The Impact of World War Two on the Individual and Collective Memory of Germany and its Citizens

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Abstract: *The domination of twentieth century history by World War Two and its aftermath are still heavily analysed and debated today. Despite this vast amount of research, little has been written about the emotional effects and the subjective experience of the Germans during and postwar. Every aspect of peoples' lives was effected, thus creating a wealth of memory which can be used to analyse the emotional consequences of the war on the individual and on society. This piece of work looks at three main elements of postwar reaction and memory. 1.) The war's impact on gender relations and the family unit 2.) Ideological warfare, the return of soldiers, and the idea of victimhood 3.) The destruction of towns and cities and the subsequent impact on concepts of history and nationhood.*

Alon Confino provokingly once asked why the citizens of the town of Emden wanted to set up a tourist board in May 1945.[1] This poses many questions about the wider impact of World War Two upon Germany and its citizens. Essentially, whether the desire to set up a tourist board indicates that the war had not left deeper traces within German memory. As soon as the war ended there were many expectations, principally formulated by the Allies, regarding how

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[1] A. Confino, 'Dissonance, Normality, and the Historical Method: Why Did Some Germans Think of Tourism after May 8, 1945?' in R. Bessel & D. Schumann (eds) *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural Change and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 332.

they believed Germans should react to their defeat.[2] This resulted in a questioning of why the Germans themselves did not show remorse, at least in the 'expected' way. Confino suggests that as tourism played a principle role in the economy and patriotic ideology of the National Socialists, rebuilding the tourist industry was a way to 'capture the perceived good years of the Nazi past'.[3] Most people disassociated themselves with the political aspects of National Socialism, and instead 'redefined the pre-war years as positive in reference to employment, adequate nourishment, [*Kraft durch Freude*], and the order of political life'.[4] This raises questions regarding memory and society's desire to reconstruct the past.

The subject of memory is a complex one, with many components. Maurice Halbwachs published *The Social Frameworks of Memory* in 1925 which has informed much of the proceeding debate on memory; he himself was influenced strongly by Émile Durkheim's 1912 paper entitled *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Durkheim maintained that memory was entirely socially determined, with little or no influence from individual memory.[5] Halbwachs followed this line of thought, stating that to recollect an event was to 'recall the viewpoint of the social group', and that collective memory only changed when social bonds weaken, dissolve, or are replaced.[6] Halbwachs also stated that the collective memory of a social group is a reconfiguration of the past which occurs in order to maintain the social unit.[7] This also requires some discussion of trauma theory on the collective and individual memory, as it could be argued that World War Two was not just a memory, but an intense trauma.

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[2] See *Germany 1944: The British Soldier's Pocketbook*, (Kew: National Archives, 2006).
[3] Confino, 'Dissonance, Normality, and the Historical Method', 332.
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] J. Winter & E. Sivan, 'Setting the Framework' in J. Winter & E. Sivan (eds) *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 23.
[6] Winter & Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', 24.
[7] *Ibid.*, 6.

Roger Bastide interestingly poses the idea that collective memory is at the same time influencing and influenced by individuals; different individuals' contributions carry different weight, and silence (forced or chosen) carries no weight at all.[8] This is particularly interesting in reference to the notorious 'silence' of the German people in the aftermath of the war. I intend to look at three differing aspects of postwar Germany and analyse them in terms of memory. I will analyse gender relations, ideological warfare and the return of soldiers, and finally the impact of the destruction of complete towns and cities. Though this is only a small proportion of the areas impacted by the war, by discussing three differing spheres it will be possible to cover the issues around postwar memory in enough depth to illustrate the variety of the interpretation to a sufficient level.

> After '45 no one thought about confronting the past. *Everyone* thought about getting something on the stove so they could get their children something to eat, about rebuilding, clearing away the rubble ... But this is what one is told today, and strangely enough it's all from people who didn't live through those times [that they should have reacted more aggressively].[9]

This is an important point demonstrating that peoples' primary concern was with their own survival and not with the impact of the war upon the world and upon their own society. There are photographs of people knitting in the streets on burned out cars, and although this looks absurd, it clearly reflects a need to do something normal, in a world where normality no longer existed.[10] 'Keeping up every day routines regardless of disaster…is a tried and trusted method of preserving what is thought of as healthy human reason'.[11] Sabine Behrenbeck suggests that there was a conflict in wanting to remember one's own misfortunes but to forget

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[8] *Ibid.*, 27.

