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**ANTISEMITISM  
AND  
XENOPHOBIA  
IN  
GERMANY  
AFTER  
UNIFICATION**



EDITED BY  
**HERMANN KURTHEN  
WERNER BERGMANN  
RAINER ERB**

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*Edited by Hermann Kurthen,  
Werner Bergmann, and Rainer Erb*

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# Abbreviations

ADL	Anti-Defamation League
AJC	American Jewish Committee
B90	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/Green Party)
CCJG	Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (Central Council of Jews in Germany)
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union)
CIS/USSR	Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union)
CSU	Christlich Soziale Union (Christian Social Union)
DVU	Deutsche Volksunion (German People's Union)
EU	European Union
FAP	Freiheitliche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Free Worker Party)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth)
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party)
FFD	Freundeskreis Freiheit für Deutschland (Freedom for Germany Circle)
FRG	Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of [West] Germany)
GDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik ([East] German Democratic Republic)
IfD	Institut für Demoskopie
IHR	Institute for Historical Review
JCA	Jüdischer Kulturverein (Jewish Cultural Association)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany)

NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (Party of Democratic Socialism, former SED)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
REP	Republikaner Partei (Republican Party)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SRP	Sozialistische Reichspartei (Socialist Reich Party)
UN	United Nations

## Contributors

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IN GERMANY AFTER UNIFICATION

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HERMANN KURTHEN, WERNER BERGMANN, AND RAINER ERB

## Introduction

### *Postunification Challenges to German Democracy*

The collapse of the Communist regime in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, were welcomed around the world. But the rapid unification of East and West Germany brought ambivalent reactions, especially from Germany's European neighbors. On the one hand there were fears of the political and economic dominance of a united Germany in the center of Europe. On the other hand recollections of the devastating consequences of German national unification movements of the past were rekindled. Voices were heard even within Germany that warned of the emergence of a new sense of nationalism that would slacken ties to Western democracies and promote a new chapter of German assertiveness—one that would seek, for example, to repress memories of World War II and the Holocaust. Such anxiety was directed in particular toward East Germans because very little was known of their political attitudes. Because they had lived under the conditions of a second dictatorship, they were expected to harbor antidemocratic, authoritarian, and intolerant views. In response to these fears, numerous empirical studies were begun in 1990 in the former GDR on voter profiles, issues regarding the political culture, and attitudes toward foreigners. One study focused on antisemitism (defined as an unfavorable and hostile attitude and evaluation of Jews); another concerned xenophobia (i.e., an unduly fearful, hostile, or contemptuous attitude toward foreigners). The surveys' findings were surprising to many because they revealed only slight differences in levels of antisemitism and xenophobia between East and West Germans. Though hostility toward foreigners was, indeed, somewhat stronger among East Germans, respondents in the East displayed far less willingness to vote for right-wing extremist parties, and they were much less antisemitic than westerners.

Attitudes toward foreigners, as other studies and opinion polls have shown, are less uniform than the term *foreigner* itself suggests. In fact, opinions about differ-

ent groups vary to a great degree. Migrant laborers (formerly guest workers) from the Mediterranean periphery and Turkey, many of them in Germany for more than two decades, are more accepted and integrated than asylum seekers and refugees from civil wars. Foreigners from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Russia experience more social distance than persons from the European Union (EU), North America, or Australia. The immigration of ethnic German resettlers from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union posed the fewest integration problems because of the immigrants' willingness to fully blend into their "fatherland." Nevertheless, these resettlers have also contributed to feelings of immigration pressure by the indigenous population. German Jews and Sinti (Gypsies) born in Germany are frequently counted as aliens even though they are full-fledged citizens.

When a wave of violence against asylum seekers began in 1991 with pogrom-like actions in East Germany and media reports of neo-Nazi marches (Husbands 1991), the findings of the previously mentioned public opinion surveys were quickly forgotten and the events were regarded as symptoms of dangerous developments in Germany. Antiasylant riots such as the one in Rostock in August 1992, the arson attack on the "Jewish barrack" at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp memorial, the Rudolf Hess memorial march in Wunsiedel, the arson murders of Turkish families in Mölln and Solingen, and the attack on the Lübeck synagogue seemed to confirm warnings of the political consequences of German unification.

With Germany's lingering past in their minds, a broad national and international audience responded to these postunification developments in united Germany. Influential commentators raised their concerns in editorial columns. Newspapers were flooded with letters to the editor that questioned the reliability of German democracy after unification. Observers in Germany and abroad used the passive and indecisive actions of politicians and police to draw parallels to the end phase of the Weimar Republic in the early 1930s, shortly before the rise of Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist movement. In the eyes of these critics, attacks on immigrant minorities duplicated the persecution of the Jews 50 years previously. Some commentators even raised the prospect of a rising Fourth Reich (Mead 1990, Sana 1990) that would repeat the crimes and mistakes of the past. Jewish authors expressed their fears about "the escalation of terror in Germany" and asked, "Is it time to leave?" (Neaman 1993).

