?²¹

Such transatlantic exchanges were also part of transnational life—both for Germans abroad and for Germans at home. "Transnational life includes those practices and relationships linking immigrants and their descendants abroad with the home country, where such practices have significant meaning, are regularly carried out, and embody important aspects of identity and social structure that help form the life world of immigrants or their descendants."²² Memory (or rather discourses about the past) is one such social practice²³ that so far has not been examined from a transnational perspective. Considering the increasing research on (especially Holocaust) memory in history,²⁴ this is somewhat surprising, even more so in the German-American context. The transnationalizing of German-American war and Holocaust memory began, after all, not with the Finkelstein and Goldhagen debates, nor with Bitburg or the airing of *Holocaust*. It began with the emigration of political refugees from Nazi Germany in the 1930s and the liberation of the concentration camps by American troops in 1945. For Germans abroad, this memory was a major link to their home country, which shaped Germans' lives in North America.

Sources and Methods

Publications by and for non-Jewish Germans in North America, such as the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* and *Kanada Kurier*, can tell us how certain groups of German immigrants dealt with their past collectively and in public. Publications by Jewish communities in North America, such as *Aufbau* and *Jewish Week*, as well as mainstream media throw light on how German migrants' attempts at dealing with the past were perceived by

others. Personal papers of German immigrants working in specific positions or functions in the institutions of the German community (churches, consulates, clubs, media, etc.) help to further illuminate the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the public sphere. Hence, from the files of Kurt von Cardinal, an officer of the German embassy in Ottawa during the 1950s and 1960s, we learn that some German immigrants perceived the 1960s television comedy series *Hogan's Heroes* as "hate propaganda."²⁵

Publicized discourses are limited, however, in an investigation of German immigrants' dealing with the past and German-Jewish relations in North America. After a steady decline in the early twentieth century, the post-World War Two German-American and German-Canadian press has been much less diversified than it had been in the decades and centuries before. The majority of German immigrants have blended into white mainstream society, which is reflected, for example, in their rate of taking out U.S. and Canadian citizenship and in the rate of moving into suburbs. Those organized in German-American and German-Canadian institutions have tended to be immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s and North American-born children and grandchildren of German immigrants with a predominantly conservative worldview. Focusing on the organized German-North Americans, therefore, would severely bias the study. Oral history interviews are used as the major way of avoiding such bias.

Hence, life-story interviews with non-Jewish Germans who came to North America in the second half of the twentieth century as well as with Jewish Americans, including Jewish German refugees, Holocaust survivors, and their descendents, are the main source of this study. The range of the interviewees' life narratives is large enough to show the diversity of individual experiences, but also of collective paths. In addition to gender and class balance, this includes interviews with people of different ages and generations and with immigrants arriving in different decades. The study draws on interviews conducted for earlier research with nearly 80 German immigrants throughout North America and on interviews with 20 German immigrants on the U.S. East Coast conducted specifically for this study. Future interviews will be conducted in Winnipeg's diverse German and Jewish communities.

Oral history here serves not merely as a substitute for non-existing written sources. One theoretical focus of this study is on orality, including oral narrative, because it is through speaking rather than writing that most people make sense of their experiences.²⁶ They craft stories around what they experience, what they remember, what they learn from social relations and from encounters with interpretations of history (in books, museums etc.). Through telling and re-telling their stories, they make memory and knowledge of the past into their identity. Oral history thus

addresses the imbalance of much historiographical work on German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that focuses on the written products of the political, social, cultural, and even economic elites.

Furthermore, people usually negotiate meanings in oral form, in dialogue, conversation, debate, and silence. Such negotiations become particularly visible in interviews with couples, in this case especially with German-Jewish couples. Moreover, many narrators had never before been asked to talk about their understanding of the past and their role in history. Many of them therefore struggled to give meaning to their experiences and memories, to make sense of their own past as much as of their national past, to construct new stories around their concepts of self in relation to National Socialism and the Holocaust. But it is not only the narrators who have to struggle. One of the advantages and challenges of oral history is that the historian participates in the dialogue, and he or she is just as much called upon to make sense of private experiences (such as encounters with Holocaust survivors) and public discourses (such as former Chancellor Helmut Kohl's phrase "mercy of late birth" or a visit to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC). Such experiences in turn inform the research and interpretation.²⁷

It is no wonder then that some of the interviews deconstructed some of my preconceived notions and categories, and increased the complexity of the analysis of the phenomena under study. This is particularly true for narratives about personal and intimate relations between Germans and Jews. In telling stories about homosexual relations with an American Jew who came out of the closet in Frankfurt/M., about the work and pain invested in making a heterosexual relationship with the child of Holocaust survivors succeed, about marriages with American Jews and children of German-Jewish refugees, the German interviewees as much as their Jewish partners constructed identities and social lives as Germans, Jews, and Americans, as lovers, friends, and partners, as parents, siblings, and children, as students, workers, and artists that I had not anticipated at the outset of this project.