[9] S. Meyer & E. Schulze, *Wie wir das alles geschafft haben: Alleinstehende Frauen berichten über ihr Leben nach 1945* (Munich: Beck, 1984), 178. quoted in E. Heinemann 'The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's "Crisis Years" and West German National Identity', *American Historical Review*, 101, (1996), 354.

[10] A. Förster & B. Beck, 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and World War II: Can a Psychiatric Concept Help Us Understand Postwar Society?' in R. Bessel & D. Schumann (eds) *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural Change and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15.

[11] W.G. Sebald , *On the Natural History of Destruction,* translated by A. Bell, (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 42.

the pain Germany had inflicted on others.[12] Robert Moeller surmises that Germans were silent on the topic of their own responsibility for 'the crimes of National Socialism… because they talked so loudly about other legacies of the Third Reich and their own status as victims'.[13] Michael Hughes develops this argument by suggesting that 'the crimes were so horrific and the destruction so shattering that genuine reflection was painful', thus it was easier to forget, or to reminisce about their own victimhood, which in some way relativised the suffering of non-German victims.[14]

Every member of a society becomes a crucial and active participant in 'total war' and thus accepted gender stereotypes during and after World War Two became more fluid and were later questioned. The National Socialist ideology propagated the conservative view that women were expected to bear children and to look after the home. During and after the war, however, women made up the majority of the civilian population and thus had to step outside the home in order to keep society functioning.[15] There are three memory categories of women post-1945; women as victims of occupiers' aggression, women as rebuilders of an annihilated state (*Trümmerfrau*), and women as promiscuous in reference to the occupying forces, which was seen as indicative of a wider moral decay.[16]

The National Socialist Ministry of Propaganda proliferated many myths in order to maintain its ideology and to urge the country to fight to the bitter end. The Germans' had long held stereotypes of 'brutal, semi-human peoples of Asia' which were pushed fiercely onto the German population by the National Socialist administration, especially images of

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[12] S. Behrenbeck 'Between Pain and Silence: Remembering the Victims of Violence in Germany after 1949' in R. Bessel & D. Schumann (eds) *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural Change and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 39.
[13] R.G. Moeller, 'Germans as Victims?: Thoughts on a Post-Cold War History of World War II's Legacies', *History & Memory*, 17, (2005), 164.
[14] M.L. Hughes, *Shouldering the Burdens of Defeat: West Germany and the Reconstruction of Social Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 25.
[15] Heinemann, 'The Hour of the Woman', 365.
[16] *Ibid*., 354.

rape and of Soviet brutality.[17] Initially, the threat of rape was a political tool, to encourage men to protect women, children and, ultimately, their homeland. When the threat became a reality with the Soviet invasion and occupation of Berlin in 1945, it was women, rather than men who had to deal with the realisation of the propaganda. The nature of rape in the context of a devastated society means that comprehensive statistics are non-existent with estimates of the numbers of rapes varying from tens of thousands to 2 million.[18] *Eine Frau in Berlin*, published anonymously by a woman resident in Berlin during its occupation, details the experience of rape, the consequent rise in abortions and sexually transmitted diseases, and subsequently how women devised means by which they could reduce the negative impact of such experiences. Women would chose particular men to act as 'protectors' who in exchange for sex would help protect them from other unwanted advances and would also provide them with much-needed access to food: 'there's no question about it: I have to find a single wolf to keep away the pack'.[19] There was an immense outcry when the book was published in the 1950s as it was accused of 'besmirching the honour of German women', the author therefore decided not to let the book be republished during her lifetime, and only after her death in 2001 was it republished and the author identified.[20] The strong public backlash due to the break in the long-held silence of the events and experiences of women, shows the extent to which German society was not ready to deal with the realities that faced thousands of German women after the Second World War. After the initial events in 1945, there 'ceased to be references to rapes of women and instead turned into allusions to the rape of Germany'.[21]

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[17] *Ibid*., 364.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] Anonymous , *A Woman in Berlin*, translated by P. Boehm, (London: Virago Press, London, 2005), 85.
[20] A. Beevor, 'Introduction' to *A Woman in Berlin*, 3.
[21] Heinemann, 'The Hour of the Woman', 368-70.

