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FROM OPFERKONKURRENZ TO SOLIDARITY: A ROUND TABLE

Desiring Victimhood: German Self-Formation and the Moralization of Political Conflict

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The closed-off storerooms of collective European historical and political consciousness are haunted by the histories and ongoing effects of colonialism and racism that have wreaked havoc on their victims. Premised on the conviction that histories of violence require recognition and representation, liberal democracies are increasingly asked to recognize these historical crimes and injustices and make them publicly visible. In Germany especially, these demands are tied to a desired ideal: colonial pasts can and must be recognized *without* competing with, or relativizing, the memory of the Holocaust and its pivotal importance for German political culture and collective self-understanding.[1] While intuitively appealing, we suggest that such a desired pluralization of the 'liberal' or 'cosmopolitan' memory paradigm may indeed lead to the recognition of *more* victims. Yet in this ideal, the political and epistemological plausibility structures of the 'politics of victimhood' are left intact. Despite an explicit commitment to solidarity in the public discourse of liberal democracies, competition for recognition (*Opferkonkurrenz*) is both an inherent, structural ingredient and a ripple effect of the politics of victimhood.[2]

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[1] This desire is expressed e.g. by Jürgen Habermas, 'Der neue Historikerstreit', *philomag*, 60 (2021), at [https://www.philomag.de/artikel/der-neue-historikerstreit], accessed 21 June 2022; Susan Neiman, *Learning from the Germans: Confronting Race and the Memory of Evil* (New York, 2019); Saul Friedländer, Norbert Frei, Dan Diner, and Sybille Steinbacher, *Ein Verbrechen ohne Namen: Anmerkungen zum Streit über den Holocaust* (Munich, 2022). See also the speech by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on the occasion of the inauguration of the Humboldt Forum, 22 Sept. 2021, at [https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/bulletin/rede-von-bundespraesident-dr-frank-walter-steinmeier-1962758], accessed 29 Jan. 2022.

[2] For a conceptualization and critique of the 'politics of victimhood', see Robert Meister, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights* (New York, 2011); Vincent

In the following, we will address the politics of victimhood in terms of the history of ideas and focus on the genealogy of the concept of passive victimhood in the West. We will not discuss historical experiences of victimization—namely, victimhood as a historical fact. Rather, we approach victimhood as an analytical category and argue that the work done by the figure of the victim occludes an understanding of political conflicts *as political conflicts.* Instead, it delegates the political primarily to the sphere of morality. Regardless of the transtemporal, transnational, and categorical entanglements of genocides, experiences of victimization, and their memorialization, we will thus first briefly describe the genealogy of the figure of the victim. We will then carve out the centrality specifically of the figure of the Jewish victim to the making of the German post-war order.[3] Finally, we will close with three brief examples that demonstrate how the politics of victimhood in this German context enables the recognition of more victims, yet simultaneously reproduces a hierarchization of vulnerability and informs the political subjectivation of different collectives.

The German term *Opfer* has two different meanings that are related to the semantic fields of the Latin *sacrificium*/*victima*. *Sacrificium* designates an active sacrifice—for example, the offering of an animal to a deity or the voluntary renunciation of certain acts—while *victima*

Druliolle and Roddy Brett (eds.), *The Politics of Victimhood in Post-Conflict Societies: Comparative and Analytical Perspectives* (Cham, 2018). Specifically on *Opferkonkurrenz*, see Jean-Michel Chaumont, *Die Konkurrenz der Opfer: Genozid, Identität und Anerkennung*, trans. Thomas Laugstien (Lüneburg, 2001), originally published in 1997 as *La concurrence des victimes: Génocide, identité, reconnaissance*. Through an analysis primarily of 'internal' Jewish debates about the Holocaust and its meaning in the present, Chaumont delineates how Jews' understanding and interpretation of victimhood evolved. One of the consequences of the rising importance of these debates generally and for Jewish self-understanding in particular is the emergence of competition not only between Jews and other victims of the National Socialist regime, but also between different Jewish actors themselves.

[3] The centrality of Jewish victimhood is, of course, not a phenomenon specific to Germany, but underpins the emergence and consolidation of the normative post-war human rights culture. On the 'globalization of the Holocaust', see e.g. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, trans. Assenka Oksiloff (Philadelphia, 2006); for a critique, see Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (London, 2013).

designates the passive endurance of suffering caused by natural catastrophe or violence.[4] Whereas the German *Opfer* carries both of these meanings, the English sacrifice/victim and the French *sacrifice/victime* differentiate between them. Only in the eighteenth century did *Opfer* become detached from its theological context and enter the sphere of ethics, as well as historical and political philosophy. With the emergence of the modern nation-state at this time, the term's semantic range and currency increased, culminating in its association with heroic self-sacrifice for the homeland.[5]

Between the early nineteenth century and the mid twentieth century, essential social transformations occurred in European societies which have had lasting effects on the notion of passive victimhood. In particular, perceptions of violence and war have changed fundamentally. This is a result of the identification and documentation of soldiers who fell in the First World War and the compensation claims raised by bereaved families and wounded and disabled survivors. In addition, first attempts at the legal regulation of military enterprises were made as early as the mid nineteenth century.[6] However, it was only with the end of the Second World War and the gradual emergence of the processes of 'coming to terms' with Nazi crimes that the figure of the victim turned into one of the most potent figures of political culture and memory politics.[7] It is now implicated in a

[4] Martin Schulze Wessel, 'Einleitung', in id. and K. Erik Franzen (eds.), *Opfernarrative: Konkurrenzen und Deutungskämpfe in Deutschland und im östlichen Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 2012), 1–8, at 1. On the formation of the passive victim, see Svenja Goltermann, *Opfer: Die Wahrnehmung von Krieg und Gewalt in der Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main, 2017). On the religious origins of the active sacrifice, see also Kirstin Breitenfellner, *Wie können wir über Opfer reden?* (Vienna, 2018), 27–45; Thomas Vollmer, *Das Heilige und das Opfer: Zur Soziologie religiöser Heilslehre, Gewalt(losigkeit) und Gemeinschaftsbildung* (Wiesbaden, 2009); Robert A. Yelle, *Sovereignty and the Sacred: Secularism and the Political Economy of Religion* (Chicago, 2019); and Bernd Janowski and Michael Welker (eds.), *Opfer: Theologische und kulturelle Kontexte* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000).

[5] Adam Seigfried, 'Opfer. I. Von der Antike bis zum Reformationszeitalter', in Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie online* (Basel, 2017).

[6] Goltermann, *Opfer*, 27–169.

[7] It is noteworthy that when the standard lexicon of German political–historical language, the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, was finished in the late

shift from the 'future-oriented model of progress' to the 'past-oriented model of memory' in Western societies.[8] Historian Martin Schulze Wessel speaks of a '"victimization" of historical science and political discourse.'[9] Peter Hallama attests to Western Europe's passive turn from national heroic narratives to an age of victimhood filled with guilt and shame: 'Yesterday's victimization is becoming the legitimacy of today's claims.'[10] Since the 1990s in particular, the notion that victim experiences constitute identities has gained increasing popularity, and (self-)identification as a victim has accordingly morphed into a common mode of self-description in confrontation with individual or group violence.[11]

Beyond the specific context of the Second World War, medical discourses and media presentations and representations since the 1980s have contributed to the growing popularization of victim narratives in the West. Psychotherapeutically oriented researchers emphasize how identities are formed through experiences of suffering. The medical '"discovery" of trauma as post-traumatic stress disorder',[12] its legal codification, and its pop-cultural restaging further propel the dissemination and expansion of the rhetoric of victimhood.[13] At the same time, the newly created criminological subdiscipline of victimology describes, in addition to 'primary' and 'secondary', also 'tertiary

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1990s, there was no entry for *Opfer*. See Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschlan*d, 8 vols. (Stuttgart, 1972–97), vol. iv: *Mi-Pre* (1978).

[8] Martin Sabrow, 'Erinnerung als Pathosformel der Gegenwart', *Vorgänge: Zeitschrift für Bürgerrechte und Gesellschaftspolitik*, 51/2 (2012), 4–15, at 14.

[9] Schulze Wessel, 'Einleitung', 1.

[10] Peter Hallama, 'Geschichtswissenschaften, Memory Studies und der Passive Turn: Zur Frage der Opferperspektive in der erinnerungskulturellen Forschung', in Schulze Wessel and Franzen (eds.), *Opfernarrative*, 9–27, at 9.

[11] Randall Hansen, Achim Saupe, Andreas Wirsching, and Daqing Yang (eds.), *Authenticity and Victimhood after the Second World War: Narratives from Europe and East Asia* (Toronto, 2021).

[12] Franziska Lamott, 'Zur Instrumentalisierung des Opferstatus', *Psychotherapeut*, 54 (2009), 257–61, at 257.

[13] Goltermann, *Opfer*, 171–233. See also Nick Haslam, 'Concept Creep: Psychology's Expanding Concepts of Harm and Pathology', *Psychological Inquiry*, 27/1 (2016), 1–17.

victimization', and thus integrates and fixes victimhood as a central component of a personality, a subject position, or an identity.[14] Far beyond the experience of violence in the context of war and persecution, victimhood is now inscribed primarily onto the physical body and codified, as well as eternalized, as a painful experience that is biologically and culturally inheritable.[15]

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the practice of empathic identification as or with victims became firmly anchored in Western and Central European societies. Relatedly, (state) recognition of (collective) victimhood has turned into a cornerstone of struggles over political representation. States now establish frameworks within which minoritized groups are placed (and place themselves) in relations of competition *and* solidarity alongside their respective victim identities. State recognition of victimhood can in this sense also be understood as an 'instrumentum regni' (a tool of government)[16] that constitutes and organizes groups around victimhood.[17] However, now that a moralized rhetoric of victimhood has become politically

[14] See Goltermann, *Opfer*, 178–96; Angelika Treibel, 'Opferforschung', in Dieter Hermann and Andreas Pöge (eds.), *Kriminalsoziologie: Handbuch für Wissenschaft und Praxis* (Baden-Baden, 2018), 441–57, at 448.
[15] On the emergence of the notion of the biological transmission of victimhood through the impact of violence and trauma on a person's genetic make-up, see Anna Danilina, 'Somatische Erinnerung und historische Gewalt: Die transgenerationale Traumaforschung der Epigenetik' (postdoctoral project, Technical University Berlin, work in progress). For the cultural idea of 'hereditary victimhood' in particular, see Jie-Hyun Lim, 'Victimhood Nationalism in Contested Memories: National Mourning and Global Accountability', in Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (eds.), *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (Basingstoke, 2010), 138–62.
[16] Daniele Giglioli, *Die Opferfalle: Wie die Vergangenheit die Zukunft fesselt*, trans. Max Henninger (Berlin, 2016), 12, originally published in 2014 as *Critica della vittima: Un esperimento con l'etica*.
[17] On the elementary importance of recognition for positive self-perception, collective identity, and participation in society, see Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition: An Essay* (Princeton, 1992). Others, such as Asad Haider, Wendy Brown, and Patchen Markell, critically focus on the relationship between the state and its practice of minority recognition, and read identity-based recognition processes as modern forms of governance that constitute relations of hierarchized difference. See Asad Haider, *Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump* (London, 2018); Wendy Brown,

effective, global state powers also describe themselves as (potential) victims. The post-1989 order conceptualizes its military interventions as a defence of the Western moral regime and a means of preventing its own potential victimization. Whereas political struggles previously played out on the basis of different visions of the political order, such as communism versus market capitalism, they are now discussed and framed as struggles between parties with *moral* and *immoral* dispositions (the first prominent example of this being the 'axis of evil', as used by George W. Bush in 2002). Deviance is no longer described as political antagonism, but as a reluctance to identify emphatically with the suffering of others.[18]

During the first decades after 1945, the (West) German state ignored, marginalized, and blamed Jews (including all those murdered after being categorized as Jews under the Nazi regime) in its practices of restitution and its political discourses.[19] Social scientist Jean-Michel

States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity (Princeton, 1995); Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton, 2003).

[18] Political theorist Robert Meister therefore argues that the post-war emergence of a normative global 'human rights discourse' and ultimately the 'War on Terror' is a revision of the justice-based 'revolution model' of 1789 to 1989 (Meister, *After Evil*, 1–49). Historian A. Dirk Moses argues that the concept of genocide as it emerged in the wake of the Holocaust is flawed in that it understands genocide to be motivated by 'irrational hatred'. Civilian deaths, however, are also caused by states striving for permanent security that is 'concerned not only with eliminating immediate threats but also with future threats' and is governed by 'a logic of prevention (future threats) as well as preemption (imminent threats)'. See A. Dirk Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge, 2021), 34–5. We are aware that state powers used representations of victimhood and self-victimization to legitimize their warfare as early as in the First World War. See e.g. anti-British visual stereotypes in German postcards from the early twentieth century: Maren Jung-Diestelmeier, *'Das verkehrte England': Visuelle Stereotype auf Postkarten und deutsche Selbstbilder 1899–1918* (Göttingen, 2017), 378–86.

[19] See e.g. the implementation of the *Bundesentschädigungsgesetz* (Federal Restitution Act) of 1953, as described in Norbert Frei, José Brunner, and Constantin Goschler (eds.), *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung: Geschichte, Erfahrung und Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel* (Göttingen, 2009). On the relation of the West German state to Jews, see Frank Stern, *Im Anfang war Auschwitz: Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus im deutschen Nachkrieg* (Gerlingen, 1991), 324–39; Peter Reichel, Harald Schmid, and Peter Steinbach, 'Die "zweite Geschichte"

Chaumont meticulously traces how these renewed experiences of humiliation, shame, and frustrated demands for recognition have been integrated into Jews' collective consciousness.[20] Only gradually, and especially in the wake of the broadcast of the Eichmann trial (1961) and the popularization of the term 'Holocaust' through the TV series of the same name (1978; first aired in Germany in 1979), did the systematic mass-murder of Jews come to be recognized as a catastrophe in and of itself, rather than as collateral damage of intensified warfare. In (West) Germany, the emergence of civil memory activism (*Geschichts- und Gedenkstättenbewegung*) and a growing interest in the historiography of the Holocaust from the 1970s onwards constituted the first public attempts to 'come to terms' with the Nazi past and, in particular, its policy of extermination.[21] Individual and collective self-formation became increasingly entangled with gazing at the past. Turning away from the self-victimization of their parents, the 'second generation' started to identify with their parents' victims and to desire the figure of the 'felt victim [*gefühltes Opfer*]'.[22] This identification with Jewish victims had both an identity-establishing and an exonerating function. Media enactments of powerless victims further promoted idealized substitute identities that enabled the German audience to distance itself from perpetrators. Identification with the Holocaust's Jewish victims and

der Hitler-Diktatur: Zur Einführung', in eid. (eds.), *Der Nationalsozialismus – die zweite Geschichte: Überwindung, Deutung, Erinnerung* (Munich, 2009), 7–21, at 18–19.