It is in people's stories that we can uncover who in the mental, familial, social, and cultural context has the power to speak or remain silent, to listen or make oneself heard. Where in their biographies did the German immigrants situate their past, the Holocaust, their encounter with Jews, and how did they do it? Who else—their parents, their children, perpetrators, victims—spoke through their life stories? It is here, in and through their stories, that I explore how German immigrants dealt with their past in the last five decades.

If one strives to understand how societies make sense of the past, how German and North American societies negotiate the past and the present, reviewing only the written reflections and cultural products of academ-

ics, artists, journalists, and politicians would lead to too narrow a picture. But their discursive practices, in the form of books, articles, and speeches, museums and memorials, films, plays, and paintings, cannot be ignored. One needs to ask, instead, how people who do not deal with the past on a professional level absorb, learn from, argue about, and reject such publicized discourses that confront them on a regular if not daily basis.

Such an investigation must therefore be based not only on an analysis of the contents but also of the forms of people's narrative. What patterns of interpretation, strategies of remembering, constructing the past, and telling the story have German immigrants used in grappling with their heritage? Are there recurrent themes, symbols, story lines, or interpretations in their life stories, their stories about coming to terms with the past, their stories about their first encounters with Jews, about being a German in North America? Did they construct myths as a way to confront or to silence the past or to break through and counter socially dominant myths? Were these narrative strategies the same, similar to or different from those developed in Germany?

Notes

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² Steven E. Aschheim, *Culture and Catastrophe. German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (Houndmills, 1996), 17. On the concept of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* as private and public discourses on National Socialism and its consequences, motivated by the underlying question of (collective) guilt, see Michael Kohlstruck, *Zwischen Erinnerung und Geschichte. Der Nationalsozialismus und die jungen Deutschen* (Berlin, 1997), 13–38. Distinct from this descriptive-analytic use of the concept, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* has also been conceived as a normative prescription of how one should deal with the past, e.g. Michael Wolffsohn, *Keine Angst vor Deutschland* (Erlangen, 1990), 96: "Zur Vergangenheitsbewältigung gehören Wissen, Werten, Weinen, Wollen, als vier Ws. Wissen, was geschah. Das Werten der Taten als Untaten. Das zumindest symbolische Weinen über die Opfer. Das Wollen eines anderen, als besser und moralischer empfundenen Allgemeinwessens. Das Wollen wäre die Voraussetzung zum Handeln." Quoted in: Ulrich Brochhagen, *Nach Nürnberg. Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Westintegration in der Ära Adenauer* (Hamburg, 1994), 11.

³ See the bibliographies in Robert G. Moeller, "War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 1008–48; Omer Bartov, "Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust," *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 771–816; Samuel Moyn, "Two Regimes of Memory," *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 1182–6; Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 1999); Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt. Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (New York, 1994); Kohlstruck, *Zwischen Erinnerung und Geschichte*; on East and West Germany: Hanno Loewy, ed., *Holocaust: Die Grenzen des Verstehens. Eine Debatte über die Besetzung der Geschichte* (Reinbeck, 1992); Bernhard Moltmann, et al., eds., *Erinnerung. Zur Gegenwart des Holocaust in Deutschland-West und Deutschland-Ost* (Frankfurt/Main, 1993); Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory. The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997);

on official West and East German-Jewish-Israeli relations: Michael Wolffsohn, *Eternal Guilt? Forty Years of German-Jewish-Israeli Relations* (New York, 1993). In reference to Germans' relations to the Nazi past, it has become common to speak of three generations: Those who lived through the Hitler years, the First Generation, passed their memories—more often than not in the form of silences—on to their children, the Second Generation. They, in turn, often have been unable to talk to their children, the Third Generation, about their parents' past. Gabriele Rosenthal, ed., *Der Holocaust im Leben von drei Generationen. Familien von Überlebenden der Shoah und von Nazi-Tätern* (Gießen, 1997); best researched has been the Second Generation, e.g. Peter Sichrovsky, *Born Guilty. Children of Nazi Families* (London, 1988); Dan Bar-On, *Legacy of Silence: Encounters With Children of the Third Reich* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989); Gerald L. Posner, *Hitler's Children. Sons and Daughters of Leaders of the Third Reich Talk About Their Fathers and Themselves* (New York, 1991); Gabriele Rosenthal/Dan Bar-On, "A Biographical Case Study of a Victimizer's Daughter's Strategy: Pseudo-Identification With the Victims of the Holocaust," *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 2/2: 105–127; Mona S. Weissmark, et al., "Psychosocial Themes in the Lives of Children of Survivors and Nazis," in: *ibid.* 3/4: 319–335; on the Third Generation: Björn Krondorfer, *Remembrance and Reconciliation. Encounters between Young Jews and Germans* (New Haven, 1995); Dan Bar-On et al., eds., *"Da ist etwas kaputtgegangen an den Wurzeln . . ." Identitätsformation deutscher und israelischer Jugendlicher im Schatten des Holocaust* (Frankfurt/Main, 1997).