The view of women who participated in 'prostitution' were seen by returning soldiers and others in society, as well as by the occupying forces, as lowering the moral standards of a whole nation, as shown in *Germany 1944: the British Soldier's Pocketbook*:

> Under the shock of defeat standards of personal honour, already undermined by the Nazis, will sink still lower. Numbers of German women will be willing, if they can get the chance, to make themselves cheap for what they can get out of you.[22]

Women were silenced by the slander they received from returning men who threatened their wives with violence, beat them and shaved their heads for 'collaborating with the enemy'.[23] Richard Bessel states that 'it is an open question whether shame and anger were directed more at the German women who allegedly had behaved in an "unworthy" manner or at the German men who had been unable to do anything about it'.[24] The divide between men and women further widened as women felt that they were being punished for the behaviour of German soldiers abroad.[25] There was a common belief that 'fraternizers' did not just prostitute themselves but made a mockery of the sacrifices of German soldiers: forty years later, a German veteran claimed still to be haunted by the words of an American serviceman: '"The German soldier fought for six years; the German woman only five minutes"'.[26] Whether this is true is another question, many would answer that women had no choice in their actions, with survival being their main concern.[27] However, in a society looking to resurrect their moral code after an amoral war, women were an easy target. This was then translated into silence and sexual conservatism in the 1950s which, according to Dagmar Herzog, 'served as a crucial strategy for managing the memory of mass murder'.[28] The discussion of the rape of German women is still not forthcoming, although the republishing

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[22] *Germany 1944: The British Soldier's Pocketbook*, 31.
[23] H.-M. Teo, 'The Continuum of Sexual Violence in Occupied Germany, 1945-9', *Women's History Review*, 5, (1996), 209.
[24] R. Bessel, 'Hatred after War: Emotion and the Postwar History of East Germany', *History & Memory*, 17, (2005), 205.
[25] Anonymous, A *Woman in Berlin*, 158.
[26] Heinemann, 'The Hour of the Woman', 381-2.
[27] Anonymous, A *Woman in Berlin*, 141.
[28] D. Herzog, 'Sexuality, Memory, Morality', *History & Memory,* 17, (2005), 242.

of *Eine Frau in Berlin* and the release of an international film in 2008 directed by Max Färberböck may have come some way in ending the silence. The use of film and literature as a medium for discussion allows women not to feel guilt for their actions, but to discuss and analyse them within the unique context of Germany at the time.

Women's history was appropriated by the new West German state, which indicates how history is translated into collective memory; the collective memory of the state and of politics. The *Trümmerfrau* are a perfect example of how the image of women re-building Germany, one stone at a time, was used to propagate a new national identity. These same women later found that their experiences were translated into cliché and their labour no longer wanted.[29] Atina Grossman believes that the 'mass rapes of 1945 inscribed indelibly on many German women's memory a sullen conviction of their own victimisation and their superiority over the vanquisher who came to liberate them…mass rapes confirmed Germans' identity…as victims of *Missbrauch'*.[30] As rape is the lowest of crimes perpetrated against those weaker than oneself, it is easy to see how the idea was co-opted by the collective memory to indicate Germany's victimhood, thus individual memory was silenced and lost.

Wolfgang Schivelbusch began analysing the effect of defeat on losing nations in *The Culture of Defeat* in 2003. Most of his theory concerns World War One, which differs from this topic as the Second World War was strongly ideological. Schivelbusch's ideas however, are still relevant in explaining the apparent lack of remorse from the German postwar nation. He states that 'the overthrow of the old regime and its subsequent scapegoating for the nation's defeat are experienced as a kind of victory', thus explaining why the period of

[29] Heinemann, 'The Hour of the Woman', 377-8.
[30] A. Grossman, 'A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Soviet Occupation Soldiers' in N.A. Dombrowski (eds), *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted With or Without Consent* (New York: Garland, 1999), 123.

depression after defeat is shorter than expected.[31] Postwar opinion polls showed that most Germans believed that soldiers had only done their duty; furthermore by the 1950s, the Allies had confirmed that it was Hitler and his officials who were guilty of misconduct.[32] There is a general literary consensus that Germans felt that they were victims of National Socialism, though it is difficult to decipher to what extent this is due to the lack of success which was constantly promised to them by Hitler, or due to the postwar revelations regarding the brutality of the regime.