[20] Chaumont, *Die Konkurrenz der Opfer*, 21–86.

[21] Jenny Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge, 2017); Volker Böge (ed.), *Geschichtswerkstätten gestern – heute – morgen: Bewegung! Stillstand. Aufbruch?* (Munich, 2004); Etta Grotrian, 'Geschichtswerkstätten und alternative Geschichtspraxis in den achtziger Jahren', in Wolfgang Hardtwig and Alexander Schug (eds.), *History Sells! Angewandte Geschichte als Wissenschaft und Markt* (Stuttgart, 2009), 243–53.

[22] On the relationship between memory and identification with *and as* Jewish victims, see e.g. Ulrike Jureit and Christian Schneider, *Gefühlte Opfer: Illusionen der Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (Stuttgart, 2010); Christoph Schmidt, *Israel und die Geister von '68: Eine Phänomenologie* (Göttingen, 2018); A. Dirk Moses, 'The Non-German German and the German German: Dilemmas of Identity after the Holocaust', *New German Critique*, 101 (2007), 45–94. For examples of German self-victimization, see Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (Munich, 2006; 3rd edn 2018), 183–204.

'mourning' morphed into basic elements of remembrance and began to determine political and aesthetic commemorative practices and discourses.[23] Victimhood became a *desired* resource and an asset.

In the context of the memory politics and activism of the 1980s,[24] initial tensions arose between groups that defined themselves in relation to their victimization by the National Socialist regime. Chaumont describes how, during the first years after the war, politically persecuted victims were addressed as heroic resistance fighters who were honoured for their actions. Gradually, however, when innocence and passivity became central characteristics of victimhood, the racially persecuted began to 'outcompete' the politically persecuted. In a newly emergent 'ranking of suffering', Jews, as non-partisan and apolitical victims who were killed for no other reason than 'who they were', figured as paradigmatic victims—an inversion that must also be understood in the context of the Cold War.[25] Under the premises of the formation,

[23] Wulf Kansteiner, 'Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle: The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany', in id., Richard Ned Lebow, and Claudio Fogu (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham, NC, 2006), 102–46; see also Insa Eschebach, *Öffentliches Gedenken: Deutsche Erinnerungskultur seit der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005); Aleida Assmann, *Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur: Eine Intervention* (Munich, 2013), 59–106. For the emerging field of memory studies in particular, see Jay Winter, 'The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom" in Contemporary Historical Studies', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington DC*, 27 (2000), 69–92.

[24] We use the terms 'activism' and 'politics' to indicate that 'memory work' became a practice of both political elites (see e.g. Richard von Weizsäcker, speech during the ceremony commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the end of war in Europe and of National Socialist tyranny, Bundestag, Bonn, 8 May 1985, at [https://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Richard-von-Weizsaecker/Reden/1985/05/19850508_Rede.html], accessed 22 June 2022) and civil society (see e.g. the emergence of the 'Geschichtsbewegung' (history movement) described in Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory*).

[25] Chaumont, *Die Konkurrenz der Opfer*, 162. On the 'disappearance' of communists and worker activists from German memorial contexts, see Y. Michal Bodemann, 'Reconstructions of History: From Jewish Memory to Nationalized Commemoration of Kristallnacht in Germany', in id. (ed.), *Jews, Germans, Memory: Reconstructions of Jewish Life in Germany* (Ann Arbor, 1996), 179–223. A. Dirk Moses traces the emergence of the notion of a 'victim of victims' in his *Problems of Genocide*, 481–8.

from the 1970s onwards, of what is today subsumed under the rubric of 'identity politics', the notion of innocent, passive victimhood was thus increasingly inscribed onto the figure of the Jew.[26]

After 1989, seeking to demonstrate its full and lasting belonging to the realm of 'civilized nations', the 'new' German state institutionalized the memory of the Holocaust as its 'post-national' foundation.[27] In this context, the figure of the Jew has become *the* key figure of German democratic self-assertion (*Vergemeinschaftung*) and a medium through which the very identity of the 'Berlin Republic' is articulated and demonstrated. Standing in for everything the Nazi state was not, the figure of the Jew has become a desired figure onto which hopes for a post-national, post-racial future are projected: Jewish museums, memorial sites, Jewish culture days, various Israel-related initiatives, and events, movies, and books are all sites upon which a democratic disposition is made public and experienced. 'Things Jewish' now inform the subjectivities and political emotions of those who conceive of themselves as participants, founders, and builders of a new, democratic German political consciousness and collectivity. The democratic citizen and the figure of the Jew are imagined as sharing *one and the same* moral–political space, and this is what makes the 'new Germany' an identifiable nation as well as a nation with which one can identify.[28]

[26] This move simultaneously enabled and triggered the constitution of other 'forgotten victims' of the Nazi regime in public discourse during the 1980s—primarily gay victims and the victims of Nazi euthanasia and enforced sterilization. See Katharina Stengel and Werner Konitzer (eds.), *Opfer als Akteure: Interventionen ehemaliger NS-Verfolgter in der Nachkriegszeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 2008); Harald Schmid, 'Zwischen Achtung und Ächtung: Opfer nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft im Bild der deutschen Öffentlichkeit', in id., Henning Borggräfe, and Hanne Leßau (eds.), *Fundstücke: Die Wahrnehmung der NS-Verbrechen und ihrer Opfer im Wandel* (Göttingen, 2015), 10–22.
[27] The term 'post-national' was coined by Jürgen Habermas in *Die Postnationale Konstellation: Politische Essays* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), trans. into English by Max Pensky as *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001). For a critique, see Albena Azmanova and Azar Dakwar, 'The Inverted Postnational Constellation: Identitarian Populism in Context', *European Law Journal*, 25/5 (2019), 494–501.
[28] On the embrace of the figure of the Jew in the context of post-Cold War nation-building, see Geneviève Zubrzycki, 'Nationalism, "Philosemitism" and Symbolic Boundary-Making in Contemporary Poland', *Comparative Studies in*

In particular, the performance of Holocaust memory and the corresponding institutionalization and expansion of Holocaust education have become prerequisites of *moral* belonging.[29] The dividing line between the genocidal past and the purified present is drawn and made visible on the level of both political discourse and individual citizens' practices, through the performance of a shift from a world in which the German state remembered its murdered Jews to a world in which it actively protects its living Jews. For the Federal Republic of Germany and its civil society, the maintenance of a special relationship with the state of Israel, the establishment of a representative, victim-identified culture of remembrance, the normative commitment to support Jewish life, and the combatting of antisemitism are thus fundamental.[30]

The paradigmatic, iconic status of the figure of the Jewish victim has implications for the desired project of pluralization in memorial contexts and ultimately impacts on the way in which present-day political struggles are read and acted out. The centrality of Jewish victimhood implies that vulnerability can be recognized in principle only if it does *not* compete with the figure of the Jew or relativize its victim status in the present. Political violence against minoritized subjects and collectives for whom (West) German rehabilitation is not central to their self-constitution remains illegible. Regardless of whether or not the Holocaust was 'historically unique', the embrace of this 'lesson of the past' is an essential condition of *moral* belonging. The

Society and History, 58/1 (2016), 66–98. For the German context, see also Jane Kramer, *The Politics of Memory: Looking for Germany in the New Germany* (New York, 1996); Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley, 2002); Bodemann (ed.), *Jews, Germans, Memory*.

[29] See Sultan Doughan, 'Teaching Tolerance: Citizenship, Religious Difference, and Race in Germany' (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2018), at [https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/etd/ucb/text/Doughan_berkeley_0028E_18515.pdf], accessed 4 Sept. 2021. On the efficacy of Holocaust memory in contemporary struggles over the legitimacy of Jewish and Muslim religious practices, see Sultan Doughan and Hannah Tzuberi, 'Säkularismus als Praxis und Herrschaft: Zur Kategorisierung von Juden und Muslimen im Kontext säkularer Wissensproduktion', in Schirin Amir-Moazami (ed.), *Der inspizierte Muslim: Zur Politisierung der Islamforschung in Europa* (Bielefeld, 2018), 269–308.

[30] See Hannah Tzuberi, '"Reforesting" Jews: The German State and the Construction of "New German Judaism"', *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 27/3 (2020), 199–224.

figure of the Jewish victim can thus raise awareness and prevent *some* forms of violence, but is simultaneously implicated in the production of *moral* others.[31]

In this sense, the moralization of political discourse constitutes the breeding ground of political subjectivation. For example, since reforms to German citizenship law in 1999–2000, the '*Ausländer*' (a legal term for a non-citizen with racial connotations, used in public colloquial language in a derogatory way) or '*Türke*' (a racialized term used for labour migrants and their families) has been replaced by a Muslim (collective) subject. Since 9/11 in particular, this new collective body has been monitored as a potential threat to liberal–democratic culture in general, and to Jewish existence in particular. Concepts such as political Islam, Muslim antisemitism, '*Gefährder*' (a legal term targeting mainly racialized subjects as possible threats to public safety), and '*Hassprediger*' (a populist term singling out racialized religious leaders and marking them as instigators of hate and violence) have found their way into media, political, and academic discourse, as well as the law.[32] The vulnerability of this collective subject is contested, as the

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[31] Valentina Pisanty, *The Guardians of Memory and the Return of the Xenophobic Right*, trans. Alastair McEwen (New York, 2021), originally published in 2020 as *I guardiani della memoria e il ritorno delle destre xenofobe*. For the concept of implication, see Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford, Calif., 2019). For the figure of the 'moral other', see Uffa Jensen, *Zornpolitik* (Berlin, 2017), 40. Social scientist Willem Schinkel uses the term 'moral citizenship' to describe the increasing detachment of citizenship from its formal aspects: 'a distinction can be made between *formal citizenship*—denoting juridically codified rights and duties of citizens—members of states—and *moral citizenship*—referring to a counter-factual ideal of citizen participation. Formal citizenship has reference to both juridical status as membership of a juridico-political order and to social rights . . . Moral citizenship is something quite different and entails an *extra-legal normative concept* of the good citizen. It is not merely a factual and descriptive but also a counterfactual and prescriptive notion.' Willem Schinkel, *Imagined Societies: A Critique of Immigrant Integration in Western Europe* (Cambridge, 2017), 189–99, quotation at 198.

[32] On the securitization of Muslims, see Nahed Samour, 'Politisches Freund-Feind-Denken im Zeitalter des Terrorismus', in Andreas Kulick and Michael Goldhammer (eds.), *Der Terrorist als Feind? Personalisierung im Polizei- und Völkerrecht* (Tübingen, 2020), 49–66; Werner Schiffauer, 'Suspect Subjects: Muslim Migrants and the Security Agencies in Germany', in Julia M. Eckert (ed.),

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'new Germany' associates it with a kind of pastness that manifests itself in both a premodern, non-enlightened, illiberal religiosity *and* an antagonistic relation to Jews. Forever suspicious, this collective body is hence perpetually required to demonstrate its liberal–democratic and anti-antisemitic disposition.[33]

As another example, after 1989 and the unification of the two German states, a (collective) East German subject was marked as deficient both democratically and in coming to terms with the Nazi past: it still had to 'catch up', its democracy was 'in diapers', its democratic revolution '*nachgeholt* [delayed]', and its conception of history in dire need of improvement through education.[34] As a result, right-wing violence and attitudes are understood as symptoms of inadequate *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, rather than as phenomena that need to be analysed as part of a much broader spectrum of disidentification with the Berlin Republic and its governance.[35] By relegating racism, antisemitism, and right-wing violence to a past which the East German collective has not yet purged, the 'new Germany' thus constitutes

The Social Life of Anti-Terrorism Laws: The War on Terror and the Classifications of the 'Dangerous Other' (Bielefeld, 2008), 55–78. On the monitoring and management of the Muslim collective, see Schirin Amir-Moazami, 'Zur Produktion loyaler Staatsbürger: Einbürgerungstests als Instrument der Regulierung von religiös-kultureller Pluralität in Deutschland', *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen*, 29/2 (2016), 21–34; ead. (ed.), *Der inspizierte Muslim*; Luis Manuel Hernández Aguilar, *Governing Muslims and Islam in Contemporary Germany: Race, Time, and the German Islam Conference* (Leiden, 2018). On the production of German Muslim subjectivity in particular, see Riem Spielhaus, *Wer ist hier Muslim? Die Entwicklung eines islamischen Bewusstseins in Deutschland zwischen Selbstidentifikation und Fremdzuschreibung* (Würzburg, 2011).

[33] Hannah Tzuberi and Nahed Samour, 'The German State and the Creation of Un/Desired Communities', *Contending Modernities Blog*, 22 Feb. 2022, at [https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/theorizing-modernities/the-german-state-and-the-creation-of-un-desired-communities/], accessed 22 June 2022; Victoria Bishop Kendzia, *Visitors to the House of Memory: Identity and Political Education at the Jewish Museum Berlin* (New York, 2017), 103–32.

[34] Boris Buden, *Zone des Übergangs: Vom Ende des Postkommunismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 17–67; Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory*, 206–61; Neiman, *Learning from the Germans*, 81–132.

[35] Naika Foroutan, Frank Kalter, Coşkun Canan, and Mara Simon, *Ost-Migrantische Analogien I: Konkurrenz um Anerkennung* (Berlin, 2019); Kramer, *Politics of Memory,* 51–100.

itself as a purified, now tolerant, and liberal democracy. The ubiquity of right-wing and racist structures in federal (East *and* West) German state institutions, from the police, the military, and political parties to *Verfassungsschutz* (the domestic intelligence agency), is thereby obfuscated.

