

Margit V. Wunsch Gaarmann

The War in Our Backyard
The Bosnia and Kosovo Wars
through the Lens of the German Print Media



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Introduction

“...They are herding them to the concentration camp” (“...Sie treiben sie ins KZ”) was the headline chosen by the German tabloid *BILD* on their front page on 1 April 1999. A picture of a long refugee trek, with hundreds of desolate Kosovo-Albanians carrying their few remaining belongings following the Serbian ethnic cleansing that had unfolded in Kosovo since 1998, accompanied this headline.¹ The context for this story was a statement made by the German Minister of Defence, Rudolf Scharping (SPD), who had claimed that ‘genocide’ was unfolding and that concentration camps existed in Kosovo. Scharping had used this argumentation to justify the first German engagement in active combat since the Second World War, which had begun mere days earlier, on 24 March 1999.

Aside from *BILD*, a number of German broadsheets including *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Welt*, *die tageszeitung* and *Frankfurter Rundschau* reported Scharping’s claim of ‘genocide’ occurring in Kosovo.² Notably, the headlines and articles were less sensational, though the message conveyed was the same: “Scharping: Strong Indication of Concentration Camps existing in Kosovo” (*Welt*)³ or “[...]Scharping is also speaking of genocide” (*FR*)⁴.

1 Anonymous: ...Sie treiben sie ins KZ. In: *BILD*, 01.04.1999, p. 1.

2 Martin S. Lambeck / Martina Fietz: Scharping: Starke Hinweise auf Existenz von Konzentrationslagern im Kosovo. In: *Die Welt*, 01.04.1999, p. 1; Alfred Dregger: Den Krieg beenden. In: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* [henceforth *FAZ*], 06.04.1999, p. 16; Markus Franz: Fischer: „Jetzt nicht wackeln“. In: *die tageszeitung* [henceforth *ta3*], 01.04.1999, p. 1; dpa/rtr/ap: Albanien prangert „barbarische“ Gewalt an. In: *Frankfurter Rundschau* [henceforth *FR*], 29.03.1999, p. 1; ap/afp/rtr/dpa: Nato bombt an Ostern weiter. In: *FR*, 01.04.1999, p. 3.

3 Lambeck und Fietz: Scharping: Starke Hinweise auf Existenz von Konzentrationslagern im Kosovo. In: *Die Welt* [Henceforth *Welt*], 01.04.1999, p. 1.

4 Monika Kappus: Die leicht geneigte Haltung eines Lastenträgers. In: *FR*, 01.04.1999, p. 1.

However one week later, these claims could not be substantiated and indeed were disproven by photographic evidence of the alleged concentration camp site taken by *Bundeswehr*-drones. Significantly, none of the papers that had quoted Scharping, rectified the error, leaving the German public with the lasting impression that concentration camps existed in Kosovo and that elements of the Holocaust were re-occurring in Europe over fifty years after the Second World War had ended.⁵

Was this a singular example of bad journalism or do more examples corroborate this impression of fragmentary research, poor reporting and hysterical headlines? Were allusions to the Second World War concertedly used by politicians and newspapers to present their argument regarding German involvement in the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo? These questions form the crux of this book, which analyses the German print media coverage of the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s.

In the early 1990s, Europe found itself in a whirlwind of political changes: the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall in the same year, Germany's unification in 1990, as well as the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In this larger context, right in Europe's backyard, Yugoslavia descended into a decade of violence that enveloped Slovenia (1991), Croatia (1991–1995), Bosnia (1992–1995) and later Kosovo (1998–1999), all with a varying degree of intensity. This book examines the last two wars in detail. Bosnia had a pre-war population of approximately 4.3 million. The bitter four-year war was marked by war crimes and displaced more than 2.2 million people according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).⁶ The death toll of the war remains disputed, ranging between the more recent estimate of 102,000⁷ and initial approximations of 200,000⁸. Several years after Bosnia had been pacified, violent conflict intensified in Kosovo. Until the cessation of violence in June 1999, there had been approximately 10,000 fatalities (an

5 For a detailed discussion of this topic, see p. 241.

6 *Scott Pohl / Naveed Hussain*: Jolie Highlights the Continuing Suffering of the Displaced in Bosnia. <http://www.unhcr.org/print/4bbb422512.html> (accessed 20.08.2014), and *Mark Cutts*: The Humanitarian Operation in Bosnia, 1992–95: Dilemmas of Negotiating Humanitarian Access. UNHCR Policy Research Unit, Working Paper No.8. <http://www.unhcr.org/3ae6a0c58.pdf> (accessed 20.08.2014).

7 Ewa Tabeau / Jakub Bijak: War-related Deaths in the 1992–1995 Armed Conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Critique of Previous Estimates and Recent Results. In: *European Journal of Population* 21,2 (2010), pp. 187–215, here p. 207.