In the wake of the Second World War, alongside the violence of rape, 'suicide became almost a mass phenomenon'.[33] Hitler, Himmler, Goring, Thierack, Ley, Goebbels, less well-known National Socialist officials, and thousands of civilians all committed suicide as the Allies advanced.[34] An extreme example is the town of Demmin in Pomerania, where over 700 people committed suicide (approximately five per cent of the population).[35] Suicide appeared as the only solution to the many who believed whole-heartedly in the propaganda and ideology of the National Socialist regime; 'in the face of defeat collective death was the only way to survive because it guaranteed mortality'.[36] The suicides of leading National Socialists were reported at the time in the international press, however, they were not then analysed at a personal or civilian level until Christian Goeschel published *Suicide in Nazi Germany,* in 1999. This delay in real analysis is reflected across all aspects of postwar culture. Goeschel analysed the numerous reasons as to why so many Germans committed suicide; fear of justice, revenge, of the future and fear of Allied troops and occupation authorities; fear of rape and of death. The guilt and shame brought about from actively

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[31] W. Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning and Recovery*, translated by C. Jefferson (London: Granta Books, 2003), 10-1.

[32] Moeller, 'Germans as Victims', 158.

[33] Bessel, 'Hatred after War', 200.

[34] M. Geyer, '"There is a Land Where Everything is Pure: Its Name Is Land of Death". Some Observations on Catastrophic Nationalism' in G. Eghigian & M.P. Berg (eds), *Sacrifice and National Belonging in Twentieth-Century Germany* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2002), 137.

[35] *Ibid*.

[36] Geyer, '"There is a Land Where Everything is Pure: Its Name Is Land of Death"', 137.

participating or even from just observing the crimes of National Socialism, and the desperation caused by the death of family members, loss of homes, lack of food, and a lack of stability. Many civilian suicides occurred as the Russians approached, which preceded the mass suicides of the National Socialist officials.[37] There are also examples of women committing suicide before or after being raped by Russian soldiers. For example: in her diary after 6 May 1945, Andreas-Friedrich notes: '"Honour lost, all lost", a bewildered father says and hands a rope to his daughter who has been raped twelve times. Obediently she goes and hangs herself from the nearest window sash'.[38] This idea of a complete degradation of Germany and of the self, with no apparent future, led many to commit suicide; the idea that society had changed so dramatically, meant they could no longer be a part of it.[39]

During the Third Reich, death was highly idealised in propaganda, this placed the feeling of loss, post First World War, within a meaningful context. This combined with a 'distinctly masculine way of dying' led to the *Selbstmorde* of National Socialist leaders being viewed as 'heroic self-sacrifices'.[40] For example, in the radio broadcast on the 1 May 1945 Hitler was said to have died 'fighting for Germany until the last gasp'.[41] General Jodl 'insisted that Hitler has to be dead because it was the only way his dreams and aspirations could survive defeat'.[42] Joseph Goebbels commissioned films which glorified death and shamed those who did not share this view, the purpose of which was 'to produce a memorial so that the living would renew the fight whenever they recalled the past'.[43] In the months around the end of the war it was common for people to carry cyanide capsules and Hitler is said to have given his secretaries cyanide pills as parting gifts.[44] This aura of death as well as

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[37] C. Goeschel, 'Suicide at the End of the Third Reich', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41, (2006), 159.
[38] Teo, 'The Continuum of Sexual Violence in Occupied Germany, 1945-9', 199.
[39] Goeschel, 'Suicide at the End of the Third Reich', 172.
[40] *Ibid.*, 156.
[41] *Ibid.*, 158.
[42] Geyer, '"There is a Land Where Everything is Pure: Its Name Is Land of Death"', 138.
[43] *Ibid.*, 140.
[44] Goeschel, 'Suicide at the End of the Third Reich', 160.

the stories of the acts of the Red Army helped to create an environment of death and violence, the consequences of which became a daily challenge.

When men returned from Prisoner of War camps they had to deal with the complete loss of ideology and their place within that ideology as ultra-masculine protectors of family and country. Coupled with this, they had to deal with the images they had seen on the front line. Alice Förster and Birgit Beck state that, 'following severe, life-threatening trauma, psychological problems, particularly Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, will develop in more than 50 per cent of cases and can persist for long periods of time'.[45] The desire to construct a collective memory of overcoming adversity and building a new future 'left little room in the West for the psychologically disturbed veteran who continued to relive the trauma of a war of mass death, the disabled soldier whose family bore the burden of rehabilitative services not adequately covered by the state, or the expellee who by the late 1950s was still living in substandard housing'.[46] If people who suffered at the hands of National Socialism, whether through their own doing or not, were not being looked after by the new state then this poses a question about whether they were indeed being punished, and if so, if they felt they were deserving of their punishment.