A final example: over the last decade in particular, German political, media, educational, and academic discourse has been directed at Palestinians as a collective that requires special monitoring. Fostered by the emergence of the concept of Israel-related antisemitism and its implementation in political practice, the Palestinian collective body is deemed ontologically antisemitic 'until proven otherwise'.[36] Palestinians, in this sense, are collateral damage of the intensifying German wish for purification from antisemitism. So much so that in recent times, the very signifier 'Palestine' has increasingly become an accessible, internalized, and viral trope denoting antisemitism.[37] The birth

[36] See Sami R. Khatib, 'Germany and its Palestinian Discontents', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 20/2 (2022), 238–41, at 239. The concept of Israel-related antisemitism emerged from academic debates starting in the 1980s that outline an idea of '*Umwegkommunikation*' as a form of antisemitic speech in which the state of Israel is used as a stand-in for Jews; see Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, 'Kommunikationslatenz, Moral und öffentliche Meinung: Theoretische Überlegungen zum Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 38 (1986), 223–46. On the role of Israel in different conceptions of antisemitism, see Klaus Holz and Thomas Haury, *Antisemitismus gegen Israel* (Hamburg, 2021); Peter Ullrich, 'With and Without Jews: Two Families of Concepts of Antisemitism', *Conflict & Communication Online*, 21/1 (2022), at [https://regener-online.de/journalcco/2022_1/pdf/ullrich2022_engl.pdf], accessed 22 June 2022.

[37] See Anon., 'Palestine Between German Memory Politics and (De-)Colonial Thought', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 23/3 (2021), 374–82. This trope has recently triggered symbolic political interventions like the BDS resolution passed by the German Parliament in 2019. For this resolution's impact on political discourse, see Peter Ullrich, 'Über Antisemitismus sprechen: BDS, die IHRA und die Deutungskämpfe um Antisemitismus im Kontext des Nahostkonflikts', in André Ritter (ed.), *Antisemitismus in Europa: Eine Problemanzeige im Kontext des interreligiösen Dialogs* (Münster, 2022), 197–212. See also 'The GG 5.3 Weltoffenheit Initiative', at [https://www.gg53weltoffenheit.org/en/about-us/], accessed 22 June 2022. This is a coalition of German public cultural and research institutions that draws attention to the resolution's far-ranging effects on the German academic and cultural sphere. For the origins of the

of a morally 'improved' German polity, made up of citizens who have 'learned their lesson' and now wish to protect what their ancestors failed to protect, thus necessitates an inscription of Palestinians as perpetrators and of Jews as their victims. For it is Jewish vulnerability *now*—as a concrete reality and a discursive trope—that enables the makers of the 'new Germany' to experience the present as a new era in which *someone else* poses a threat to Jews.[38]

Following up on these brief examples, we close by questioning the politics of victimhood. We observe that the struggles of the present and political subjectivation are tightly bound to the constitution and recognition of past victimhood. Memorialization promises to prevent catastrophes from ever happening again. Yet our impression is that this merging of the past and the present does not necessarily *prevent* unequal relations, but rather impacts and reinforces them. Solidarity *and* competition are shaped by these unequal relations. They operate as monozygotic twins in a field structured by Germany's collective moral conversion from genocidal nationalism to liberal and allegedly difference-embracing democracy. It is precisely our clinging to the promises of the figure of the victim that urges us to analyse this figure and our attachment to it.

On Overlaps, Solidarities, and Competition

Manuela Bauche

Experiences of racism, persecution, exclusion, and genocide at times run counter to historiographic periodization. Those experiences linked to the history of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics (KWI-A) provide a good case study for this. The KWI-A opened its doors in September

BDS movement, see Philip Marfleet, 'Palestine: Boycott, Localism, and Global Activism', in David Feldman (ed.), *Boycotts Past and Present: From the American Revolution to the Campaign to Boycott Israel* (Cham, 2019), 261–86.

[38] See Sultan Doughan, 'Desiring Memorials: Jews, Muslims, and the Human of Citizenship', in Ben Gidley and Samuel Sami Everett (eds.), *Jews and Muslims in Europe: Between Discourse and Experience* (Leiden, 2022), 46–70.

1927 in Dahlem in the south-west of Berlin and remained in operation until 1945.[39] Scientists employed there worked on topics that we today understand as belonging to the field of human genetics. KWI-A staff were also involved in policy advice. Scientists provided counsel, first to the Weimar state and then to the National Socialist state, on the introduction of eugenicist policies, such as forced sterilizations. They directly supported the implementation of these sterilizations, for example by contributing to and writing medical reports on those to be sterilized and by training staff for the necessary administration. Additionally, research conducted at the KWI-A helped legitimize racist and ableist National Socialist policies of persecution and extermination.[40]

While reviewing the history of the KWI-A, one encounters numerous phenomena that suggest overlaps between experiences and structures that are often separated by historiography. One example is the practice of collecting human body parts. The KWI-A housed a collection of remains of more than 5,000 individuals from all over the world, assembled mainly during the German colonial era. It had been put together by the anthropologist Felix von Luschan, who died in 1924. When Eugen Fischer founded the KWI-A three years later, he also took over Luschan's chair of anthropology at Berlin University and moved his predecessor's collection to the institute in Dahlem.[41]

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[39] For a comprehensive account of the history of the KWI-A, see Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *Grenzüberschreitungen: Das Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Erblehre und Eugenik 1927–1945* (Göttingen, 2005).

[40] Sheila Faith Weiss, *Humangenetik und Politik als wechselseitige Ressourcen: Das Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Erblehre und Eugenik im 'Dritten Reich'* (Berlin, 2004).

[41] Beate Kunst and Ulrich Creutz, 'Geschichte der Berliner anthropologischen Sammlungen von Rudolf Virchow und Felix von Luschan', in Holger Stoecker, Thomas Schnalke, and Andreas Winkelmann (eds.), *Sammeln, Erforschen, Zurückgeben? Menschliche Gebeine aus der Kolonialzeit in akademischen und musealen Sammlungen* (Berlin, 2013), 84–105. For an attempt to trace the individual life stories behind some of the human remains assembled in the collection, see Holger Stoecker, 'Human Remains als historische Quellen zur namibisch-deutschen Geschichte: Ergebnisse und Erfahrungen aus einem interdisziplinären Forschungsprojekt', in Geert Castryck, Silke Strickrodt, and Katja Werthmann (eds.), *Sources and Methods for African History and Culture: Essays in Honour of Adam Jones* (Leipzig, 2016), 469–91.

This collection has been referred to as proof of the impact of colonial science and racism on research at the KWI-A. For instance, the project 'Manufacturing Race: Contemporary Memories of a Building's Colonial Past', which in 2013 hosted a temporary exhibition at the former main building of the KWI-A in Berlin-Dahlem and later turned their results into a website, addresses 'The Skull Collection' prominently (though not exclusively).[42]

It is right and historically accurate to point to the anthropological collection as an important legacy of colonial knowledge production at the KWI-A. While Germany's colonial past has been ignored for decades in public debates on memory, more public attention has recently been paid to the presence of human remains in German museum and university collections, as well as to anthropological and anthropometric practices associated with the colonial era.[43] Physical anthropology, however, is equally linked to the Nazi era.[44] What is missing is the link between these two historical contexts. At the KWI-A, the practice of collecting human body parts continued well into the Nazi period. In 1940, its director Eugen Fischer worked to establish what he called an *Erbbiologische Centralsammlung* (collection for hereditary biology), which he wanted to include human fetuses and organs from every part of the world, as well as specimens from animals. Fischer asked colleagues all over Germany to contribute to the collection.[45] A few years later, his colleague Wolfgang Abel announced that he planned to put together a *Lehrsammlung*

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[42] See e.g. *Manufacturing Race: Contemporary Memories of a Building's Colonial Past*, at [www.manufacturingrace.org], accessed 8 May 2022.
[43] For scholarly work on the history of collecting human remains in the German colonial context, see e.g. Stoecker, Schnalke, and Winkelmann (eds.), *Sammeln, Erforschen, Zurückgeben?*; Margit Berner, Anette Hoffmann, and Britta Lange (eds.), *Sensible Sammlungen: Aus dem anthropologischen Depot* (Hamburg, 2011).
[44] For accounts of collecting and experimenting with human body parts during National Socialism, see e.g. Sabine Hildebrandt, *The Anatomy of Murder: Ethical Transgressions and Anatomical Science during the Third Reich* (New York, 2016); Julien Reitzenstein, *Das SS-Ahnenerbe und die 'Straßburger Schädelsammlung': Fritz Bauers letzter Fall* (Berlin, 2018).
[45] Niels C. Lösch, *Rasse als Konstrukt: Leben und Werk Eugen Fischers* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), 372–3.

für Rassengeschichte (teaching collection on the history of races). It remains unclear whether this collection ever materialized. If it did, some of the assembled body parts may have come from internees murdered at the Nazi concentration camp of Sachsenhausen, located north of Berlin.[46] The practice of collecting human remains while benefiting from systems of violence thus persisted throughout the entire existence of the institute. The history of the KWI-A is just one of many examples that suggest that it would be worthwhile to rethink and expand historiographical traditions.

Another example of the overlaps between historical periods is the research conducted at KWI-A under the (racist) label of *Bastardstudien*, or 'bastard studies'. It involved research on individuals whom scientists understood to be the result of 'miscegenation'. Director Fischer had built his reputation on a study conducted in 1908 in German South West Africa (today's Namibia) that entailed measuring, questioning, and observing individuals identifying as Rehoboth Basters.[47] Basters saw themselves as descendants of both European settlers and the Khoikhoi population. For Fischer, the Basters were the perfect subject for studying how physical traits are passed on in what he understood as a process of racial mixing. Fischer's research interest must also be understood against the backdrop of colonial policy debates on what (legal) status should be assigned to descendants of colonizers and the colonized.[48]

After founding the KWI-A in Berlin, Fischer encouraged younger scientists to conduct research with a similar approach. Among others, in the 1930s Tao Yun-Kuei, Johannes Schäuble, and Rita Hauschild researched individuals of European and Chinese, European and indigenous American, and Asian and African parentage. KWI-A staff were also commissioned by the Reich's Ministry of the Interior to conduct preparatory investigations for the sterilization of an estimated 400 to 800 children born to German women and soldiers of African and Asian descent serving in the French and US armies, which had

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[46] Schmuhl, *Grenzüberschreitungen*, 463–4.

[47] Eugen Fischer, *Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardisierungsproblem beim Menschen: Anthropologische und ethnographische Studien am Rehobother Bastardvolk in Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika* (Jena, 1913).

[48] Lösch, *Rasse als Konstrukt*, 60–75.

been stationed in the Rhine regions from the end of the First World War to the mid 1920s.[49]

Research on what was understood as racial mixing provided an important pillar of the KWI-A's research profile until the end of the 1930s. When the Nazis passed the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, scientists' interest in the figuration of racial mixing expanded and evolved to include relationships between those identified as Jewish and as *deutschstämmig* (of German descent). It is well known that Fischer's 1913 book on the Rehoboth Basters was referred to by Nazi lawmakers pondering what degrees of 'mixing' to permit or ban.[50] Interestingly, at the end of the 1930s, Fischer served as an examiner for a dissertation on 'jüdisch-deutsche Blutsmischung' ('Jewish and German blood-mixing'), which advocated extending the regulations adopted in 1935.[51] It is also noteworthy that, with few exceptions,[52] historical research on the idea of 'racial mixing' is strongly divided between work on miscegenation in the colonial context[53] and research on so-called *Mischehen* (mixed marriages) during National Socialism.[54]

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[49] Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor, 2004); Reiner Pommerin, '*Sterilisierung der Rheinlandbastarde': Das Schicksal einer farbigen deutschen Minderheit 1918–1937* (Düsseldorf, 1979).

[50] Cornelia Essner, *Die 'Nürnberger Gesetze' oder die Verwaltung des Rassenwahns 1933–1945* (Paderborn, 2002), 102, 419–52.

[51] Alexander Paul, *Jüdisch-deutsche Blutsmischung: Eine sozial-biologische Untersuchung* (Berlin, 1940).

[52] Annegret Ehmann, 'From Colonial Racism to Nazi Population Policy: The Role of the So-Called *Mischlinge*', in Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck (eds.), *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined* (Bloomington, Ind., 1998), 115–33; Doris Liebscher, *Rasse im Recht — Recht gegen Rassismus: Genealogie einer ambivalenten rechtlichen Kategorie* (Berlin, 2021), 150–205; Birthe Kundrus, 'Von Windhoek nach Nürnberg? Koloniale "Mischehenverbote" und die nationalsozialistische Rassengesetzgebung', in ead. (ed.), *Phantasiereiche: Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), 110–31.

[53] See e.g. Fatima El-Tayeb, *Schwarze Deutsche: Der Diskurs um 'Rasse' und nationale Identität 1890–1933* (Frankfurt am Main, 2001), 92–130; Birthe Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten: Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien* (Cologne, 2003), 234–79.

[54] See e.g. Beate Meyer, *'Jüdische Mischlinge': Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrung, 1933–1945* (Hamburg, 1999); Maximilian Strnad, *Privileg Mischehe?*

Yet the example of the KWI-A shows that this idea was constantly reworked and deployed throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

There is certainly no easy answer to the question of why research on such closely related topics has been divided into different academic fields. While the study of colonial history—at least in West Germany—was to a considerable degree born out of area studies and strongly influenced by thinkers in postcolonial studies, and thus only gained importance from the late 1990s, historians began working as early as the 1950s on explanations for the murderous regime whose dismantling they had just witnessed.[55] We must assume that the German state's memory politics, which after 1989–90 elevated remembrance of the Shoah to *Staatsraison* (national interest) and integrated the hitherto fragile network of memorial sites run by various actors into a state-sponsored structure,[56] did not encourage the two fields to move closer together.

Memory, Michael Rothberg argues in his book *Multidirectional Memory*, is fundamentally built on borrowing and comparing. He makes the point that memory of one specific history of suffering does not necessarily conceal other such histories. Reflecting on the Freudian concept of *Deckerinnerung* (screen memory), Rothberg suggests that memories serve as 'screens' in more than one sense of the word: even as they allow us to remember a specific event while forgetting and covering up others, they are also sites of projection to which other people can refer. Instead of involving conflict between memories, screen memory, in Rothberg's words, 'more closely resembles a remapping of memory on which links between memories are formed and then redistributed'.[57] Others have argued that the term

Handlungsräume ' jüdisch versippter' Familien 1933–1949 (Göttingen, 2021).