Other frequent questions were, Is the outburst of hatred and violence a specific German phenomenon or only the work of some young thugs? To what extent do these events after unification represent an attitude change in the German population as a whole? Are prejudice and hateful acts confined to a small group of young skinheads (mostly uneducated, unemployed, and lower-class youth) or to a handful of *ewig Gestrigen* (reactionaries attached to the past) on the far Right? Why is resentment also significantly higher among older, lower-class, and authoritarian segments of the population? Is it true that even within respected democratic parties, signs of subtle and openly aired resentment have emerged and that antisemitism and xenophobia are becoming culturally acceptable again? Can the right-wing intellectual scene that refers to revisionist history, *völkisch* cultural traditions, and nationalist identity rhetoric gain respectability among the cultural elite? Can the

Right exploit the ambivalent attitudes toward Germany's dealing with the past that are found among considerable percentages of respondents? These respondents do not deny the existence of camps and the Holocaust, but they reject responsibility for the acts of their parents and grandparents and express fears that remembrance is exploited by Jews. How widespread and threatening are these developments and do remedies exist to counter them?

The shrillness of some alarmist cries and suspicions has obscured a sober assessment of the origins, dynamics, and outcomes of the escalation of violence and resentment. This passionate concern, repeated over and over, must be confronted with the same intensive sociological and political research that was undertaken in the years following unification in order to distinguish fact from fiction. For example, it was found that by and large an adolescent subculture was—and still is—responsible for xenophobic violence (Willems et al. 1993). But public opinion surveys and the results of numerous elections at the national and regional levels since 1991 have proven that racist neo-Nazi and antisemitic propaganda and xenophobic fears exploited in election campaigns by far right-wing parties did not receive significant and persistent public support. The two largest right-wing parties, the German People's Union (Deutsche Volksunion [DVU]) in the northern states of West Germany and the "Republikaner" Party (REP) in the southern states, enjoyed notable election successes only for a short period (see Falter 1994; see also the chronology in the appendix).

Nevertheless, the undeniable fact of an upsurge of violence and resentment has been interpreted by many observers as a general shift to the Right and a rise in xenophobia and antisemitism. Among the extremist right-wing fringe, xenophobia and antisemitism are closely linked, although their ideological roots, motivations, and expressions differ. Extremists perceive immigrants as a threat to ethnocultural identity and racial homogeneity of the German collective; Jews are hated because they question the image of an untainted national past as witnesses and victims of the Holocaust. Foreigners correspond to the underclass stereotype of being lazy, dirty, deviant, and promiscuous. Jews are depicted as a small but powerful group that pushes its political and financial interests behind the scenes.

Among the general public, the strength of and linkage between both patterns of prejudice are less pronounced. Views about the 7 million immigrants are less restrained by taboos than are views about Jews. Foreigners are openly rejected because of social competition in the workplace, housing, education, welfare, and social security. In contrast, the public image of the comparatively small group of Jewish citizens (about 50,000) is nourished by remaining elements of traditional religious and economic antisemitism and resentments that are the result of reparations, collective guilt, and public commemorations of the Holocaust.

Closer analysis, documented in this volume, reveals the activation of prejudices and the emergence of a xenophobic protest movement in the aftermath of the 1989–90 upheavals. This movement exploited the advantages of a democratic society and the historically and politically unique opportunity of the unification crisis to use violence and resentment (Jaschke 1993, Bergmann and Erb 1994c). The goal was to achieve and reaffirm a supposedly ethnocultural homogeneity—as expressed in the slogan "Germany for the Germans" and the often-repeated mantra

"Germany is not an immigration society"—thereby clinging to a concept of nationhood and identity that was no longer a reality owing to the increasing pluralism and diversity that was transforming German society into a multiethnic and multicultural entity (Kurthen and Minkenberg 1995).

Several factors combined to facilitate the development and activation of a violent and primarily xenophobic subculture. First, media and politicians on the Right focused on, stimulated, and dramatized the large, unprecedented wave of immigration supposedly flooding Germany. The influx of hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers, ethnic Germans, and East Germans coming into West Germany and, later, the distribution of refugees in the East German new *Länder* according to a federal quota system were seen as creating social problems in employment, housing, integration, welfare, and education. Thus this influx became the focus of strong public attention. Second, politicians, the government, and administrations on all levels were embarrassed by the actions of extremists and wished this contentious issue would simply disappear. Therefore they initially ignored or downplayed the threat posed by the upsurge of extremist violence and popular resentment. Only after public polarization and rising broad protests, both from within and outside Germany, did they feel obligated to establish policies and take actions against extremism and its sources. Third, the political conflict between the governing conservative-liberal coalition and the social-democratic and Green Party opposition blocked for almost a year any effective government action in legislating political asylum, action that was central to quelling abuse of the very liberal West German asylum legislation and in addressing public discontent about inefficient policies. Fourth, institutions of social control in the eastern German states virtually collapsed. These factors all proved advantageous for violent groups, a situation that in turn triggered new actions in both parts of Germany.