This idea of victimhood has been strongly debated throughout the postwar world. Memorials were erected to the 'lost *Heimat*', and people publically mourned during 'The Peoples Day of Mourning' for all those who suffered; this meant categorising Jews and fallen soldiers as 'victims' of a general period of wartime and terror.[47] Returning soldiers would use published 'memoirs' to confirm their own memories and to simplify the chaos of images they

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[45] Förster & Beck, 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and World War II', 21.
[46] Moeller, 'Germans as Victims?', 164.
[47] *Ibid*., 159.

brought back from the front line.[48] Wolfgang Borchert's *Draußen vor der Tür*, written in 1946 and broadcast on radio in 1947, deals with the return of an unwanted soldier, whose family has arranged a new life where there is no room for him.[49] Given the general desire not to talk about the problems caused by the war it may seem somewhat surprising that this work was broadcast so early in the postwar period. I would propose that this is due to its subject matter, not of the war, or of National Socialism, but of the concerns of society, the family and a desire to return to normality. Contrastingly, Heinrich Böll's *Der Engel schwieg,* which confronts the complete desolation of Germany, was written at the end of the 1940s but not published until 1992 as it was 'deemed too much for the German population at the time to deal with'.[50]

The idea of how to commemorate, if at all, the National Socialist past is a problem that is still facing Germany today. The East dealt with the problem by according no significance to the buildings of National Socialism, whereas the West took a more fluid approach. Alfred Kernd'l was the strongest advocate for preserving traces of the National Socialist past believing that the 'Germans failure to confront their own past can be measured by the continuing destruction of its traces'.[51] Only after the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 did the Holocaust begin to be discussed and to re-enter the active collective memory.[52] Lea Rosh began planning and fundraising for a Holocaust memorial in Berlin in 1989, yet it was only erected between 2003 and 2004. This indicates how difficult it has been for the collective German consciousness to deal with the atrocities committed under the Third Reich.

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[48] S. Hynes, 'Personal Narratives and Commemoration' in J. Winter & E. Sivan (eds) *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 207.
[49] P. Sorlin, 'Children as War Victims in Postwar European Cinema' in J. Winter & E. Sivan (eds) *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 119.
[50] Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 10.
[51] B. Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 133.
[52] Winter & Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', 31.

Between July 1944 and May 1945 more German soldiers and civilians died than in the preceding five years.[53] Estimates about the housing stock vary from town to town, but approximately 7.5 million people were made homeless.[54] With the loss of housing on this scale not only was there a loss of immediate shelter, but there was also a loss of history. This later became a battle ground for left-wing terrorist organisations who wanted to preserve the history of Germany, and so occupied old tenement buildings in protest at their removal. History played a very important part in National Socialist ideology as did the idea of self-determination, with the Third Reich venerated as the next great empire of history. Winifred Sebald proposed that total destruction was not 'the horrifying end of a collective aberration, but something more like the first stage of a brave new world'.[55] Schivelbusch, likewise, believes that 'the conception of war as a purifying and renewing force is the most important legacy granted to the defeated'.[56] Sebald suggests that the Germans were not sorry at the loss of their cities and instead were relieved at the loss of their 'historical burden'.[57] The image of the *Trümmerfrau* was important to German national conscience, as it showed Germany being rebuilt and creating a new identity for itself that somehow connected Germans with the past before the defeat.[58] As Moeller recounts, 'success was measured in reconstructed cities, economic recovery, the provision of adequate housing, and a sense of security'.[59] The vast majority of literature in Germany about the war, up until the late 1990s, was primarily about the miraculous rebuilding of the cities not about the reality of the horrors, as this gave the Germans something to be proud of, rather than encouraging a sense of collective responsibility and analysis.[60]

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[53] Goeschel, 'Suicide at the End of the Third Reich', 153.
[54] Förster & Beck, 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and World War II', 28.
[55] Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 6.
[56] Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 29.
[57] Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 12-3.
[58] Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, 31.
[59] Moeller, 'Germans as Victims?', 162.
[60] Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 8.