[55] Michael Wildt, 'Die Epochenzäsur 1989/90 und die NS-Historiographie', *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, 5 (2008), 349–71.

[56] Cornelia Siebeck, '50 Jahre "arbeitende" NS-Gedenkstätten in der Bundesrepublik: Vom gegenkulturellen Projekt zur staatlichen Gedenkstättenkonzeption—und wie weiter?', in Elke Gryglewski, Verena Haug, Gottfried Köbler, et al. (eds.), *Gedenkstättenpädagogik: Kontext, Theorie und Praxis der Bildungsarbeit zu NS-Verbrechen* (Berlin, 2015), 19–43.

[57] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, Calif., 2009), 14.

Deckerinnerung is better applied to the German context of memory politics in its literal sense of 'covering memory'. While Iman Attia acknowledges that memories of different events are interwoven in the German context too, she uses the notion of *Deckerinnerung* primarily to describe the ways in which this produces hierarchies.[58] According to her understanding of *Deckerinnerung*, memories can also generate blind spots.

In the following, I would like to share my reading of how the former site of the KWI-A in Berlin-Dahlem has been perceived in the media, and how this perception contrasts with the complexity of the institute's history. In my view, the media response seems to imply blind spots and to be structured along the lines of what Attia understands by *Deckerinnerung*.

In January 2015, when it was revealed that fragmented bones of animal and human origin had been found during construction work at the former KWI-A premises on the campus of the Free University of Berlin (FU), the city's press reacted with outrage. Journalists were appalled that the remains were cremated before their historical context could be investigated, so that the opportunity had been missed to identify the people whose remains had been unearthed. Press reports unanimously agreed that the find was highly sensitive, explaining: 'This was where Josef Mengele had sent skeletal parts in 1943 and 1944 that came from people whom he had had deliberately murdered in Auschwitz for hereditary biological research purposes.'[59] As a result, 'from the beginning there was suspicion that these could be bone fragments of Nazi victims'[60] and 'it [was]

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[58] Iman Attia, 'Geteilte Erinnerungen: Global- und beziehungsgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf Erinnerungspolitik', in ead., Swantje Köbsell, and Nivedita Prasad (eds.), *Dominanzkultur reloaded: Neue Texte zu gesellschaftlichen Machtverhältnissen und ihren Wechselwirkungen* (Bielefeld, 2015), 75–88, at 81–2.

[59] Götz Aly, 'Bitte keine Ausflüchte!', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 19 Feb. 2015 at [https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/umgang-mit-ueberresten-von-moeglichen-ns-opfern-bitte-keine-ausfluechte/11396552.html], accessed 20 May 2022. All translations my own, unless stated otherwise.

[60] Anja Kühne, 'Neue Widersprüche bei Skelettresten auf dem FU-Campus', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 6 Feb. 2015, at [https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/heikler-fund-neue-widersprueche-bei-skelettresten-auf-dem-fu-campus/11333914.html], accessed 22 May 2022.

quite possible that the skeletons belong[ed] to victims of euthanasia crimes under National Socialism.'[61]

The outrage was justified. At the same time, it is noteworthy that it was based on a selective perception of the KWI-A's history. While the 'Connection to Auschwitz'[62] was cited repeatedly, KWI-A research practices that suggested links to the colonized world (for example) went largely unmentioned—even though both Nazi and colonial practices of examining human body parts provide potential explanations for the find.

Indeed, more than one historical context imposes itself when it comes to explaining the presence of human remains on the KWI-A site. One is the perfidious working relationship that existed between the institute and the concentration and extermination camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau. At Auschwitz, Josef Mengele became camp doctor (*Lagerarzt*) in May 1943 and ran his own research laboratory. A medical doctor with two doctorates, he may have asked to be transferred to the camp, anticipating that this would offer him the opportunity to conduct unrestricted research and experiments on inmates. Mengele maintained connections with numerous research institutes, and it is likely that many of the experiments he carried out on internees in the camp were commissioned by them. One was the KWI-A, which was headed at the time by Mengele's scientific mentor Otmar von Verschuer.[63]

There is evidence that Mengele had medical data on interned twins and blood samples from camp inmates sent to the institute in Dahlem.

[61] Ead., 'Einfach eingeäschert', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 Jan. 2015, at [https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/umgang-mit-den-skelettfunden-in-dahlem-einfach-eingeaeschert/11278454.html], accessed 20 May 2022; see also Reinhard Bernbeck, 'Die Opfer nicht erneut zu Objekten machen', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 18 Feb. 2015, at [https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/position-die-opfer-nicht-erneut-zu-objekten-machen/11385976.html], accessed 20 May 2022; 'Erneut menschliche Knochen entdeckt', *taz*, 1 Sept. 2016, at [https://taz.de/Auf-Gelaende-der-Freien-Universitaet-Berlin/!5336790/], accessed 20 May 2022.
[62] This is the (translated) title of Carola Sachse (ed.), *Die Verbindung nach Auschwitz: Biowissenschaften und Menschenversuche an Kaiser-Wilhelm-Instituten. Dokumentation eines Symposiums* (Göttingen, 2003).
[63] Benoit Massin, 'Mengele, die Zwillingsforschung und die "Auschwitz-Dahlem Connection"', in Sachse (ed.), *Die Verbindung nach Auschwitz*, 201–54.

Most disturbingly, he did not hesitate to order that the eyes of at least eight people who died in the camp should be removed and sent to the KWI-A in 1943 and 1944. The victims of this research were members of the German Sinti Mechau family. They had been examined before their deportation and photographed by the biologist Karin Magnussen, to whom their body parts were delivered. In Auschwitz, the Mechaus were specially selected by Mengele for Magnussen's research and probably also murdered for this purpose.[64]

The fate of the Mechau family is the consequence of a system of radical and systematic dehumanization and violence that allowed people to be racialized, deported, selected, abused, and murdered for research. Journalists in 2015 therefore very rightly referred to this context. There is no doubt that the FU should have investigated whether the human remains found on the former KWI-A site were evidence of crimes committed in the context of Nazi persecution and extermination policies.

A second context that must be considered when trying to account for these remains is the history of the anthropological and anatomical collections that were stored at the KWI-A, which I mentioned earlier. The appropriation of human remains for the anthropological collection also relied to a large extent on violence—in some cases, deadly violence.[65] The results of subsequent archaeological investigations conducted on the site suggest that the finds are linked to the anthropological collections of the KWI-A, but that an additional connection to National Socialist camps cannot be ruled out.[66]

Can the fact that public criticism of the FU's actions focused solely on practices connected to the National Socialist state be read as a

[64] Hans Hesse, *Augen aus Auschwitz: Ein Lehrstück über nationalsozialistischen Rassenwahn und medizinische Forschung. Der Fall Dr. Karin Magnussen* (Essen, 2001); Günter Heuzeroth and Karl-Heinz Martinß, 'Vom Ziegelhof nach Auschwitz: Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Sinti und Roma', in Günter Heuzeroth (ed.), *Unter der Gewaltherrschaft des Nationalsozialismus 1933–1945: Dargestellt an den Ereignissen im Oldenburger Land*, vol. ii: *Verfolgung aus rassischen Gründen* (Osnabrück, 1985), 227–352.

[65] Stoecker, 'Human Remains als historische Quellen'.

[66] Christina Boldt, 'Kein Schlussstrich', *campus.leben,* 26 Feb. 2021, at [https://www.fu-berlin.de/campusleben/campus/2021/210226-abschluss-knochenfunde/index.html], accessed 20 May 2022.

dynamic of *Deckerinnerung* in the negative sense of the word? If so, who produces *Deckerinnerung*, and why? While the state is often high-lighted as playing a central role in the recognition of past injustice and in allocating resources for acts of remembrance,[67] the press coverage suggests a more complicated landscape in which the idea of *Staats-raison* extends beyond state actors.

There were a few noteworthy exceptions from the selective focus in the press reports. The Jewish weekly *Jüdische Allgemeine*, for instance, stressed the sensitivity of the finds by explaining that this was where 'Josef Mengele [delivered] specimens from Auschwitz' and where 'medical collections from all over the world, from colonial times and from times of the Nazi dictatorship, were stored'.[68] Is it a coincidence that a newspaper connected to one of the histories of persecution relevant to the KWI-A was one of the few to take a broader view of the topic? Possibly. But we can also read this exception as suggesting that—contrary to what the terms imply—*Deckerinnerung* and *Opferkonkurrenz* are not primarily produced by those fighting for recognition of their histories of exclusion and dehumanization.

Those engaged in that fight have a long history of collaboration. When the Nazi concentration camps were shut down and their inmates freed in the spring of 1945, former internees set up committees which worked to ensure that the experience of the camps and of Nazi terror would not be forgotten. Many of these committees built on the structures of clandestine inmate organizations and brought together people from a variety of countries who had been persecuted for their opposition to the Nazi regime and/or as Jews.[69] In the 1970s, Jewish organizations and individuals openly and explicitly supported German Sinti claims for recognition as victims of the Nazi policy of extermination, as well as the founding of the Central

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[67] See e.g. Y. Michal Bodemann, *Gedächtnistheater: Die jüdische Gemeinschaft und ihre deutsche Erfindung* (Hamburg, 1996), 80–128.

[68] Eberhard Spohd, 'Das Rätsel von Dahlem', *Juedische Allgemeine*, 2 Mar. 2015, at [https://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/kultur/das-raetsel-von-dahlem/], accessed 20 May 2022.

[69] Katharina Stengel, 'Hermann Langbein und die politischen Häftlinge im Kampf um die Erinnerung an Auschwitz', in Barbara Distel, Wolfgang Benz, and Uwe Bader (eds.), *Die Zukunft der Erinnerung* (Dachau, 2009), 96–118.

Council of German Sinti and Roma.[70] In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Women of Colour, migrant women, and White Jewish women organized themselves separately from the predominantly White German women's movement as they felt the need to create a space in which they would not be reduced to their position as racialized individuals.[71] And today, those pushing for German colonialism to be remembered more widely engage in open exchange with prominent figures from Jewish and Sinti communities in order to learn from their struggles for remembrance.[72]

These histories are not well known. In view of a powerful discourse suggesting that plurality in the realm of memory culture can only lead to conflicting claims over memory and to *Opferkonkurrenz*, it is important to remember that there is a different story—though not a straightforward one. Some of these moments of collaboration reveal the enduring effects of the structures of persecution themselves. The camp committees, for instance, were dominated by those who had been persecuted on the grounds of their political opposition to the Nazi regime; yet these *politische Häftlinge* (political prisoners) had been granted certain privileges in the camp system compared to those persecuted and detained as Jews, Sinti, and Black people, or on the basis of other racialized categories. When the International Auschwitz Committee published an edited volume of testimonies by former camp inmates in 1962, it featured contributions by Jewish authors and former political prisoners, two contributions from former prisoners of war, and only one by a Sintezza.[73] Other experiences of persecution, including by those who had been persecuted as alleged 'criminals'

[70] Jasmin Dean, 'Zwischen Konkurrenz und Kooperation: Allianzen zwischen Jüdinnen*Juden sowie Rom*nja und Sint*ezze', *Jalta: Positionen zur jüdischen Gegenwart*, 3 (2018), 95–103.

[71] Jihan Jasmin Dean, 'Verzwickte Verbindungen: Eine postkoloniale Perspektive auf Bündnispolitik nach 1989 und heute', in Meron Mendel and Astrid Messerschmidt (eds.), *Fragiler Konsens: Antisemitismuskritische Bildung in der Migrationsgesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 2017), 101–29.

[72] 'Dekoloniale [Re]visions 1/21', workshop organized by Dekoloniale: Memory Culture in the City, Berlin, 25 Feb. 2021, at [https://www.dekoloniale.de/en/program/events/revisionen-1#], accessed 8 May 2022.

[73] H. G. Adler, Ella Lingens-Reiner, and Hermann Langbein (eds.), *Auschwitz: Zeugnisse und Berichte* (Frankfurt am Main, 1962).

or 'asocials', queers, clerics, Black people, or Asians, were completely absent.[74] Furthermore, the collaboration between Jewish and Sinti organizations after 1945 mainly entailed Jews supporting Sinti—not the other way round.[75] The varying degrees of (non-)recognition of different histories of persecution and genocide determined who was able to raise their voice in support of whose struggle. Finally, when the feminist alliances of the 1980s and 1990s eventually disintegrated, some of those involved later argued that one of the movement's weak points had been its failure to create space for discussion of how privileges based on race, language, and citizenship had affected the alliance, or how antisemitic and anti-Muslim discourses around the war in Iraq had impacted on Jewish, Muslim, Black, and migrant feminists in different ways and driven them apart.[76]

The history of collaborations between 'communities' can be read as supporting a sceptical perspective on multidirectionality—one that looks anxiously at the divisive effects of state policies of (non-) recognition. The dynamics of the 2015 press coverage of the human remains found at the FU also stand for the power of the discourse of *Staatsraison* to conceal alternate histories, and to offer a straightforward path through the jumble of multiple memories. Finally, the division of historical research on histories of exclusion and violence in the first half of the twentieth century is a testament to the stabilizing effects of memory politics.

Behind all this, however, there is Michael Rothberg's optimistic view of the multidirectionality of memory and the potential for

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[74] Katharina Stengel, 'Auschwitz zwischen Ost und West: Das Internationale Auschwitz-Komitee und die Entstehungsgeschichte des Sammelbandes *Auschwitz: Zeugnisse und Berichte*', in ead. and Konitzer (eds.), *Opfer als Akteure*, 174–96.

[75] This is well expressed in the speeches by prominent Jewish supporters of Sinti claims in Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker and Verband Deutscher Sinti (eds.), *Sinti und Roma im ehemaligen KZ Bergen-Belsen am 27. Oktober 1979: Erste deutsche und europäische Gedenkkundgebung 'In Auschwitz vergast, bis heute verfolgt'* (Göttingen, 1980).

[76] Maria Baader, 'Zum Abschied: Über den Versuch, als jüdische Feministin in der Berliner Frauenszene einen Platz zu finden', in Ika Hügel, Chris Lange, May Ayim, et al. (eds.), *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung* (Berlin, 1993), 82–94.

solidarities. The example of the history of the KWI-A and the handling of its legacy illustrates that historical evidence urges us to connect histories that have previously been thought of as separate and to broaden our perspective on the diversity of the victim groups affected. And the long history of collaborations reminds us that a way out of the competition might be to question the referee.