The conditions for mobilization of eastern German youth by the right-wing political spectrum were more favorable than in the West, because counterforces in eastern Germany in the form of a left-wing youth culture had lost their legitimacy and the citizens' movement had suffered burnout from unproductive debates at "round-table" discussions during unification and thus were not an attractive alternative for young people seeking action. Xenophobic activities and violence were able to increase quickly in number and degree. A subculture of young men with prescribed modes of dress, music, and behavior emerged as part of an international right-wing-oriented skinhead youth scene whose members were inclined to act out their often unpolitically rooted hatred and prejudice against poorer and weaker groups, such as immigrant minorities, but also against gays, Left and anarchist "Autonome" youth gangs, the elderly, homeless, disabled, and East Europeans. The youth of the offenders, the type of actions they took, their use of weaponry (baseball bats and Molotov cocktails), and their provocative, utterly embarrassing to Germans, use of Nazi salutes and slogans support the fact that they represented not a broad social mass movement but a right-wing youth movement.

What suddenly became visible had been known to researchers of youth and right-wing extremism since the mid-1980s—a movement that attempts to ignore fundamental principles of democracy and human rights. The movement's supporters encompass unpolitical, alcoholic thugs and bigots but also rabble-rousers,

whose belief system is based on nationalist, racist, or authoritarian and state-centered totalitarian ideologies. The extremist fringe ranges from nationalist intellectuals (the New Right) and a multitude of legal or illegal parties, groups, and factions to militant neo-Nazis and violent youth gangs, in particular antiforeigner skinheads.

Right-wing extremism, which primarily had existed until then in small and hidden organizations and informal groups, expanded its sphere by recruiting young members of the hooligan and skinhead subcultures. Tapping these groups served to significantly increase the number of violent crimes with right-wing extremist motives even before 1990.<sup>1</sup> The sensational success of the "Republikaner" Party at the polls in January 1989 brought the growth of right-wing extremism in West Germany into the public consciousness. Antiforeigner and antisylum-seeker violence that exploded in 1991–92 corresponded to the rising numbers of immigrants and the confusing asylum debate (Kurthen 1995). Particularly in the former GDR, violence reached unparalleled heights in 1992. In contrast, violent antisemitic incidents started to rise but with a time lag and at a comparatively much lower level of intensity, incident structure, and different background of perpetrators. In 1990 the 38 counted antisemitic acts were composed of 9 involving arson or explosive acts, 4 involving bodily injury, and 25 involving property damage, such as graffiti. Of 39 cemetery desecrations, half were of proven right-wing origin (see Merkl 1994: 478, n. 37). Although xenophobically motivated violence declined after 1993 following bold public and political moves against extremists and reform of the asylum law that curbed immigration, antisemitic incidents were on the rise till 1994 and fell since then. According to police reports, antisemitic acts consisted mainly of slander, hate propaganda, public incitement, graffiti, and other nonviolent damage to property (see chapter 2). Overall, however, the wave of violence seems to have reached its apex and to be on the decline (see table 1.1).

Of particular interest is the sudden increase of violence in the East German states. Little was known about right-wing extremism in the former Communist state; since the early 1980s, the youth culture in the GDR was divided into a variety of subgroups, including right-wing extremist groups as well as peace and environmental groups and punks. Youth research in East Germany, concentrated in Leipzig, observed that since the late 1970s young people's identification with the socialist state declined and a small but growing minority of youth supported a fascist model of society. Following the spectacular and controversially debated attack by neo-Nazis in East Berlin on people attending a rock concert in the Church of Zion in 1987, it was no longer possible for GDR authorities to continue their practice of avoiding public and international reactions by disallowing any publicity of right-wing radical and antisemitic incidents. The increased violence that followed the political upheaval of 1989–90 was thus not solely a consequence of the collapse, transformation, and restructuring of a socialist society; rather, it had already formed its roots in the former GDR.

Serious East German social science research about this phenomenon only became possible after unification and the opening of archives (see chapter 6). For example, the former state party, the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands [SED]); the state youth organization, Free German Youth

# ng Extremism, Immigration, and Violence against Foreigners and Jews in Germany, 1980–1994

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
sands)	108	49.4	37.4	19.7	35.3	73.8	99.7	57.4	103	121	193	256	438
ng parties, is, skinheads,	19.8	20.3	19	20.3	22.1	22.1	33.1	25.2	28.3	35.9	32.2	39.8	41.9
ikaner”	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	5	8.5	25	20	20	23
	1,643	1,824	2,510	1,347	1,154	1,754	1,281	1,447	1,607	1,853	1,848	3,884	7,684
lents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	516	389	2,720	4,746
nts	263	323	479	239	191	200	250	330	350	267	208	367	627
ier acts	60	45	43	32	36	50	117	98	103	146	152	1,255	2,000
with	—	—	—	17	12	—	—	—	—	58	59	84	83
ground ecrations)	113	92	88	76	91	123	189	195	193	264	273	999	1,774
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	367	493	865
r million <sup>a</sup>	27.4	30.4	41.8	22.4	19.2	29.2	21.3	24.1	26.8	30.9	23.1	47.9	94.9
lents per million	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8.6	4.9	33.6	58.6
nts per million <sup>b</sup>	4.3	5.3	7.9	3.9	3.2	3.3	4.1	5.5	5.8	4.5	2.6	4.6	7.8
	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.5	2.1	3.3	3.3	3.2	4.3	4.6	16.4	28.6
many <sup>c</sup>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.1	29	54.1
any	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

n des Innern 1993, 1994, 1995, and own calculations (population basis since 1990 United Germany).