Sebald wrote primarily in reference to the air raids on German cities by the Allied forces as he believed that this was absent from German collective memory, that it 'obviously did not register on the sensory experience of the survivors still living on the scene of the catastrophe'.[61] He also remarked that when the events were spoken about, the language resorted to clichés as though the speakers could not find the words themselves to explain something without precedent.[62] When the bombing of Dresden was written about by Max Seydewitz in 1955, it 'established the equivalence of the crimes of the Allies and the crimes of the Nazis'.[63] Sebald referred to the German's attitude towards this as 'collective amnesia'.[64] However, Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan refer to extreme trauma beyond the control of individual memory which is only then remembered via certain stimuli.[65] For example, Sebald recollects stories of women carrying the remains of children in suitcases after the air attack on Hamburg, which is clearly the product of extreme trauma.[66] Even when *On the Natural History of Destruction* was originally published in German as *Luftkrieg und Literatur* in 1999, Sebald said: 'to this day, any concern with the real scenes of horror during the catastrophe still has an aura of the forbidden about it, even of voyeurism, something that these notes of mine have not entirely been able to avoid'.[67]

The family unit bore the brunt of problems caused by the war and its aftermath and, thus, 'the postwar German family (or what was left of it) was fixated on conformity, on not standing out'.[68] Most children remembered that their parents never talked about their experience in the Third Reich.[69] Members of families did not talk about their involvement in

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[61] *Ibid*., 5.
[62] *Ibid*., 24.
[63] M. Seydewitz, *Zerstörung und Wiederaufbau von Dresden* (Belin: Kongress Verlag, 1955) referenced in Moeller, 'Germans as Victims?, 162.
[64] Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 10.
[65] Winter and Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', 15.
[66] Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, 89.
[67] *Ibid.*, 98.
[68] Herzog, 'Sexuality, Memory, Morality', 242.
[69] Förster & Beck, 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and World War II', 34.

National Socialism, as that would betray the collective memory of victimhood, instead the postwar family stressed that 'familial and sexual conservatism were timeless German values that transcended political regime changes'.[70] 'Diaries and interviews with children of Nazi perpetrators show evidence of avoidance and difficulties in expressing emotions'.[71] As Halbwachs suggests, memories are passed through society via verbal exchange, and if the way of recollecting the past is through silence, then this is also transmitted, and becomes a mode of remembrance in itself. However, the younger generation were better able to judge the events of National Socialism and the war as they were further removed from the trauma of the events themselves.[72] This has led to the suggestion that the 1968 student protests and the subsequent rise in left-wing terrorism were evidence of the Germans finally reacting to Hitler's legacy.[73]

According to Confino, tourism is about subjective experience concerned with the small normal day-to-day activities of everyday life.[74] In this way, the viewer removes themselves from the grand narratives of history and becomes an individual with personal experience rather than the member of a guilty whole.[75] This would go some way in explaining why the citizens of Emden wanted to set up a tourist board as quickly as they did; not only would it signal a return to normality, but it would also remove the citizens from the greater context of World War Two. I would suggest that if a country and a population are not vocal about their feelings, this does not mean that feelings are absent or that they are absolving themselves of guilt. I would instead suggest that the impact of World War Two was so total and so catastrophic, that the Germans firstly could not comprehend or find the words to express the new situation in which they found themselves, but also that they were trying to

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[70] Herzog, 'Sexuality, Memory, Morality', 245.
[71] Behrenbeck, 'Between Pain and Silence', 23.
[72] Sorlin, 'Children as War Victims in Postwar European Cinema', 108.
[73] The most notable example is J. Becker, *Hitler's Children* (London: Pickwick, 1989).
[74] Confino, 'Dissonance, Normality, and the Historical Method', 333.
[75] *Ibid*.

deal with the events internally. Behrenbeck stipulates that the war caused the Germans to lose their national narrative which would have helped them come to terms with the past; 'the postwar years can be seen as a latent period when German society became aware of what had happened and suffered a loss of meaning'.[76] There is also a sense that it is still too soon to be analysing the effects of the Third Reich, the war and the resulting damage, as historical events. The events and memories are still very much part of the modern consciousness and if Halbwachs is to be believed, memory only becomes history when the social group ceases to share their experiences.[77] I would suggest that the events are too recent to be considered history or for the impact of the war to be seen as complete. As stated at Nuremberg: 'A thousand years will pass and still this guilt of Germany will not have been erased'.[78] If you transpose the word 'guilt' for the many feelings Germans have about the war then I think you may arrive some way toward the truth.

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[76] Behrenbeck, 'Between Pain and Silence', 40.

[77] See Halbwachs' definitions of autobiographical memory, historical memory, history, and collective memory in M. Halbwachs , *On Collective Memory*, edited and translated by L.A. Coser, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[78] Nuremberg Trial XXVI, 527, XII, 13 referenced in E. Davidson, *The Death and Life of Germany: An Account of the American Occupation* (New York: Knopf, 1959), 115.

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