Solidarity Means Shifting Categories: Queer Victimhood and the National Socialist Past

SÉBASTIEN TREMBLAY

Wednesday 14 July 2021 was an emotional moment for many. Like other colleagues and activists, I had followed the discussions surrounding the commemoration of lesbian victims in the former concentration camp of Ravensbrück. Waking up on that day in mid July to the news that this would become reality filled me with joy. Indeed, after years of back-and-forth and questionable objections, a so-called commemorative sphere (*Gedenkkugel*) was finally unveiled on the seventy-seventh anniversary of the camp's liberation.[77] This success is not only due to a sudden public interest in structures of suffering and the queer history of National Socialism, but also a direct result of the indefatigable labour of historians and memory activists.[78]

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[77] 'Gedenkzeichen für die lesbischen Häftlinge im Frauen-Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück', *Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten: Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück. Meldungen*, 14 July 2021, at [https://www.ravensbrueck-sbg. de/meldungen/gedenkzeichen-fuer-die-lesbischen-haeftlinge-im-frauen-konzentrationslager-ravensbrueck/], accessed 20 Jan. 2022. See also Anna Hájková, 'Langer Kampf um Anerkennung: Das verspätete Gedenken an lesbische NS-Opfer', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 30 April 2022, at [https://www. tagesspiegel.de/gesellschaft/queerspiegel/langer-kampf-um-anerkennung-das-verspaetete-gedenken-an-lesbische-ns-opfer/28291076.html], accessed 22 June 2022. As of May 2022, the monument is still a temporary one. The original sphere was accidentally damaged, and the real monument will be unveiled later this year. A provisional plaque has been placed next to it.
[78] 'Aktivistinnen des lesbischen Gedenkens Anna Hájková und Birgit Bosold im Gespräch mit Ulrike Janz, Irmes Schwager und Lisa Steiniger', *Invertito:*

This episode further highlights various aspects of post-war history still lingering in Germany post-unification. As I will make clear in this contribution, the story of the *Gedenkkugel* is a metonymy for the entanglements of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and historical scholarship in Germany. It is also a great starting point for a critique of historiographical frameworks that have gone largely unchallenged by a majority of colleagues. My argument in this piece is twofold. First, I situate *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in recent German memory culture and use queer history as a prism to underline moments of solidarity and the potential for reframing categories of victimhood—a historiographical necessity. Second, I disentangle queer history from various key turning points of German contemporary history, highlighting the importance of analysing the German *Staatsraison* intersectionally.

Memory studies in Germany, I argue, need to be recalibrated. The importance of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* has often been constitutive for social affinities, as cultural trauma and suffering during the National Socialist regime were frequently at the core of social movements, collective memories, and political identities in the post-war era. Structural debates over victimhood have thus clashed with narratives classifying victims according to perpetrator categories. In the case of queer history, gay activists in and outside academia who fought for years for the German state to recognize the atrocities committed towards non-heteronormative men during the National Socialist dictatorship were ironically reluctant to open up categories of victimhood. Faced with a reconceptualization of National Socialist queerphobia—that is, the inclusion of other queer experiences of the regime and a structural understanding of oppression—some gay historians have rejected outright the idea that women were persecuted for being lesbians.[79] Their opposition can be understood as an emotional reaction: the fear of losing a coveted status for their social group, and of possibly voiding their own political legitimacy by broadening the idea of victimhood. My quarrel here is not per se with the historiographical debates about structures during the dictatorship, but with the lack of self-reflection regarding the

[79] E.g. Alexander Zinn, *'Aus dem Volkskörper entfernt'? Homosexuelle Männer im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2018).

constitutive aspect of victimhood. Beyond legal and perpetrator categories, scholars have pointed out patriarchal and racial aspects of the regime that were not always anchored in previously investigated frameworks.[80] This enlargement and democratization of victimhood would not only offer a possible way out of the competition between victim groups (*Opferkonkurrenz*), but also enrich our discussion in the present. I will now map the constitution of the German queer subject in the second part of the twentieth century and the role memory played in this endeavour.

Following the sharpening of Paragraph 175 — the part of the German penal code criminalizing relationships, sex, and desire between men regardless of whether these aspects of their lives were consensual — by the National Socialist regime in 1935, legal persecution became even more central to the suffering of gay men, as thousands were murdered in concentration camps. The statute was only fully repealed in 1994 following multiple reforms.[81] The first of these — the repeal of aspects of the law tainted by the Nazis — was only ratified in 1969. In the 1970s, in the early years of gay and lesbian liberation, queer activists emphasized these legal continuities. They even reclaimed the pink triangle — the symbol that non-heteronormative men deported to the camps were forced to wear by the regime — as a badge for their movement. Beyond legal continuities, many activists of the 1970s felt a direct connection with these victims and the line was blurred between a fight for recognition and post-memory — a sort of second-generation trauma transmitted in this case outside family structures.[82]

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[80] Laurie Marhoefer, 'Lesbianism, Transvestitism, and the Nazi State: A Microhistory of a Gestapo Investigation, 1939–1943', *American Historical Review*, 121/4 (2016), 1167–95.

[81] For an example of the criminalization narrative, see Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York, 2014). On Paragraph 175, see Stefan Micheler, Jürgen K. Müller, and Andreas Pretzel, 'Die Verfolgung Homosexueller Männer in der NS-Zeit und ihre Kontinuität: Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede in den Großstädten Berlin, Hamburg und Köln', *Invertito: Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Homosexualitäten*, 4 (2002), 8–51.

[82] Sébastien Tremblay, '"Ich konnte ihren Schmerz körperlich spüren": Die Historisierung der NS-Verfolgung und die Wiederaneignung des Rosa Winkels in der westdeutschen Schwulenbewegung der 1970er Jahre', *Invertito: Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Homosexualitäten*, 21 (2019), 179–202.

This discovery of Nazi-era persecution in the 1970s is peculiar. It allowed gay activists to find historical legitimacy, fighting alongside and for victims of persecution while also identifying with the survivors. An appeal to the cultural trauma of the so-called 'Third Reich' allowed them to blur the line between the fight for the victims disregarded during the post-war era—that is, in the past—and the consolidation of a collective in the present. This was not done without overcoming hurdles.[83] Despite being debunked by the tireless efforts of early gay scholarship in the mid 1970s, a certain myth prevailed among non-academics that more queer men had been killed in concentration camps than non-queer Jewish men.[84] The stories of Jewish queer victims were rarely in the foreground of such narratives.[85] The idea of a hidden queer genocide, eventually described as a 'Homocaust' in the 1980s, was paired with a certain antisemitic resentment.[86] Ironically, because of the central role played by memory in shaping the intellectual and political life of the Federal Republic, this genuine longing for the recognition of queer suffering eventually evolved into *Opferkonkurrenz*—the idea that some persecuted groups, here non-queer Jews, had their victimhood recognized and commemorated more rapidly than others. This is far from the truth. Historians have proven numerous times that the antisemitic aspects of the National Socialist atrocities and the Shoah were not at the centre of early West German memory culture. Independently of this misconception and relativization of post-war antisemitism, the recognition of gay men as

[83] Sébastien Tremblay, 'Apocryphal Queers and Gay Orthodoxy', *New Fascism Syllabus: Blog*, 11 June 2021, at [http://newfascismsyllabus.com/opinions/apocryphal-queers-and-gay-orthodoxy/], accessed 9 May 2022.

[84] James D. Steakley, 'Selbstkritische Bemerkungen zur Mythologisierung der Homosexuellenverfolgung im Dritten Reich', in Burkhard Jellonek and Rüdiger Lautmann (eds.), *Nationalsozialistischer Terror gegen Homosexuelle: Verdrängt und ungesühnt* (Padeborn, 2002), 55–68. For early efforts to set the record straight, see Rüdiger Lautmann, Winfried Grikschat, and Egbert Schmidt, 'Der rosa Winkel in den nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern', in Rüdiger Lautmann (ed.), *Seminar: Gesellschaft und Homosexualität* (Frankfurt am Main, 1978), 325–65.

[85] Anna Hájková, *Menschen ohne Geschichte sind Staub: Homophobie und Holocaust* (Göttingen, 2021).

[86] Tremblay, 'Apocryphal Queers'.

victims of fascism was a long time coming. Queerness, in the form of male homosexuality, was only linked to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in 1985 when President Richard von Weizsäcker mentioned 'homosexual men' in his speech commemorating 8 May 1945.[87] It took until 2002 to redeem the victims by amending the *Gesetz zur Aufhebung national-sozialistischer Unrechtsurteile in der Strafrechtspflege*, an act repealing unlawful National Socialist criminal convictions.

Gay men did not walk this long path to recognition alone. Other so-called forgotten victims of National Socialism fought for recognition during these years, and moments of solidarity between interest groups created a movement to expand the categories of victimhood in the second part of the twentieth century. We can consider these struggles as a second wave of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that paralleled the establishment of federal memorials in Berlin, the newly chosen German capital, at the start of the 2000s, when the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe near the Tiergarten propelled the construction of other monuments. At the time, gay organizations petitioning for a monument to murdered homosexual men allied themselves along the way with Roma activists demanding an official commemorative space for the 500,000 victims of the Porajmos. The Roma monument was inaugurated years after the one for homosexual men. The Memorial to the Persecuted Homosexuals under National Socialism became the centre of a long quarrel between gay and lesbian associations.[88]

Some historians have also meticulously documented lesbian lives in the camps. However, because they were not deported simply for being lesbians, some colleagues, such as Alexander Zinn, still dismiss their claim to victimhood. These historians do not deny that lesbians were present in the camps, but they argue that they were not persecuted because of their sexuality and desires.[89] Debates surrounding

[87] Von Weizsäcker, Bundestag speech, 8 May 1985.
[88] Jennifer Evans, 'Harmless Kisses and Infinite Loops: Making Space for Queer Place in Twenty-First Century Berlin', in ead. and Matt Cook (eds.), *Queer Cities, Queer Cultures: Europe since 1945* (London, 2014), 75–94.
[89] Alexander Zinn, 'Abschied von der Opferperspektive: Plädoyer für einen Paradigmenwechsel in der schwulen und lesbischen Geschichts-schreibung', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 67/11 (2019), 934–55. For a counter-argument, see Samuel Clowes Huneke, 'Heterogeneous Persecution: Lesbianism and the Nazi State', *Central European History*, 54/2 (2021), 297–32.

the *Gedenkkugel* mentioned above have crystallized these tensions. According to Insa Eschebach, these clashes are representative of the remodelling and democratization of historical analysis during the last decades.[90] Previously, historical research had focused on categories of victimhood that echoed perpetrator classifications which were anchored in unjust National Socialist laws (*NS-Unrecht*). Lesbian memory activists (and their supporters) have also emphasized that they never intended to create new categories of victimhood, but sought to underscore structures of suffering beyond legal persecution.[91] This structural analysis of suffering beyond the categories created by the perpetrators is part of a new historical framework in which coming to terms with the National Socialist past includes understanding the patriarchal and racial aspects of the regime, which were not always directly anchored in the law. In the end, gay and lesbian associations both supported the *Gedenkkugel* project and 14 July 2021 was a turning point for this new wave and for queer solidarity. The culmination of a conversation spanning more than a decade, this new solidarity between queer victims of National Socialism represents a third wave of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, offering new perspectives beyond fixed categories and *Opferkonkurrenz*.

Historiographically speaking, debates between pioneers of gay and lesbian history and a younger generation of queer historians illustrate the tensions at the core of this third wave of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Scholars working on non-heteronormative German history have slowly transitioned from writing a typical gay and lesbian history to a queerer approach.[92] Following this turn, identities have been opened up and discussed, allowing new investigations of queerness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially from trans* perspectives.[93] Queer historians investigate sexualities beyond

[90] Insa Eschebach, 'Queere Gedächtnisräume: Zivilgesellschaftliches Engagement und Erinnerungskonkurrenzen im Kontext der Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück', *Invertito: Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Homosexualitäten*, 21 (2019), 49–73.
[91] 'Aktivistinnen des lesbischen Gedenkens', 94.
[92] See Jennifer Evans, 'Introduction: Why Queer German History?', *German History*, 34/3 (2016), 371–84.
[93] E.g. Katie Sutton, 'Sexology's Photographic Turn: Visualizing Trans Identity in Interwar Germany', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 27/3 (2018), 442–79.

historical actors' categories (homosexual, urning, gay, lesbian, and so on) and try to chart queerness conceptually — that is, they use queerness as a fluid category of analysis and not as a term to be found in historical sources.[94] This broadening and deconstruction of categories has clashed with a particular narrative centred on the criminalization of gay men. Proponents of this way of interpreting the past argue that men engaging in same-sex relationships banded together over the last two centuries, and that a non-heteronormative male social group emerged from the various struggles to fight criminalization. As the penal code did not criminalize women having sex with women, gays and lesbians were often kept separate when discussing repression, pushing non-legal persecution into the background.

As I have argued, a brief look at memorial debates and queer German history enables us to trace the genealogy of a second and third wave of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. These two waves were marked by debates among historians and social groups, were discussed in the press, and shaped political and memorial categories in the past and in the present. Since then, debates about the Holocaust and other atrocities of the 'Third Reich' have infused most of the public, political, and cultural discussions in post-unification Germany. At first glance, historians and anti-fascists like me can rejoice at the prospect of remaining relevant and at the apparent seriousness with which the German state recognizes the crimes of the past, as well as the structural remnants of the antisemitic, racist, and hetero-patriarchal ideology of the National Socialist regime.

However, this *Staatsraison* has unfortunately also opened the door to the instrumentalization of these important fragments of memory. Looking at the last few decades of queer politics, we can see how the need to flee state persecution has evolved into a search for new forms of legal protection from the state. This paradigm shift is also entangled with the horrors of National Socialism. The official plaque next to the Memorial to the Persecuted Homosexuals under National Socialism reminds visitors that the German state has a 'responsibility to actively oppose the violation of gay men's and lesbians' human rights. In many parts of the world, people continue to be persecuted for their sexuality,

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[94] Evans, 'Introduction'.

homosexual love remains illegal and a kiss can be dangerous.' Presented as something connected to the German past but now mainly existing outside Germany's borders, this call-to-arms against queer-phobia publicly links *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* with homonationalist assemblages. As a result, racialized male migrants, especially Muslims, are now portrayed as the homophobic 'other' and perceived as enacting a violent form of masculinity, having not experienced the supposedly enlightening effects of the traumatizing German past. In other words, moments of solidarity, fragments of memory, and the inclusion of queer suffering in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* have had indirect consequences for racialized people in the present and led to contemporary exclusions.