es (total/per million) exist for France 1990 (722/12.77), for Austria 1992 (429/55.3), and for the United Kingdom 1991 (7.882/136.9). See Bun , in comparison, reported over a thousand hate crimes, mostly directed against blacks, Muslims, and Asians (about 130 per million). Los A inst gay men, blacks, and Jews in 1991 (about 75 per million; see Merkl 1994: 431).

are with antisemitic incidents (total/per million) in 1991: United States (1,879/7.6), Denmark (40/7.7), and Canada (251/11.4). In 1993 the the ADF reported 1730 antisemitic acts (6.9 per million), including 758 acts of harassment, assaults and threats, and 927 acts of vandalism om Anti-Defamation League 1993b and Merkl 1994: 431. The FBI reported 4,755 incidents in the United States in 1991 (18.9), among which i. data are not nationally representative because only one-fifth of localities reported to the FBI. See Merkl 1994: 474, footnote 11.

pare with extreme right-wing violent incidents (total/per million) in other Western countries: Switzerland 1991 (77/11.6), France 1991 (91/ ta from Bundesminister des Innern 1993: 77 ff.

. West Germany.

(Freie Deutsche Jugend [FDJ]); and the Ministry for State Security (Stasi) had undertaken some investigations about the type and extent of neo-Nazi support and youth violence in the end phase of the GDR. Existing groups provided a core for the establishment of local right-wing groups after the opening of the border in the fall of 1989. West German neo-Nazis saw these groups as potential recruits. Contacts between eastern and western groups developed quickly. Within a short period of time, the right-wing subculture in East Germany had assumed the styles and behavior of its western counterparts. Simultaneously, ideology was transferred from West to East, and violence from East to West. West German neo-Nazis who visited their East German comrades could share not only their ideology but also their greater political experience and ways of dealing with journalists; on the other hand the violent actions in East Germany served as a model for West Germany.

The 1991–93 wave of mainly xenophobic violence, representing a protest movement built on historically unique conditions, was considerably dampened after 1993 by the responses of government and society catching up with events. The banning of organizations, harsher criminal prosecution, public protests, and the ability of the political system to take action in the area of unrestricted immigration through the asylum law contributed to restrict a further upsurge of attacks and prejudice. The failures of right-wing parties at postunification German polls and the stability of attitudes of Germans toward Jews, other ethnic minorities, and asylum seekers (confirmed by public surveys) support the idea that the violence represented a situational escalation rather than a reversal of the trend toward a more liberal, tolerant, and open-minded society. Stability of democratic orientations can be assumed because surveys showed a large majority of Germans expressing concern about the growth of right-wing extremism and antisemitic tendencies. Particularly after the Mölln anti-Turkish arson attack, the Germans clearly dissociated themselves from right-wing extremists and expressed overwhelming solidarity with the victims. In fact, this event proved crucial to delegitimizing the right-wing xenophobic violence and rhetoric of parties such as the REP. Consequently, there was less widespread fear within Germany that a Nazi Party could ever regain power. In April 1995, three-quarters of polled Germans felt such an event was impossible, in contrast to opinions outside Germany, where 44% of U.S.-Americans believed it to be possible.

The impact of these concerned and sometimes extremely critical foreign reactions on German domestic policy cannot be underestimated. Ever since U.S. High Commissioner John McCloy declared in 1949 that Germans' attitudes toward Jews represented the touchstone for German democracy, antisemitism has been interpreted not as an expression of a group conflict, but always as a destabilization of the democratic culture and as a lack of motivation in drawing the correct consequences from the Nazi past. For example, inciting racial hatred and denial of the Holocaust are punishable as a crime in Germany, whereas they are a legal part of freedom of speech in other countries. The social and political elite in Germany also respond very quickly and consistently to antisemitic incidents; this is not true to the same degree with respect to xenophobia.

In the history of the FRG, the years 1989 to 1993 represent the third postwar

wave of right-wing extremism, which followed periods of right-wing-party success in the early 1950s by the Socialist Reich Party (Sozialistische Reichspartei [SRP]) and in the mid-to-late 1960s by the German National Democratic Party (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands [NPD]). These waves all followed a typical course. The surprising early success of Right extremism was perceived as a threat to German democracy; reluctant political and social counterreactions ultimately always succeeded in marginalizing extremism. During its success phase, the right-wing camp was represented by a single party, which later splintered into numerous competing smaller parties and groups after experiencing failure.