⁴ Renata Lefcourt, "On Being a German Immigrant Woman to the United States after 1945," paper presented to the Oral History Association 1998 Annual Meeting, Buffalo, NY, USA, October 15–18, 1998; Ursula Hegi, *Tearing the Silence. On Being German in America* (New York, 1997), 15; Sabine Reichel, *What Did You Do In the War, Daddy? Growing Up German* (New York, 1989), 10.

⁵ While Germans' confrontation with their past and/or encounters with Jews during visits abroad are occasionally mentioned, there is hardly ever a follow-up, see Kohlstruck, *Zwischen Erinnerung und Geschichte*, 103–126. On the other pole of transnational life are attempts by American-born children of German immigrants to deal with the past, see Frederick Kempe, *Father/Land. A Personal Search for the New Germany* (New York, 1999).

⁶ Krondorfer, *Remembrance and Reconciliation*; Bar-On, *"Da ist etwas kaputtgegangen . . ."*

⁷ The concept of "foreigner" has been historically fluctuating. After 1945, up to one quarter of the West German population consisted of German refugees who were considered "foreigners" and non-Germans by the majority of the "native" West German population. While socio-economic integration was swift, tension and animosities have remained, but have been covered up by, consecutively, animosities toward labor migrants from South and South East Europe, so-called ethnic German refugees from the Soviet Union, asylum-seekers from Africa, refugees from the former Yugoslavia, and by tensions between West and East Germans after reunification.

⁸ Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, 1999); Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York, 1999).

⁹ Renate Freeman (pseudonym), interview by Alexander Freund, Silver Spring, MD, USA, 18 May 1998.

¹⁰ Hegi, *Tearing the Silence*, 288.

¹¹ Reichel, *What Did You Do In the War, Daddy?*

¹² Johanna Hegenscheidt, interview by Alexander Freund, New York, NY, USA, 2000.

¹³ Hegi, *Tearing the Silence*, 168.

¹⁴ Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany* (Oxford, 1992); Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York, 1994); Jerome A. Chanes, ed., *Antisemitism in America Today: Outspoken Experts Explode the Myths* (New York, 1995).

¹⁵ Lutz Niethammer, "Erinnerungsgebot und Erfahrungsgeschichte. Institutionalisierungen im kollektiven Gedächtnis", in: Loewy, ed., *Holocaust*, 21–34, 30.

¹⁶ From 1945 to 1991, the number of Jews in West Germany was 30,000. Wolfgang Benz, *Zwischen Hitler und Adenauer. Studien zur deutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft* (Frankfurt/Main, 1991), 64; the number rose to 70,000 in 1998 because of the migration of Russian and other Eastern European Jews: Torsten Schneider-Haase, "Der ewige Antisemit," *Die Woche* Nr. 52-01/1999, 8.

¹⁷ Hegi, *Tearing the Silence*, 258, 291.

¹⁸ Sara Varsintzky (pseudonym), interview by Alexander Freund, Ottawa, ON, Canada, 26 March 1998.

¹⁹ Cf. Moeller, "War Stories".

²⁰ The June 17 "Day of German Unity" has been replaced by the "Day of German Unity" celebrating the 1990 reunification on October 3.

²¹ For the politics of public memory see Bartov, "Defining Enemies"; specifically for West Germany, see Moeller, "War Stories"; for the USA, see Shandler, *While America Watches*.

²² Robert C. Smith, "Comparing Local Level Swedish and Mexican Transnational Life: An Essay in Historical Retrieval," unpubl. ms. Barnard College, NY 2000, 1.

²³ James Fentress/Chris Wickham. *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992).

²⁴ See *Passing into History: Nazism and the Holocaust beyond Memory*. Special issue of *History & Memory* 9/1-2 (Fall 1997); Saul Friedlander, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington, 1993).

²⁵ National Archives of Canada, Manuscript Group 31 H39, Cardinal, Kurt v., vol. 3: Trans-Canada Alliance of German Canadians (TCA), file: "Hate Propaganda".

²⁶ Jerome S. Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Cambridge, MA 1986; *ibid.*, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); Donald Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany, 1988).

²⁷ Ronald J. Grele, "History and the Languages of History in the Oral History Interview: Who Answers Whose Questions and Why?" in Eva M. McMahan/Kim Lacy Rogers, eds., *Interactive Oral History Interviewing* (Hillsdale, NJ, 1994).