What is more, the crimes committed by the National Socialist regime have significance beyond the borders of the Federal Republic. As the ultimate evil, the genocide of European Jewry and other Nazi atrocities have been universalized and sometimes conflated.[95] This has obviously led to competing debates regarding genocides and memory, but it has also given the German state a particular position, having led German politicians to see these memorial imperatives as their responsibility to history: a mandate to learn from the past and to fight ethnic nationalism and antisemitism across the world. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* therefore became more than a *Staatsraison*; it became constitutive for citizenship, for a sense of belonging. In a way, Germany is presented as both the singular perpetrator of the twentieth century and as the herald of particular aspects of liberalism: diversity and tolerance. Leaving aside the concrete political failures of the sixteen years of the Merkel era regarding anti-discrimination policies and the rise of the far right, this narrative understands the German state as the guarantor that something like this will never happen again.

Vergangenheitsbewältigung needs to be reconceptualized beyond these patriotic notions of responsibility. First, many people living in Germany nowadays are not connected to German fascism. Second, such a perspective already renders invisible and erases millions of people who are themselves descendants of victims, particularly Jews. In other words, anti-fascist political memory needs to avoid the creation of memorial 'guest statuses' for millions of people who are

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[95] See Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory*.

descendants not of the perpetrators, but of survivors. Memory politics needs to go beyond the feelings of the *Dominanzgesellschaft*.[96]

In the queer community, this reshaping of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* would entail two things. The first of these, following the example set by the *Gedenkkugel*, is the deconstruction of fixed categories of analysis in order to understand all the structural aspects of the National Socialist terror. This would also lead to solidarity beyond competing memories and *Opferkonkurrenz*, where crimes would be analysed in their differences—the Holocaust being different from the Nazi persecution of homosexualities, for example. Second, coming to terms with the past should not be a unidirectional endeavour to learn from it, but also an examination of how all facets of the present, including all members of society, can offer ways to break fixed narratives about the past, linking racism, antisemitism, and the present zeitgeist in a *longue durée* instead of ritually chanting 'never again'.

Responses

Manuela Bauche

The issue of victimhood—of its construction and of claims for recognition of victimhood—figure prominently in all our contributions. I would like to follow up especially on two themes.

I am particularly intrigued by Hannah Tzuberi and Patricia Piberger's retracing of how innocent and passive victimhood was inscribed onto the figure of the Jew in Germany. Hannah and Patricia argue that 'when innocence and passivity became central characteristics attached to victimhood, the racially persecuted began to "outcompete" the politically persecuted'. And that '[i]n a newly emergent "ranking of suffering", Jews, as non-partisan and apolitical

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[96] The psychologist and educator Birgit Rommelspacher uses the term 'dominance society' to describe a hierarchizing social order running along many different lines of difference (class, gender, race, etc.), in which the dominant part of society remains unaware of its own hierarchies and convinced of its own equality. See Birgit Rommelspacher, *Dominanzkultur: Texte zu Fremdheit und Macht* (Berlin, 1995).

victims who were killed for no other reason than "who they were", figured as paradigmatic victims'. On reading this, I asked myself what histories of Jewish agency and resistance might have been hidden by this idea of the innocent and passive Jew. Had stories and memories of Jewish victimhood been more diverse and complicated before this figure was born in the 1970s? I also wondered to what extent this figure has informed claims for recognition by other 'victim groups', such as those affected by the history of colonialism. Have they felt the need to build their claims on the idea of passivity, or do they allow for a more differentiated picture? Is it possible to paint a complicated picture of victimhood and still be recognized as a victim? Or does one exclude the other? My impression is that there is indeed a difficult tension between the commitment to tell the history of colonization in a detailed and differentiated way, and the risk that too strong a differentiation would dissuade people from the idea that colonial rule was a violent regime built on inequality, exploitation, and violence.[97]

[97] By way of example, Rudolf Duala Manga Bell is remembered as a major figure in Cameroonian anti-colonial protests against German colonizers in the 1910s who was murdered by the Germans for his actions. While Manga Bell indeed assumed a significant role in mobilizing protest against the German colonial administration in Cameroon, he was anything but fundamentally anti-German. One could read his protest as having been primarily motivated by the fear of losing special privileges that the Duala people had been granted within the colonial system by the German authorities. Though this reading does not diminish Manga Bell's impact on the formation of anti-colonial sentiment in Cameroon, it might be too complicated a base for a story of colonial suffering and violence to support claims for the recognition of colonialism as injustice. On Manga Bell and the role of the Duala in the history of Cameroon, see Ralph A. Austen, 'Bell, Rudolf Duala Manga', in Henry Louis Gates, Emmanuel Akyeampong, and Steven J. Niven (eds.), *Dictionary of African Biography* (Oxford, 2012); Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, *The Kaiser and the Colonies: Monarchy in the Age of Empire* (Oxford, 2022), 347–72; Ralph A. Austen and Jonathan Derrick, *Middlemen of the Cameroons Rivers: The Duala and their Hinterland, c.1600–c.1960* (Cambridge, 1999). For examples of the commemoration of Manga Bell, see 'Hey Hamburg, kennst Du Duala Manga Bell?', exhibition at the MARKK Museum am Rothenbaum, 14 Apr. 2021–31 Dec. 2022, at [https://markk-hamburg.de/en/ausstellungen/hey-hamburg-3/], accessed 31 May 2022; the graphic novel Initiative Perspektivwechsel, *Widerstand: Drei Generationen antikolonialer Protest in Kamerun* (Bonn, 2021); and Christian Bommarius, *Der gute Deutsche: Die Ermordung Manga Bells in Kamerun 1914* (Berlin, 2015).

The main thought I would like to share concerns the figure of the passive victim in research on colonial and National Socialist violence. In a recent commentary on the 2020 debate over the relationship between memory of the Holocaust and of German colonialism, Frank Bajohr and Rachel O'Sullivan among others evaluate arguments for and against the claim that there was continuity between colonial and National Socialist violence.[98] One of their critiques differentiates between colonial and National Socialist violence: 'While colonial massacres and mass violence usually emerged from a guerrilla war fought by the indigenous population against the colonial masters, the Holocaust was not based on a real conflict, but rather on ideological projections.'[99] Here, Bajohr and O'Sullivan build on similar arguments that were put forward in the years between 2003 and 2007, when the 'continuity thesis', of which Hamburg-based historian Jürgen Zimmerer was perceived as the main representative, was the subject of a lively academic debate.[100] Scholars such as Birthe Kundrus made the point that the German war against the Herero and Nama in the colony of German South West Africa (today's Namibia), which left between 60,000 and 80,000 dead, was a military campaign aimed at the 'destruction of the enemy [*Vernichtung des Gegners*]'. She stressed that the genocidal effects of this war were the result not so much of a racist ideology as of the specific military context. In this argument, genocide in National Socialist Germany was implicitly presented as the contrasting image.[101]

I will not discuss the relative merits of these arguments here. What I wonder is whether the idea of the passive and innocent victim that Hannah and Patricia highlight in their contribution also informs the

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[98] Frank Bajohr and Rachel O'Sullivan, 'Holocaust, Kolonialismus und NS-Imperialismus: Forschung im Schatten einer polemischen Debatte', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 70/1 (2022), 191–202.   [99] Ibid. 195.
[100] Jürgen Zimmerer, 'Holocaust und Kolonialismus: Beitrag zu einer Archäologie des genozidalen Gedankens', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 51/12 (2003), 1098–119; see also id., *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Münster, 2011).
[101] Birthe Kundrus, 'Kontinuitäten, Parallelen, Rezeptionen: Überlegungen zur "Kolonialisierung" des Nationalsozialismus', *WerkstattGeschichte*, 43 (2006), 45–62, at 48. See also Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, 'Der Holocaust als "kolonialer Genozid"? Europäische Kolonialgewalt und nationalsozialistischer Vernichtungskrieg', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 33/3 (2007), 439–66.

differentiation between colonial and National Socialist violence. While I acknowledge that it can be useful to look closely at the similarities and differences between forms of violence, I believe that this comparison is only relevant insofar as it is possible to derive statements on memory from it.

Memory politics and the prospect of memories of colonialism being allowed to enter the realm previously reserved for the Holocaust are also what made German scholars deem Jürgen Zimmerer's claims regarding continuities between colonialism and National Socialism worth debating in the first place. Even if one agrees with the above-mentioned distinction between colonial and National Socialist violence, the question arises as to what statements about memory are to be derived from this distinction, or to what extent assumptions about memory informed the distinction. It would therefore be interesting to investigate the extent to which historiographical analyses such as those mentioned above are informed by the idea of the innocent and legitimate victim.

Finally, I would like to take up one of Sébastien Tremblay's closing thoughts. In light of conflicting claims between gay and lesbian activists around the *Gedenkkugel* in Ravensbrück, Sébastien argues that what is needed is a reconception of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which would entail 'the deconstruction of fixed categories of analysis in order to understand all the structural aspects of the National Socialist terror.' Sébastien argues that this would allow for 'solidarity beyond competing memories and *Opferkonkurrenz*, where crimes would be analysed in their differences — the Holocaust being different from the Nazi persecution of homosexualities'.

This claim resonates strongly with my own desire to bring together experiences of historical injustice that are usually discussed and remembered separately. If I may again draw on the history of the KWI-A: among those who suffered as a direct result of the institute's research or the policies it contributed to were people with a variety of backgrounds and (ascribed) identities. Sinti and Roma, Jews, and Eastern Europeans were the subjects of research in concentration camps and ghettos by KWI-A scientists or camp staff associated with them during the Second World War. People with disabilities and other individuals in whom researchers took an interest were subjected

to examinations at the institute, as were non-Europeans during field trips within Europe and beyond. Anyone identified as carrying a hereditary disease, as well as African–German and Asian–German people, were sterilized on the recommendation of eugenic reports produced by KWI-A staff. Although these experiences are linked to distinct histories and discourses of othering—some of which also involved the idea of degeneration—they were all the result of radical dehumanization. I agree with Sébastien that a perspective that acknowledges suffering on the part of those who are not commonly or easily recognized as victims of historical injustice allows for both broad and detailed analyses of where structures of exclusion overlap and where they differ.

Those affected by this dehumanization have themselves invoked what we might call structural similarities of suffering in their acts of mutual support and solidarity. On the occasion of the first European rally commemorating the persecution and murder of Sinti and Roma by National Socialists at the former concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen in October 1979, Simone Veil, at the time president of the European Parliament, spoke. Veil had herself been persecuted as a Jew and interned at Bergen-Belsen, and her mother had been murdered there. In her speech, Veil invoked the 'dying' and the 'shadows' who had fought for survival in the camp and who 'no longer had any age, gender, or voice, whose faces were expressionless',[102] before revealing that she was speaking of Jews, Sinti, and Roma and gradually rehumanizing them. Having pointed out that Jews deported to Bergen-Belsen were often killed shortly after arrival, and that she initially thought Roma and Sinti were spared this fate, Veil concluded: 'We were too separated in the camps, we were sacrificed one after another, but still with the same hatred and efficiency.'[103] Similarly, when Petra Rosenberg, chair of both the Berlin-Brandenburg Association of German Sinti and Roma (Landesverband Deutscher Sinti und Roma Berlin-Brandenburg) and the Berlin-Marzahn Forced Camp Memorial (Gedenkstätte Zwangslager Berlin-Marzahn e.V.) was invited to comment on the commemoration

[102] Simone Veil, 'Meine Anwesenheit bezeugt meine Solidarität gegenüber den Zigeunern', in Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker and Verband Deutscher Sinti (eds.), *Sinti und Roma im ehemaligen KZ Bergen-Belsen*, 49.
[103] Ibid. 52.

of German colonialism, she and others pointed to Sinti, Roma, and Black people's shared experiences of everyday racism.[104]

These glimpses of solidarity raise the question of who exactly imposes 'fixed categories' of victimhood. How are categories of persecution and historical analysis and narratives of lived experience used to differentiate victimhood? How do these many layers build on each other? Where do they allow for shifts in categorization, or even for the deconstruction of categories? What is the potential of narratives of lived experience in particular, such as Simone Veil's invocation of 'shadows', for a deconstruction of fixed categories of victimhood? Might that potential lie in such narratives, rather than in historical analysis?

Sébastien Tremblay

First, I want to thank the other authors for such important insights. Both contributions demonstrate clearly how victimhood has enough cohesive potential to benefit social movements, bestowing new meanings on existing categories of identity. Yet they also highlight how studying victimhood helps us identify power structures beyond an oversimplified polarization between victims and perpetrators. Victimhood as a discourse and a memory praxis prepares the ground for a broader conversation on power asymmetries between archival, canonical, and official memories in the *Dominanzgesellschaft*,[105] the transfer of knowledge, and the foundations of *Opferkonkurrenz*.