Although the success and failure of right-wing extremist parties can be explained by so-called sociological crisis theories, this is not true for the increase in antisemitic incidents. The latter are related neither to economic cycles nor to electoral success of right-wing parties, which cautiously try to avoid appearing anti-Jewish because of the public ostracism imposed on antisemites and the fear of legal repercussions. Aside from often apolitical vandalism and adolescent incidents (e.g., swastika daubing) triggered by single, isolated events—then heavily exploited and imitated by antisemites—a series of politically initiated antisemitic incidents in the past were usually closely tied to phases of increased public discourse and public discontent regarding issues related to Germany's Nazi past (e.g., reparation payments and Holocaust remembrance issues). The current phase deviates from this pattern as antisemitic harrassment and crimes increased at the same time that a wave of xenophobic violence occurred in postunification Germany. One explanation points to the fact that leaders of right-wing and extremist parties in Germany have directed the disappointment of their fellow travelers over the electoral failures of their cause after 1993 at Jewish representatives, organizations, and influence. Anti-Jewish attacks were used to motivate the remaining supporters, whereas neo-Nazis, who have no voter constituency to consider, attack Jews as their ideologically defined enemy. Such a worldview does not consider Jews to be one minority among many. Whereas most of the immigrants and ethnic minorities in Germany are rejected predominantly as a social burden and for reasons of economic competition, Jews are regarded as powerful and anti-German “wire-pullers.” Jews are accused of manipulating the German elite in order to prevent the development of a self-confident German nation out of vindictiveness for unique Nazi crimes, which are in their monstrosity denied by extremists. Jews supposedly direct immigration waves to Germany to weaken the national substance and force Germany to become integrated in broad supra- or international entities and coalitions that curb national sovereignty and self-determination. In their hatred of Jews, minorities, and immigrants; in their contempt for federal agencies and politics; and in their paranoid fears of worldwide conspiracies of a one-world government, and so on, extremists in Germany share similar beliefs as those in other countries, such as the United States. From the perspective of anti-semitism research it is obvious that the traditional stereotype of the world Jewish conspiracy has been adapted to the situation following the collapse of communism. The United States is the only remaining world power, a government that—according to the traditional stereotype—is run by Jews on Wall Street, in Hollywood,

in the media, and elsewhere. For the more dangerous segment of right-wing ideologues, antisemitism is also anti-Americanism.

In order to accurately assess antisemitic resentment and prejudice over the last four years, it is necessary to retrace its history in the FRG and in the former GDR, a history that goes back to 1945.

The horrified reactions to the extent of Nazi extermination politics with respect to the Jews, the discredited Nazi ideology after 1945, and the denazification and reeducation policies of the Allies all led, at least among the intelligentsia, to a rejection of hypernationalism and antisemitism. This was not true to the same extent for the population at large; it can thus be assumed that into the late 1960s there was a discrepancy between public opinion and individual attitudes.

Findings of U.S. Military Government surveys conducted in 1946 and an evaluation of newspaper reports indicated an almost unbroken persistence of antisemitism in the late 1940s and early 1950s (see Merritt and Merritt 1970, 1980). This was expressed with an openness and brutality that seems unfathomable today; it was primarily aimed directly against Jewish citizens. The public support for the acquittal of Nazi film director Veit Harlan, director of the notoriously antisemitic propaganda film *Jew Süss*, was indicative of the anti-Jewish sentiment of the early 1950s, as was the public opposition to restitution of Jewish property, to reparations policy in general, and to the surge of cemetery desecrations. The process of making antisemitism a public taboo and denying it a public forum had already begun, but it still had far to go at the end of the 1950s. The wave of antisemitic incidents in the winter of 1959–60, which triggered worldwide outrage, marked a turning point in German attitudes toward Jews because a broad base of the German population opposed this vandalist rioting. (Now we know from Stasi archives that some incidents had been provoked by Communist undercover actions from the East.) Concrete steps were taken and changes occurred in schools, academia, churches, and the law against inciting racial hatred. The process of bringing the issue into the German public arena and dealing with it was furthered by such closely followed events as the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961), the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt (1963–65), and the literary debate on the Holocaust—for example, such plays as *The Deputy* (1963) by Rolf Hochhuth, *The Investigation* (1965) by Peter Weiss, and *Jöel Brandt* (1965) by Heiner Kipphardt.

A 1974 antisemitism study showed an obvious decline in antisemitic stereotypes as compared with the 1940s and 1950s (Silbermann 1982). This shift can be traced largely to the younger generations who were socialized after 1945 (born 1935 and later), not to any significant changes in attitudes among the older generations. This trend has continued ever since; representative surveys conducted in the late 1980s determined that approximately 15% of the population was explicitly anti-Jewish; among those 50 years of age and younger, the figure was clearly less, at 6%. The success of coping with the past, spreading knowledge, and reeducating the public is also apparent in the fact that today only 17% percent in western Germany and 5% in eastern Germany regard the number of Holocaust victims to be exaggerated (Golub 1994), whereas a majority (in then West Germany) sup-

ported that statement in the early 1950s (63% considered the figure of 5 million murdered Jews to be either somewhat or greatly exaggerated in 1954 [see Emnid-Institut 1954]).