8 Nedim Dervišbegović: Revised Death Toll for Bosnian War.. http://www.bosnia.org.uk/news/news_body.cfm?newsid=1985 (accessed 20.08.2014).

upper estimate) and 90% of Kosovo's population of 2 million people had been forced to leave their homes.⁹

Meanwhile, back in Germany, the average citizen was trying to make sense of the Balkan conflicts, turning to the national media as a main source of information. Why had violence erupted? What armed forces were engaged in conflict? Who were the victims and who the perpetrators? Was Germany getting involved? If so, why? The international coverage of the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo is frequently associated with the famous quote "the first casualty when war comes, is truth" which is attributed to the American Senator Hiram Johnson, though the Greek philosopher Aeschylus has also been credited. The common perception reinforced by this quotation is that rather than reporting 'the truth', 'the media' manipulated public opinion to support the controversial international interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo.¹⁰

However, none of these claims are substantiated by elaborations how 'the media' manipulated, to what extent its impact on public opinion is measurable, what important information was concealed and to what effect. Phillip Knightley's monograph *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo* is one such example. Knightley – an avid opponent of the NATO-intervention in Kosovo – claims that the alliance had a monopoly of information, which he argues NATO used to manipulate the media in its favour. However, most of his claims remain unsupported. For example he posits that NATO-members had a "[...] meticulously prepared system of propaganda and media control [...] swung into action [...]]" as the bombardment of Serbia and Kosovo commenced in March 1999. Thus Knightley suggests that all media outlets in the 19 member-states, ranging from Turkey to Canada, acted in coordination without explaining how this was done or who may have spearheaded such an endeavour. Without

9 Mark Webber: The Kosovo War: A Recapitulation. In: *International Affairs* 85,3 (2009), pp.447–459, here p.451, and U.S. State Department: Erasing History: Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo, May 1999. <http://balkanwitness.glypx.com/erasing-history.pdf> (accessed 20.08.2014).

10 Some literature that proportes this claim include: Thomas Deichmann: From "Never Again War" to "Never Again Auschwitz": Dilemmas of German Media Policy in the War against Yugoslavia. In: Philip Hammond / Edward Herman (eds): *Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo Crisis*. London: Pluto 2000, pp.153–163; Barry Lituchy: Media Deception and the Yugoslav Civil War. In: Clark Ramsey (ed.): *NATO in the Balkans: Voices of Opposition*. New York: International Action Center 1998; Heather Cottin / Alvin Dorman: War Propaganda Aimed at Jewish Opinion. In: Ramsey Clark (ed.): *NATO in the Balkans: Voices of Opposition*. New York: International Action Center 1998, pp.210–219; Michel Collon: *Media Lies and the Conquest of Kosovo: NATO's Prototype for the Next Wars of Globalization*. New York: Unwritten History 2007; Jürgen Elsässer: *Nie wieder Krieg ohne uns: Das Kosovo und die neue deutsche Geopolitik*. Hamburg: Konkret 1999.

giving sources for his claims, he vaguely stated that pressure was exerted “...in NATO-countries to publish atrocity stories from Kosovo...”¹¹ While Knightley’s claims could be plausible, his unsubstantiated assertions render his work unreliable. Nonetheless, it must be noted that no research has been produced disproving these wide-spread allegations of NATO manipulating information during the Kosovo War. Consequently, such charges suggesting intrigue call for an in-depth examination of this coverage, which this book offers by examining a wide range of examples of the German press.

Analysing the textual and visual coverage of the violence in Bosnia and Kosovo in nine German national publications – namely *Die Welt*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), *Frankfurter Rundschau* (FR), *die tageszeitung* (taz), *BILD-Zeitung*, *Der Spiegel*, *Junge Freiheit* (JF), *Konkret* and *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (AJW) – forms the basis of this book. These newspapers reflect the political spectrum from far-right (JF) to far-left (Konkret), while simultaneously including broadsheets (*Welt*, FAZ, FR, taz), a tabloid (BILD), a news-magazine (*Spiegel*), and a weekly newspaper targeting Germany’s Jewish population (AJW). This selection encapsulates the plurality of views present in German society. Consequently, rather than referring to the blanket term of the ‘German media’, the analysis of various distinct publications enables a differentiated interpretation. AJW, a weekly, later bi-weekly cultural newspaper published by the Central Council of Jews in Germany (*Zentralrat der deutschen Juden*), did not aim to report on daily political events. Rather it picked up on certain topics when they impacted Jewish life around the world. Consequently, AJW did not always report on the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo with much detail, or at all. Nonetheless, the coverage is an important perspective for the analysis conducted in this book and will therefore be drawn upon in chapters 3 and 8.