I first want to address Manuela Bauche's focus on solidarities and reflect on moments of unity and disunity regarding the White, non-Jewish queer community in Germany. I want to underline the transcendent power of Whiteness and reflect on this lack of solidarity. I assert that the understanding of the queer community in Germany

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[104] Interview with Petra Rosenberg, 'Dekoloniale [Re]visions 1/21', workshop organized by Dekoloniale: Memory Culture in the City, 25 Feb. 2021, at [https://www.dekoloniale.de/en/program/events/revisionen-1-21-interview-mit-petra-rosenberg#], accessed 30 May 2022.
[105] Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdiscipinary Handbook* (Berlin, 2008), 97–108.

as White is connected to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, and that a reconsideration of National Socialist atrocities focusing on racialization, coloniality, and antisemitism together would allow us to concentrate on historic victimhood beyond White-centred narratives, taking into consideration QBIPOC perspectives and experiences.[106]

As media debates about coloniality and the Holocaust have shown, political rhetoric based on the voices of *Menschen mit Nazihintergrund* (people with a Nazi background)[107] seems to play a much more important role than some of the scholarship coming from communities targeted by the National Socialists.[108] I do not mean to say that descendants of victims have a homogeneous and inherent understanding of, or an authentic way of reflecting on, the atrocities and genocide suffered by earlier generations. Nor is it about identity politics or other tired and tarnished political concepts.[109] In particular, these debates should not be about pitting different communities against each other.[110] My wish is to enlarge our understanding of the dictatorship and its memory by provincializing the voices of non-Jewish White Germans who, as Hannah

[106] On the framing of the queer German community as White, see Jin Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places* (London, 2015) and Christopher Ewing, '"Color Him Black": Erotic Representations and the Politics of Race in West German Homosexual Magazines, 1949–1974', *Sexuality & Culture*, 21/2 (2017), 382–403. Others have historicized these matters further, e.g. Laurie Marhoefer, 'Was the Homosexual Made White? Race, Empire, and Analogy in Gay and Trans Thought in Twentieth-Century Germany', *Gender & History*, 31/1 (2019), 91–114.
[107] Saskia Trebing, 'Künstlerin Moshtari Hilal: "Kritik ist das Gegenteil von Gleichgültigkeit"', *Monopol: Magazin für Kunst und Leben*, 7 May 2021, at [https://www.monopol-magazin.de/moshtari-hilal-menschen-mit-nazi-hintergrund-kritik-ist-das-gegenteil-von-gleichgueltigkeit], accessed 9 May 2022.
[108] Meron Mendel, 'Wie Identitätspolitik schadet: Wer sind die "Menschen mit Nazihintergrund"?', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 March 2021, at [https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/identitaetspolitik-versus-erinnerung-an-den-holocaust-17256208.html], accessed 9 May 2022.
[109] Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò, *Elite Capture: How the Powerful Took Over Identity Politics (And Everything Else)* (London, 2022); Karsten Schubert and Helge Schwiertz, 'Konstruktivistische Identitätspolitik: Warum Demokratie partikulare Positionierung erfordert', *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, 31 (2021), 565–93.
[110] Sabine Hark and Paula-Irene Villa, *Unterscheiden und herrschen: Ein Essay zu den ambivalenten Verflechtungen von Rassismus, Sexismus und Feminismus in der Gegenwart* (Bielefeld, 2017).

Tzuberi and Patricia Piberger show, have decided that being descended from perpetrators gives them an enlightened view of antisemitism and racism.[111] The opposite—deprovincializing voices at the margins—would not only enrich memory culture and our understanding of the National Socialist era, but would also allow mainstream debates to connect with other aspects of Germany's long history of antisemitism and racism, such as the institutional and scientific ones highlighted by Manuela. As Hannah and Patricia remind us in their contribution, it is not innocuous that dominant voices in Germany have disciplined and punished racialized voices, and that they continue to do so after dismissing for years the legacies of German colonialism. The shifts that are now on the table would not only go against a particular understanding of White mainstream liberal German memory culture, but would also force introspection regarding neocolonial projects such as the Humboldt Forum,[112] connecting centuries of German racial and colonial violence with the racialized antisemitism at the core of the murder of European Jewry.[113]

Through her example of solidarities and discussions in Berlin-Dahlem, Manuela convincingly shows us how historical framing is primordial. As Judith Butler reminds us, historical subjects evolve within constitutive frameworks and norms of recognizability.[114] On the margin, these norms, discourses, and practices are often

[111] Margrit Pernau, 'Provincializing Concepts: The Language of Transnational History', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 36/3 (2016), 483–99; Emmanuel David, 'Fantasies of Elsewhere: Notes on Provincializing Transgender', *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 7/1 (2020), 132–39; Jonah I. Garde, 'Provincializing Trans* Modernity: Asterisked Histories and Multiple Horizons in *Der Steinachfilm*', *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 8/2, 207–22.
[112] Mirjam Brusius, 'Stones Can Talk Back: Vergangenheitsbewältigung Revisited', *New Fascism Syllabus: Blog*, 9 June 2022, at [http://newfascismsyllabus.com/opinions/stones-can-talk-back-vergangenheitsbewaltigung-revisited/], accessed 11 June 2022.
[113] These controversies are peculiar. Not only are they often, as Manuela reminds us, absent from the margins, but scholars have focused on the racial aspects of both the regime and the Holocaust for decades without relativizing antisemitism or the singularity of the genocide. See Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge, 1991).
[114] Judith Butler, 'Bodies and Power, Revisited', *Radical Philosophy*, 114 (2002), 13–19.

defined by, against, or at least in relation to structures created by the *Dominanzgesellschaft*. As I mentioned in my contribution, for the queer community in Germany, these relational structures and normative spaces have meant that a group of recognized victims—in my case queer men—obtained political acknowledgement through acts of memory defined and welcomed by the *Dominanzgesellschaft*.[115] This victory may have created a marginal subgroup of gay men who are both recognized victims of German fascism and the new gatekeepers of who is considered worthy of the same status.[116] The example of the *Gedenkkugel* in Ravensbrück readily comes to mind. In the case of the long-standing fight between scholars of gay history, such as Alexander Zinn, and those researching queer–feminist history, such as Anna Hájková, these structures do not excuse the dismissal, by opponents of lesbian recognition, of decades of scholarship; however, they do explain some of the tensions at the core of *Opferkonkurrenz*.

In one of their footnotes, Patricia and Hannah mention Reinhart Koselleck while discussing the establishment of the *Opfer* in German contemporary history. Here I would also like to point to Koselleck's view of memorialization and especially the visual culture of remembrance, reminding us that his way of understanding history, though admittedly a conservative one, still stressed the potential for co-existing historical narratives.[117] Koselleck was against an official memory carved into stone, as it would erase the plurality of experiences of historical events.[118] Together with misogyny, which certainly exists in the gay community, I think the fear of erasure explains the position adopted by some gay historians. In contrast, deprovincializing voices on the margins of pre-existing framings emanating from the *Dominanzgesellschaft* illustrates the potential of a history written using differences and

[115] Sébastien Tremblay, '"The proudest symbol we could put forward"? The Pink Triangle as Transatlantic Symbol of Gay and Lesbian Identities from the 1970s to the 1990s' (Ph.D. thesis, Free University of Berlin, 2020).

[116] Hájková, 'Langer Kampf'.

[117] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Denkmäler sind Stolpersteine: Der Historiker Reinhart Koselleck zur neu entbrannten Debatte um das geplante Berliner Holocaust-Mahnmal', *Der Spiegel*, 2 Feb. 1997, 190–2.

[118] Margrit Pernau and Sébastien Tremblay, 'Dealing with an Ocean of Meaninglessness: Reinhart Koselleck's Lava Memories and Conceptual History', *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 15/2 (2020), 7–28.

in the plural.[119] As the history of the KWI-A exemplifies, this plurality does not exclude coherent historical narratives. On the contrary, it enables the better problematization of historical events, taking into consideration bigger structures, interpretation patterns, and interconnected experiences.

Second, I want to look at one of the aspects tackled by Hannah and Patricia—namely, the enlightening and performative effects of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and victimhood in post-unification Germany, as well as the ways in which conceptions of temporalities and especially racialized modernities have created a different context for contemporary political struggles. I am especially interested in how White non-Jewish queers living in Germany have benefited from a focus on victimhood, even though the Holocaust, the Porajmos, and other atrocities committed by the National Socialist regime were fundamentally racialized endeavours. In a world where non-European spaces have been portrayed at least since Hegel as premodern, backward, and trying to catch up with European time,[120] I argue that the exclusion of racialized individuals from the enlightening effects of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—whether or not they have a concrete experience of migration in their biography—is connected to how migration is understood as temporal mobility and not only per se as geographical mobility.[121] Because racialized bodies in Europe are framed not as modern, but as perpetual foreign agents from a premodern past, they are relegated to a space that has yet to be blessed by the lessons learned from the horrors of the two world wars on European soil or by the importance of the Holocaust for the European community.[122]

[119] Sabine Hark, *Gemeinschaft der Ungewählten: Umrisse eines politischen Ethos der Kohabitation* (Berlin, 2021).

[120] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1924), 55.

[121] Fatima El-Tayeb, '"Blood Is a Very Special Juice": Racialized Bodies and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Germany', *International Review of Social History*, 44/7 (1999), 149–69; ead., *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis, 2011).

[122] For examples of the demonization of the non-enlightened 'other' and potential 'imported illiberalism', see Mariam Lau, 'Queer oder Schwul?', *Die Zeit*, 1 July 2021, 48; Christopher Sweetapple, 'Von Abu Ghraib nach Nordneukölln', *Der Freitag*, 7 Dec. 2018; Anna Schneider and Lucien Scherrer, 'Schwulenhass,

What is more, because gay men and lesbians in Germany understand themselves as the heirs of the victims of the National Socialists, the boundaries of the contemporary 'community' are defined by European time and by Whiteness. Scholars have also demonstrated how such White-centred genealogies linger through historiography and racially exclude other queer men through general conflations of 'Islam' with the 'homophobic other'.[123] Because the perpetrators and victims of the initial injury were framed as White and the injury itself as foundational, Whiteness permeates the construction of the German historical queer subject.

The contributions to this round table have highlighted how defining victimhood by original perpetrator categories results in debates such as those surrounding the *Gedenkkugel* or the memorial in the Tiergarten to the homosexuals murdered under National Socialism. Reshaping our frameworks of National Socialist persecution means democratizing memory culture.[124] As the other contributors have shown, this is only possible if we stop using the *Dominanzgesellschaft* as the point of departure for our endeavour. Scholarship from outside Germany and German scholarship written at the margins are already doing so uncontroversially, as Manuela mentions. It is therefore time to move beyond sensationalist media quarrels that pit victim groups against each other. Germany is still mired in antisemitic and racist structures, and the task of reshaping these debates productively beyond the offence-taking and the clickbait has unfortunately fallen on the shoulders of the worst affected.

Islamismus und linke Realitätsverweigerung in Berlin-Neukölln', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 19 Nov. 2020.

[123] Jin Haritaworn and Jen Petzen, 'Invented Traditions, New Intimate Publics: Tracing the German "Muslim Homophobia" Discourse', in Stephen Hutchings, Chris Flood, Galina Miazhevich, et al. (eds.), *Islam in its International Context: Comparative Perspectives* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2011), 48–64; Zülfukar Çetin, *Homophobie und Islamophobie: Intersektionale Diskriminierungen am Beispiel binationaler schwuler Paare in Berlin* (Bielefeld, 2014).

[124] Insa Eschebach uses the example of the *Gedenkkugel* as democratization in 'Queere Gedächtnisräume'.

Hannah Tzuberi and Patricia Piberger

Our initial contribution focuses on the figure of the victim and contemporary society's attachment to it. In Sébastien Tremblay's text, this attachment takes shape in a desire for queer solidarity and the overcoming of competitive victimhood through mutual recognition. Recounting the struggle that preceded the installation of a *Gedenkkugel* for lesbian women in the former concentration camp Ravensbrück, he argues for an 'enlargement and democratization' and ultimately a 'reframing' of victimhood and its categories. In Manuela Bauche's contribution too, recognition of historical victimhood is fundamental to present-day solidarity. Her case study—the KWI-A—recontextualizes Nazi history by zooming in on its material and ideological interconnectedness with Germany's colonial past. Based on observations of the memorialization of the institute, she uncovers a 'long history of collaboration' between those affected by racism and persecution and highlights the overlap of 'experiences and structures that are often separated by historiography'.

    In our response, we complicate the notion of victim-based recognition as a basis for solidarity. By focusing on the *Gedenkkugel*, we show that the analytical category of 'victimhood' opens up an alternative reading of the struggle—one that places it within a normative memory paradigm and thus reveals that competition is the monozygotic twin of solidarity. When examined through the analytical category of 'memory', the lesbian memory activists featured in Sébastien's contribution engage in *counter-memory* activism. They contest conventional historical narratives that manifest themselves in state-sponsored memorial spaces and public monuments that do not allocate any specific visibility to lesbian victims. Within a memory paradigm, the *Gedenkkugel* is a self-evident and desired material telos of historiographical research into histories of persecution. It renders lesbians visible as *particular* victims.[125] Yet when 'victimhood' is taken up as an analytical

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[125] Lesbian memory activists at first attempted to install the *Gedenkkugel* against the wishes of both the Ravensbrück memorial site (*Gedenkstätte*) and the Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany (Lesben- und Schwulenverband in Deutschland, LSVD). Sébastien associates the LSVD with an older stream of scholarship that he juxtaposes with approaches developed in the

category rather than as a historical fact to be recognized in solidarity, counter-memory seems to be a less conclusive framing of the struggle for the *Gedenkkugel*. In our analytical framework, this struggle appears to be absolutely 'in sync' with the normative, victim-centred memory culture of post-1989 Germany.

Within a memory paradigm, a memorial is a natural end product of memory work. Taking up victimhood as an analytical category, however, obliges us to ask why contemporary actors embrace historical victimhood, and to consider their timing in doing so. Why did it become important in the mid 2010s for lesbians to launch their struggle for a permanent *Gedenkkugel*, and thus to establish lesbian victimhood of National Socialist persecution as a distinct category? A brief look back: an initiative called Autonome feministische Frauen und Lesben aus Deutschland und Österreich (Autonomous Feminist Women and Lesbians from Germany and Austria, hereafter 'Initiative') installed a first temporary *Gedenkkugel* in Ravensbrück in 2015 and submitted a first petition for it to be made permanent in 2016.[126] This demand did

context of new queer historiographies. Whereas the former disables queer solidarities, the latter enable a 'broadening [of] the idea of victimhood' and thus the recognition of (historical) suffering that goes beyond perpetrator categories. For example, the Nazis did not categorize persecuted persons as 'lesbians', but in their attempt to purify and remake the body of the nation, 'lesbian behaviour' was explicitly mentioned alongside a wide range of further categories such as mixed-race or Jewish parentage, prostitution, or promiscuity. The women whose files mention 'lesbian behaviour' did not necessarily self-define as lesbians, but saw themselves as communists or members of other persecuted groups. The categories underlying contemporary memorial regimes are thus sometimes distinct from those of both perpetrators and victims alike.