Also there is a common consent of anti-antisemitism among the German elite. The media, churches, unions, academia, political parties, educational institutions, and so on, have socially isolated and marginalized antisemitism among right-wing extremists. Topics of public controversy and survey results demonstrate that a shift has taken place in the motives for antisemitism in Germany—to a secondary anti-semitism. The issue is no longer mainly one of group conflict over scarce resources (jobs, housing, political influence), but the specifically German problem of having to live with a damaged national identity. The “antisemitic” affairs of the 1980s—the failed attempt of Ronald Reagan and Helmut Kohl at Bitburg in May 1985 to reconcile former enemies at the graves of soldiers (including some young Waffen-SS conscripts); the controversy surrounding the performance of Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s play *Garbage, the City, and Death* in the fall of 1985; the so-called historians’ debate about the historical legacy of the Holocaust in comparative perspective; and the stylistically insensitive commemorative speech by then Bundestag president Philipp Jenninger on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the *Reichskristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) in 1988—all became scandals not because they were intentionally anti-Jewish but because they were seen as unacceptable, offensive attempts to deal with or to overcome the past. Regarding West Germany, one can speak of a tenacious process of dismantling prejudices and anti-Jewish attitudes to raise awareness and sensitivity, in short, a collective learning process that has been going on for decades and that has not yet been completed (see chapter 3). However, with regard to xenophobia, this process is much less advanced.

In the self-image of the GDR as well as in its research, antisemitism played a role only in the early history of its socialist society. It was regarded as eliminated once expropriation of the means of production from private ownership supposedly removed the foundation of prejudice and greed in society. In addition, it was believed that constantly propagated Communist antifascism in the media, education, public events, speeches, and so on and strict prohibition of any deviating and extremist opinion would prevent any reawakening of antisemitism or ethnic or national hatred. The task of observing public opinion and individuals was reserved for state security services. In the socialist GDR, social science survey research was rarely or at best superficially conducted. Attitudes toward Jews were never the subject of a survey. Antisemitic incidents were either not perceived as such, were regarded as the result of Western provocation, or were dealt with internally, quietly, and without publicity. The policy of the GDR leadership toward Jews and Jewish congregations can best be described by quoting the demand that Count Clermont-Tonnère had made in 1789: “Nothing for the Jews as a nation; everything for the Jews as people.” Although persecuted Jews received state compensation as “victims of fascism” and Jewish congregations received financial support from the state, contact with Jews outside the country, above all with Israel and Jewish organizations in the United States, was prohibited (Maser 1995). Claims made by individuals or congregations for the return of “Aryanized” property were

not recognized. Stalinist campaigns and trials against “Jewish conspirators” took place in 1952 in East Germany in much less prominent and oppressive form. At that time many Jews, especially those in the ruling classes, hastily left the country (Herf 1994). East Germany participated in the anti-Israel politics of the Eastern bloc by supporting Israel’s enemies and Arab terrorists. News coverage of events in the Middle East was not only done exclusively from the perspective of the Arab states but also included anti-Zionist rhetoric carrying traditional antisemitic stereotypes. Foreign policy interests led the GDR leadership to allow Jewish communities to intensify their foreign contacts starting in 1986–87, especially to Jewish organizations in the United States. These contacts were supposed to serve the function of opening the door for Erich Honecker, SED leader and head-of-state, who wanted to cap his political career with a state visit to the United States. At meetings with representatives of international Jewish organizations in 1988 in East Berlin, the GDR leadership mentioned for the first time the possibility of paying reparations. In view of this historical burden of guilt, the first freely elected parliament in East Germany (Volkskammer) unanimously approved the following declaration in April 1990: “We ask the forgiveness of Jews throughout the world. We ask forgiveness of the people of Israel for the hypocrisy and hostility of official GDR policy toward the state of Israel and for the continued persecution and humiliation of Jewish citizens in our country after 1945.”

A look at the development of antisemitism over the past 50 years of West and East German history is necessary to gain a firm basis from which to evaluate the present. The sometimes sensational and moralistic focus of the mass media and event-oriented scientific research on current developments, especially when they concern collective violence with deadly consequences, runs the risk of misinterpreting short-term developments as long-term trends (Dudek 1994: 292). When, for example, political one-sidedness of the entire justice system is concluded from a poor, extremist trial decision that is worthy of criticism or when revisionist views of a prominent historian are regarded as a *new majority opinion* of German historiography, then isolated events are generalized and wrongly interpreted as an indication of attitudinal changes in the population at large and among the political elite. News coverage refers by definition to current events and appraises them from the present perspective. But this runs the danger of ignoring historical origins, hidden social processes, and structural conditions. It is the task of research to place current developments within a larger time frame and chain of causes, and thus conduct multilevel analyses of antisemitism and racism that take into account the complexity of the phenomena.