In the course of this analysis, it is not my intention to test the content of the German press coverage according to veracity or against a universally accepted narrative of events – which rarely exists in any case. Rather, I present and analyse what the publications reported and how certain interpretations and viewpoints were communicated. In addition, analysing the German press’ visual content – in the form of pictures and cartoons – proves to be a valuable facet of the German press’ reporting. Both types of visual material offer a distinctive medium that can express more subtle viewpoints which are at times left unsaid in texts. Moreover, cartoons feature a format in which

11 Phillip Knightley: *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 2002, p. 508.

opinion can be expressed much more bluntly than in text. The nature of caricatures demands the condensation of complex subject matters to effectively communicate a desired message. The reliance on stereotypes in this process reveals important nuances regarding a publication's views of a conflict as well as the actors involved, and is therefore also a crucial element of an in-depth media analysis.

The examination of the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo through the prism of selected German publications offers a unique narrative of recent events that differs distinctly from the more common diplomatic history. A press analysis exposes the interpretations presented to the broad public as the conflicts unfolded, which were tailored to a non-specialist, yet often targeted readership and written without the benefit of hindsight. While of course television was an omnipresent factor in the news cycle of the 1990s, the print media nevertheless played a crucial role in informing the public, as well as initiating and reporting on important debates. Studying the coverage of this near decade of violence and warfare in nine publications demands a condensation of the period. Consequently this book focuses on three key timeframes from each war. The first part – consisting of three chapters – examines the Bosnian War, studying the initial phase of the conflict, the Srebrenica Massacre, and lastly the international involvement which ended the immediate violence, namely the diplomatic negotiations in Dayton, USA. The second part of the book analyses the Kosovo War and also consists of three chapters. Again, the early phase of the conflict is studied first, followed by a chapter on an incident of mass violence in Račak. The last chapter scrutinises the international involvement in the region that ended the violence, namely the early period of NATO's bombardment of Serbia and Kosovo.

The German press is a particularly interesting case study for two reasons. Firstly, as will be elaborated momentarily, both conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo were instrumental in shaping Germany's post-unification foreign policy. Having accomplished the unification of East and West Germany in 1990, the country which had become the demographically largest in Western Europe faced questions regarding its role within the European Community (EC)/European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the world in general. While Chancellor Helmut Kohl had assured the world that Germany's post-unification future would be inextricably linked to Europe,¹² it

12 Kristina Spohr: German Unification: Between Official History, Academic Scholarship, and Political Memoirs. In: *The Historical Journal* 43,3 (2000), pp. 869–888, here p. 878.

remained unclear how this would reflect in the realities of the country's foreign policy when confronted with war in Europe. Secondly, the violence in Bosnia, which some observers termed 'genocidal', raised questions about the extent to which collective memory of the Holocaust should influence Germany's foreign policy towards the Balkans. How would Germany negotiate the politics of collective memory and the duties of membership in a military alliance when faced with the deployment of soldiers into active combat, as was the case in Kosovo? Such matters naturally consumed the country's policy-makers. However, analysing how they were conveyed to the German public in the national press and to what extent these larger discourses coloured the print media's coverage of the violence in Bosnia and Kosovo offers a new understanding regarding the debates that engaged the broad public and what arguments they were presented with.

Politics of Memory: Collective Memory of the Holocaust

The emergence, evolution and transformation of collective memory in post-war West-Germany has been widely covered, both in German and English language literature.¹³ A general consensus exists in the literature that 'generational memory' dominated the collective memory of the Holocaust, which is exposed most clearly in the dichotomy between the adults of the 'Adenauer Era' (1949–1963) and their children who belonged to the '1968-generation'. The latter are often linked to the student movement at German universities in the late 1960s, from where the generation derives its name, though the student movement was not an exclusively German phenomenon. A third generational shift occurred in the early 1990s, when an 'internationalisation' of the responsibility for the Holocaust developed.

The 'Adenauer era', named after Germany's first post-war Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, was marked by two distinct attitudes: "[...] 'to put this chapter behind us', [paralleled with...] an awareness of responsibility [...]"¹⁴ Jeffrey Herf elaborates the argument by claiming that a '*Schlussstrichmentalität*'

13 Wolfgang Bergem (ed.): *Die NS-Diktatur im deutschen Erinnerungsdiskurs*. Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2003; Jeffrey Alexander et al.: *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press 2004; Sabine Bode: *Die deutsche Krankheit – German Angst*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 2006; Hans-Joachim Hahn: *Repräsentationen des Holocaust: Zur westdeutschen Erinnerungskultur seit 1979*. Heidelberg: Winter 2005; Dan Michman: *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945–2000: German Strategies and Jewish Responses*. New York: Peter Lang 2002; Charles Maier: *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1997.