[126] For an outline of the conflict over the *Gedenkkugel*, see Ina Glaremin, '"Mindere Vergangenheit"? Die Debatte um die Gedenkkugel für lesbische Frauen* in der Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück' (MA dissertation, Technical University Berlin, 2021), at [https://sexualityandholocaust.files.wordpress.com/2021/06/ina_glaremin_gedenkkugel-2.pdf], accessed 11 June 2022. Eventually, a historical assessment commissioned by Ravensbrück and the Bundesstiftung Magnus Hirschfeld enabled the decision for a permanent memorial; see Martin Lücke, 'Die Verfolgung lesbischer Frauen im Nationalsozialismus: Forschungsdebatten zu Gedenkinitiativen am Beispiel des Frauen-Konzentrationslagers Ravensbrück', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 70/5 (2022), 422–40. Even before the campaign for the *Gedenkkugel*,

not develop in the context of the debates about the Memorial to the Persecuted Homosexuals under National Socialism, which opened in 2008, or the early lesbian history movement of the 1980s, which investigated lesbian life and victimization during the Nazi era, among other things.[127] These earlier historiographical efforts and the establishment of a lesbian 'prehistory' were not linked to specific memorial demands. We argue that there are two reasons why lesbian memory activists only recently began to organize for a memorial. First, within an institutionalized National Socialist memorial landscape, and in a move of *women's* solidarity rather than queer solidarity, lesbian memory activists aim to historicize their civil rights movement by achieving permanent visibility and recognition of specific victimhood under National Socialism. Second, fuelled by generational change and the contestations of anti-racist and queer critiques, the recognition of particular National Socialist victimhood functions as a 'stand-in' for the legacy of the increasingly contested lesbian struggles of the 1970s to 1990s. Let us now present our reasoning.

Although a few men were also incarcerated in Ravensbrück, the camp's post-war history has clearly been shaped by women — especially

Ravensbrück was important to lesbians. From 1984 onwards, the only lesbian group in the GDR, the Arbeitskreis Homosexuelle Selbsthilfe — Lesben in der Kirche, used Ravensbrück in its struggle for political recognition. See Samirah Kenawi, 'Konfrontation mit dem DDR-Staat: Politische Eingaben und Aktionen von Lesben am Beispiel Ravensbrück', in Gabriele Dennert, Christiane Leidinger, and Franziska Rauchut, *In Bewegung bleiben: 100 Jahre Politik, Kultur und Geschichte von Lesben* (Berlin, 2007), 118–21. After 1989, West German lesbians such as Alice Schwarzer also joined the official ceremony commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Ravensbrück in 1995. See Alice Schwarzer, 'Leben nach Auschwitz', *EMMA*, 6 (1995), 51–9.

[127] Early lesbian historical narratives and oral histories cover life in the Weimar Republic, under National Socialism, and in post-war Germany; see Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespräche mit älteren lesbischen Frauen. Dokumente* (Kiel, 1986). Only in the late 1980s did lesbian experiences during the years of Nazi rule come to be presented as a distinct topic of interest; see e.g. ead., 'Zur Situation lesbischer Frauen während der NS-Zeit', *Beiträge zur Feministischen Theorie und Praxis*, 25/26 (1989), 29–36; Claudia Schoppmann, *Nationalsozialistische Sexualpolitik und weibliche Homosexualität* (Pfaffenweiler, 1991).

by politically persecuted women and their histories of resistance. Accordingly, one of the Initiative's first steps was to contact the International Ravensbrück Committee (IRK), an organization for former prisoners which co-ordinates international efforts to historicize the camp.[128] Reacting to the memorial site's approval of the *Gedenkkugel* in 2021, the Initiative publicly documented its gratitude to the IRK: 'We . . . would like to thank the International Ravensbrück Committee as well as the Austrian and German Camp Community Ravensbrück, who supported the Initiative from the beginning.'[129] Undoubtedly, the IRK's support was of pivotal importance for the Initiative, and possibly outweighed the initial tensions (and subsequent rapprochement) between lesbians and gays.

One could thus frame the struggle for the *Gedenkkugel* as a moment of *women's* solidarity rather than queer solidarity, and of *fragmentation* rather than unification. Lesbians, descendants of inmates, and other representatives of the IRK collaborated to *disembed* lesbian girls and women from a collective of undifferentiated female victims. As a specific lesbian victimhood is made visible, lesbians are marked as particular and levered out of the shared memorial space, no longer forming a fragment of general, unspecified female victimhood.[130] The

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[128] See 'Unterstützung für Denkmal für die verfolgten und ermordeten lesbischen Frauen und Mädchen im ehemaligen KZ Ravensbrück', *Rut-Online*, at [https://rut-online.de/gedenkkugel-ravensbrueck/], accessed 24 June 2022. Only after receiving the IRK's support in May 2016 did the initiators of the *Gedenkkugel* submit an official petition to the *Gedenkstätte*; see Initiative, 'Dankschreiben 2018', at [https://feminismus-widerstand. de/?q=danke_2017], accessed 24 June 2022. On the post-war history of Ravensbrück and the role of the IRK and its historical commission, see Susan Hogervorst, 'Erinnerungskulturen und Geschichtsschreibung: Das Beispiel Ravensbrück', in Stengel and Konitzer (eds.), *Opfer als Akteure*, 197–215.

[129] Initiative, 'Wege zum Gedenken und Erinnern an lesbische Frauen im Frauen-KZ Ravensbrück', press release, 16 Apr. 2022, at [https://feminismus-widerstand.de/?q=gedenkkugel], accessed 24 June 2022.

[130] Women's solidarity was an important frame for lesbian memory activists fighting for the recognition of lesbian persecution, and they therefore called their opponents a 'patriarchal headwind' and accused them of misogyny and lesbophobia; Lisa Steininger, 'Eine Gedenkkugel als sichtbares Zeichen des Erinnerns an die Verfolgung und Ermordung lesbischer Frauen', *Mitteilungsblatt der Österreichischen Lagergemeinschaft Ravensbrück & FreundInnen* (Dec.

Gedenkkugel in this sense is the materialization not only of an opening up of categories, but also of a *particularization* and *fragmentation* of memory.

The desire for recognition of specific lesbian victimhood, we suggest, can be contextualized in a (generational) conflict over the legacy and historicization of the new lesbian movement. In contemporary queer/trans and anti-racist feminist discourse, earlier feminists and lesbians (the German *Frauen/Lesbenbewegung*) are frequently marked as 'White feminists and lesbians' and criticized for their alleged privilege and for having been particularly invested in the interests of White, bourgeois women.[131] In light of significant gains in civil rights and political equality, lesbians can no longer define themselves as victimized subjects without contestation. In this context, lesbians' memories of their personal, biographical experiences of post-war victimization and their fight for political equality as citizens are expressed and legitimized through being interlocked with victimhood under National Socialism.[132] Consider the inscription on the *Gedenkkugel*: 'In memory

2017), 18–20, at 18–19. Eva Bäckerová, president of the IRK, also cited patriarchal power structures as a reason for the invisibility of lesbian victimhood and memory in her letter of support addressed to the *Gedenkstätte*; see Eva Bäckerová, 'An die Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten', *Mitteilungsblatt der Österreichischen Lagergemeinschaft Ravensbrück & FreundInnen* (Dec. 2016), 5–6.

[131] Such criticism clashes with the lived experiences of (White) lesbians who grew up under conditions of legal discrimination and without full civil rights. It also ignores those lesbians and feminists who questioned female (National Socialist) victimhood in the 1980s and 1990s and were invested in debates about female perpetratorship, racism, antisemitism, and other forms of violence within the German women's and lesbian movements. See e.g. Studienschwerpunkt 'Frauenforschung' TU Berlin (ed.), *Mittäterschaft und Entdeckungslust* (Berlin, 1989); and *Geteilter Feminismus: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Fremdenhaß*, special issue of *Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis*, 27 (1990). On debates about the role of women in Nazi Germany, see Atina Grossmann, 'Feminist Debates about Women and National Socialism', *Gender & History*, 3/3 (1991), 350–8.

[132] In this move, queer nostalgia (Haritaworn, *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others*, 142–53) and victimhood nostalgia converge: the history of one's own post-war victimization is made legitimate and commemorable through victimhood under National Socialism. In addition, (self-)figuration as a Nazi victim impacts a subject's interpellation in the present. On a discursive level, historical National Socialist victimhood situates a subject outside perpetratorship and closer to justice and morality.

ROUND TABLE

of all lesbian women and girls in the Ravensbrück and Uckermark women's concentration camp. *They* were persecuted, incarcerated and murdered. *You* are not forgotten'.[133] 'They' were murdered in the impersonal, detached third person plural, but are remembered in the direct second person plural. 'We' have a direct, personal connection to the persecuted 'foremothers', with whom 'we' form a transtemporal community of passive suffering. By disembedding lesbian victims from the undifferentiated collective of female victims, lesbians become visible within the established National Socialist memorial landscape — and thereby also enable the memorialization of their own post-war struggle in anticipation of an upcoming generational change. By remembering them ('you'), we also remember *ourselves*. The *Gedenkkugel* is thus also an act of self-memorialization — a permanent, material, and public witness of 'our' role as foremothers to future lesbians.[134]

The struggle for the *Gedenkkugel* thus appears less 'against or counter to' and more 'in sync' with the normative, victim-centred memory culture of post-1989 Germany. Real-life experiences of discrimination are channelled through a disembodied reference to victimhood under National Socialism. No biological family relations are necessary to claim a link between the memorializing community and the persecuted women. Rather, victimhood is 'transmitted . . . outside family structures' (Sébastien Tremblay) and can also be claimed by descendants of bystanders and perpetrators through empathic identification *with* and

[133] Initiative, 'Wege zum Gedenken' (emphasis our own).
[134] The demand for memorialization is entwined here with the formation of lesbian political subjectivity. This operation is underpinned not only by a desire for memory, but by a striving for visibility. Consider in this regard the pre-1989 history of Ravensbrück: through a particular practice — the demand for memorialization — a group (Lesben in der Kirche) was formed as a political actor. 'These eleven women posed an enormous danger to the power of the state'; Kenawi, 'Konfrontation mit dem DDR-Staat', 120. Another example is the struggle over lesbian representation in the film shown at the Memorial to the Persecuted Homosexuals under National Socialism. The main focus of these debates was also the history of Nazi persecution and lesbian visibility; see 'NS-Verfolgung von Lesben wird weiter geleugnet', *Emma*, 1 July 2010, at [https://www.emma.de/artikel/neuer-streit-ums-homo-mahnmal-ns-verfolgung-von-lesben-wird-weiter-geleugnet-265069], accessed 31 Aug. 2022. In a move we describe as queer solidarity, lesbian victimhood was added to gay victimhood by the addition of a lesbian couple to the film in 2012.

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as victims—in this case, lesbian victims. Full inclusion in the historical narrative of post-war Germany, and specifically its public sphere, is mediated through efforts to achieve the recognition and institutional remembrance of victimhood under the Nazis. As exemplified by historian Anna Hájková: 'Lesbian women are from now on no longer stepdaughters of history, but full members of it.'[135] Concrete struggles against discrimination become expressible, commemorable, and politically effective through (collective) self-constitution as victims of National Socialist persecution.[136]

If this is the case, however, how can minoritized collectives assert their political rights if they cannot claim National Socialist victimhood, or if their claims to victimhood are in opposition to those of the figure of the Jew? Unsurprisingly, the *Gedenkkugel* memory project seems to be one that QPOC organizations such as LesMigraS or GLADT are not specifically invested in. We agree with Manuela and Sébastien that the memorial 'afterlife' of genocide(s) needs to reflect

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[135] Anna Hájková, 'Langer Kampf'. In our reading, the lesbian struggle for a *Gedenkkugel* is not substantially different from the memory politics of the gay movement in the 1970s and 1980s. As Sébastien Tremblay indicates, the latter blurred the lines between a fight for recognition of 'victims disregarded during the post-war era' and the creation of a 'collective in the present' or post-memory; see Columbia University Press, 'An Interview with Marianne Hirsch', at [https://cup.columbia.edu/author-interviews/hirsch-generation-postmemory], accessed 24 June 2022. This example makes it clear that the 'consolidation of a collective in the present' can involve confrontational memory work (e.g. the idea of a 'Homocaust') and can at times also be weaponized in the context of contemporary political struggles (as in the struggle to abolish Paragraph 175). As Koray Yılmaz-Günay and Salih Alexander Wolter highlight, analogy and competition played a central role in gays becoming recognized as victim subjects. Presenting itself as the 'only forgotten victims', who were at a disadvantage to Jews as the 'privileged victims', the gay community demanded entry into the nation and its culture of commemoration. See Koray Yılmaz-Günay and Salih Alexander Wolter, 'Pink Washing Germany? Der deutsche Homonationalismus und die "jüdische Karte"', in Duygu Gürsel, Zülfukar Çetin, and Allmende e.V. (eds.), *Wer macht Demo_kratie? Kritische Beiträge zu Migration und Machtverhältnissen* (Münster, 2013), 60–75.

[136] Alternative places of memorialization, such as lesbian and feminist archives in Germany, cannot keep up with the National Socialist memorial landscape. They have a precarious status, and do not ensure lasting, sustainable transmission in the mainstream.

the complex entanglements running through histories of violence. Yet when recognition in the present is channelled exclusively through National Socialist victimhood, unequal relations lie dormant. Manuela thus marks the genealogy of solidarity as 'not a straightforward one.' For example, when the representative bodies of Jews and of Sinti and Roma—the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma—worked together to campaign for the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under National Socialism, only the former were in a position to support the latter. While Manuela suggests that 'moments of collaboration reveal the enduring effects of the structures of persecution themselves', we propose that it is precisely instances where solidarity collapses that require close scrutiny.

Returning to our reading of lesbian memory work, it would be of the utmost importance to ask, for example, how the 1990s alliances between Women of Colour mentioned by Manuela disintegrated, and what role victimhood under National Socialism played in these processes. Paying attention to moments of collapse reveals the narrative of solidarity to be suffused with competitive relations.

The last few years in particular have shown that memory debates serve as arenas in which present-day political conflicts are acted out. This makes it almost impossible to detach the writing of genocidal histories from their political valence. In the current memory paradigm, therefore, the visibility of contemporary injustice remains bound to the recognition of past victimhood—as if the best way to address injustice *now* would be to build a memorial to those still precariously *alive*.

About the Authors

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