The attention given to postunification events by concerned writers, journalists, politicians, and academics in Germany and abroad indicates the existence of a strong interest in events in united Germany. At the same time, however, it also reveals a lack of detailed knowledge and thorough analysis of the extent and imminent danger of antisemitism and xenophobia in Germany, particularly among the English-speaking public.

A review of English-language literature on the subject confirms that there are currently few publications that explain antisemitism and xenophobia in postunifi-

cation Germany in a comparatively detailed and complete manner. Nearly all existing publications have excluded East Germany and are outdated in their coverage of most recent events, surveys, and research findings in Germany. Though as a reaction to the dramatic changes in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 several international conferences have attempted to get a grasp on the consequences of these revolutions few have covered antisemitism and xenophobia. Only one conference in the fall of 1992 on antisemitism in Europe covered developments in Germany (see *Patterns of Prejudice* 1993). Scholarly literature and research has focused in the past on two types of analysis: international comparative research and research concentrating on Germany. Bauer and Rosensaft 1988 and Gilman and Katz 1991 are examples of research in comparative perspective. However, they do not specifically discuss the relationship between antisemitism and xenophobia but address the issue of antisemitism more from historical, cultural, religious, and literary viewpoints. Michael Curtis and particularly Helen Fein have approached the sociological and political contexts of modern antisemitism, but some of their findings need to be updated and tested again. Thus, in this volume we shall refer to some of the earlier findings and theories that have been discussed by Curtis (1986) and Fein (1987) and apply them to Germany based on the most recent polls and studies. With regard to research on Germany, Benz (1992a, 1993a, 1995a, 1995b), Rabinbach and Zipes (1986), Bergmann and Erb (1990), and Bergmann, Erb and Lichtblau (1995) recently presented volumes that deal with the history of antisemitism in postwar Germany. Stern (1991) has concentrated on a history of the cultural and political dimension of antisemitism and philosemitism in postwar West Germany only. Relatively few investigators—like Silbermann (1982), Silbermann and Sallen (1992), Silbermann and Schweps (1986), Bergmann and Erb (1990, and 1991a), Butterwegge and Isola (1990), Butterwegge and Jäger (1992), Farin and Seidel-Pielen (1992), Merkl and Weinberg (1993), Björge and Witte (1993), Kowalsky and Schroeder (1994)—have specifically dealt with questions of persisting postunification German xenophobia and antisemitism based on the most recent empirical studies. Before 1989 most data and analyses were limited to West Germany. It was only after the fall of the Berlin Wall that empirical surveys were able to cover attitudes of East Germans toward Jews and the Holocaust (Jodice 1991, Wittenberg, Prosch, and Abraham 1991, 1995, Emnid-Institut 1992, Golub 1994, Brusten 1995). Studies of GDR German youth also included questions about antisemitism (Förster et al. 1993). Some surveys deliberately compared opinions in East and West Germany, thus allowing researchers to test with sufficient accuracy hypotheses about the extent and links of xenophobia and antisemitism after unification.

In reviewing the existing literature and our own research about the origins and dynamics of, and remedies for, postunification antisemitism and xenophobia, at least three areas of analysis influenced our selection of authors and chapters and the structure of this book.

1. The overall demographic distribution of behavior, attitudes, and voting patterns within the East and West German population.
2. Antisemitic and xenophobic milieus, movements, groups, and organizations;

ideology and discriminatory actions aimed at specific victim groups; the violence of such groups (against people, property, community facilities, and symbols); and, finally, the demographic profiles of the offenders.

3. The institutional, political, and societal background of postunification events, such as, for example, the perceptions and responses of decision-making bodies in government, administration, political parties, and the judiciary, as well as the substantial public reaction, expressed, for example, at public events, anti-Nazi counterdemonstrations, and vigils by hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of Germans in the East and the West. In addition, one has to take into account the opinions and actions of targets of resentment and violence, that is, of minorities and their communities and representatives. Finally, we have to consider the media's news coverage, including foreign public opinion and media reports.

Developments in each one of these areas should not be projected onto another, as each has its own structure and logical development. Aggressive, openly displayed antisemitism by certain fringe groups might very well increase considerably at a particular moment in time without necessarily signifying corresponding changes in the political system, the elite, or public opinion (Epstein 1993). Findings can vary depending on what methodological and theoretical framework and what comparative standards are chosen for the analysis.

In order to offer a complex picture of the situation since German unification and to document the profound changes taking place in Germany, we present recent articles based on qualitative and quantitative data that deal with central aspects of the aforementioned areas. The intention is to collect genuine historical, sociological, and political science research; to make comparisons; to give answers to the questions raised earlier; and to draw conclusions about issues of strong public interest. The sources on which these contributions are based include official statistics and polls; interviews with experts; media reports; analyses of secondary sources, documents, and literature; and ethnographic materials. We combined German and American perspectives using different sociological, political, and historical approaches and methods. The inclusion of different views and disciplines provides more objective and richer insights into recent research in and about Germany. It also gives readers a chance to compare findings and make up their own minds about the state of affairs. In any case, the contributors to this volume demonstrate that the issue at hand is more complex than some media reports and academic observers have suggested. Inappropriate, simplified, and overgeneralized analysis can lead to the wrong application of remedies and the failure of well-intended measures of prevention. In the worst case it is counterproductive and promotes what it pretends to avoid.

This volume is unique, even within the German-speaking world. It includes not only most recent survey and case study research about antisemitism and xenophobia (chapters 2–5) but also validated assessments of specific social forces, movements, groups, and organizations that propagate hate and prejudice (chapters 6–9). Responses from Germany, from the German Jewish community, and from the me-

dia abroad are included, as well as an analysis of the reactions and remedies to effectively overcome antisemitism and xenophobia (chapters 10–13). The volume ends with an appendix that contains an updated and detailed account of antisemitic incidents in united Germany between 1989–90 and 1994.

With the objective of assessing the origins of, the extent of, and the remedies to antisemitism and xenophobia in postunification Germany, the contributions are organized into three parts corresponding to the analytical distinctions between research areas described previously.

Part I explores empirical facts and findings regarding the origins and the extent of antisemitism and xenophobia in East and West Germany. Does the outburst of antisemitic and xenophobic violence after unification indicate persistent changes in the attitudes of Germans as a whole (chapter 2)? How are current attitudes toward Jews and minorities linked with the perception of the past? Can increased knowledge about and attitudes toward the Holocaust curb antisemitism (chapter 3)? How can the current levels of knowledge of, interest in, and emotional attachment to the Holocaust and remembrance (e.g., among student populations in East and West Germany) be compared (chap. 4)? Are extremist antidemocratic attitudes interrelated with antisemitism and hostility toward foreigners? Is German democracy stable enough to cope with these new threats (chapter 5)?

Part II examines the roots and motives of groups and organizations that propagate antisemitism and xenophobia. This part focuses on sources of prejudice and violence. Why have extreme right-wing rhetoric and symbols become so attractive to marginalized youth subcultures (chapter 6)? How strongly are antisemitism and xenophobia embedded in the programs and politics of extremist and right-wing parties, groups, and organizations (chapter 7)? Has unification sped up an increasing legitimization of reactionary elements of German political culture that relate to the Third Reich and the Holocaust, leading to the infiltration of a New Right discourse into the young intelligentsia of Germany in both East and West (chapter 8)? What are the main tools and arguments of revisionist propaganda, and how much of an inroad have they made into the public (chapter 9)?

Part III investigates national and international perceptions of, and reactions to, antisemitism and xenophobia. This part explores reactions and remedies to post-unification events. How did German society respond to rising violence and prejudice against Jews and foreigners (chapter 10)? Chapter 11 deals with the impact of unification on the largest Jewish community in united Berlin. What challenges confronted Jewish unity and how did the community respond? The next chapter gives a view from outside. How has the image of Germany changed in the U.S. media in light of postunification antisemitism and xenophobia (chapter 12)? The part ends with concluding remarks and outlines further research topics and questions (chapter 13), followed by a chronology of antisemitic and extreme right-wing events in Germany after unification in 1989/90 (appendix).

## NOTE

Parts of this chapter were translated from German by Allison Brown and Hermann Kurthen.

1. The fact that German police sources label incidents as having a “right-wing” background is not in every case evidence of neo-Nazi political motives or proof that “right-wing” incidents were planned and organized by such political groups. According to German police reports in 1992, the right-wing violent subculture represented 1,600 neo-Nazis and about 5,000 skinheads (the latter not including anti-racist Sharpskins and left-wing Redskins). The statistics do not report how many incidents and violent acts had spontaneous and local character involving turf fights, sexual jealousies, xenophobia, roving mobs, soccer hooligans, youth gangs, drunks, and unaffiliated individuals. Evidence from research and court trials suggest that a large portion of all reported incidents had a rather apolitical origin. During the height of violent anti-foreigner incidents in the first half of 1992, about 9% of 1,443 reported incidents were arson, 12% were attacks on person, and the rest were other offenses such as robbery, graffiti, and other property damage and threats, insults, and other forms of harassment. In 1992 8% of all violent right-wing attacks were directed against the police or other public agencies (see Merkl 1994: 445–46, 478, n. 39). The poor education, young age, and lower-class background of offenders point at weak social control in dysfunctional families and communities. Kids from these milieus tend to join youth subcultures and use shock, provocation, and violence as means of self-expression and identification. Labeling them without differentiation as incorrigible Nazi hoodlums plays into the hands of political extremists waiting to recruit them for their own purposes (see Merkl 1994: 452 ff.).