14 Michman: *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany*, p. 1.

dominated the immediate post-war years and that the German people urgently desired to ‘draw a line’ and forget about the past.¹⁵ Bernhard Giesen largely agrees with this conclusion, claiming that the Adenauer era was dominated by a ‘coalition of silence’ during which German society was overshadowed by a ‘moral numbness’ regarding the recent past. He contends that Germans were aware of their responsibility for the Holocaust, but were unable to face both the resulting trauma as well as the victims so shortly after the Second World War.¹⁶

This changed with the next generation, the colloquially-named ‘1968-generation,’ which called for – amongst other demands – a more public awareness of Nazi crimes.¹⁷ In his book *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany’s 1968 Generation and the Holocaust*, Hans Kundnani elaborates that the slogan “*Nie wieder Krieg*”, or “never again war” became the utmost paradigm and the most important lesson from the National-Socialist past for the 1968-generation. Many individuals later found their political home in the pacifist Green Party, which was founded in 1980. Amongst them were two prominent “68-ers”, Joschka Fischer, Germany’s Foreign Minister between 1998 and 2005, and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a German and French politician and Member of the European Parliament since 1994.¹⁸

This shift in generational memory implicated a gradually increasing public responsibility for the Holocaust. Historians have regarded the ‘*Betroffenheitsdiskurs*’ or ‘discourse of dismay’ which dominated the memory culture of the 1980s and early 1990s as the climax of German collective memory. A deep, all-encompassing shame defined Germany’s interpretation of its recent past, which had not existed thus far.¹⁹ The centrality of the victims in this new discourse relegated Germany to be the ‘country of perpetrators’,

15 Jeffrey Herf: *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany*. In: Dan Michman (ed.): *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945–2000*. New York: Peter Lang 2002, pp. 9–30, here p. 11.

16 Bernhard Giesen: *The Trauma of Perpetrators: The Holocaust as the Traumatic Reference of German National Identity*. In: Jeffrey Alexander et al. (eds): *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press 2004, pp. 112–154, here pp. 116–117.

17 Bode: *Die deutsche Krankheit*, p. 135; Ludger Volmer: *Die Grünen und die Außenpolitik – ein schwieriges Verhältnis: Eine Ideen- Programm- und Ereignisgeschichte grüner Außenpolitik*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot 1998; Hans Kundnani: *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany’s Generation and the Holocaust*. London: Hurst & Company 2009, pp. 1–5.

18 Kundnani: *Utopia or Auschwitz*.

19 Darius Zifonun: *Gedenken und Identität: Der deutsche Erinnerungsdiskurs*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus 2004, p. 152; Hahn, *Repräsentationen des Holocaust*, pp. 67–68; Julia Kölsch: *Politik und Gedächtnis: Die Gegenwart der NS-Vergangenheit als politisches Sinnstiftungspotenzial*. In: Bergem (ed.): *Die NS-Diktatur im deutschen Erinnerungsdiskurs*. Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 137–150, here p. 147.

causing communal guilt and shame to transcend the collective memory of the Holocaust.²⁰

After this peak, various authors have argued that an internationalisation of the Holocaust memory and Nazi crimes in general occurred starting in the early 1990s. Lothar Probst traces this tendency in historical research, which he argues increasingly considered the role of Swiss banks, the French Vichy Regime and the analysis of various countries which had supported the persecution of the Jews and other enemies of the Nazis. Moreover, the refusal of certain European neighbours to admit Jewish refugees from Nazi-Germany was a prominent theme.²¹ Here a shift occurred from blaming solely Germany to including other international actors without diminishing Germany's responsibility. Bernhard Giesen identifies this progression as a 'metaphysical guilt', which applies to all human beings, not just Germans.²² As a result, the historical burden stemming from the Holocaust began to shape and influence global discourse on international human rights and international tribunals as well as humanitarian-motivated military interventions.²³ As the Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer summarises, "the Holocaust has [...] become the symbol for genocide, for racism, for hatred of foreigners, and of course for anti-Semitism [...]"²⁴ This in turn has led to repeated comparisons between the Holocaust and other international crimes against humanity.

As this short excursion has demonstrated, the collective memory of the Holocaust in West-Germany evolved in various stages. Consequently, the conclusion that the Second World War and collective memory thereof influenced the German media coverage of the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, as other media studies have deduced, must be considered with more discernment. While various other studies have concluded that the Holocaust influenced the language and interpretation of various international publications in their coverage of the violence in Bosnia and Kosovo,²⁵ the discourse of collective

20 Zifonun: *Gedenken und Identität*, p. 152; Hahn: *Repräsentationen des Holocaust*, p. 68.

21 Lothar Probst: Der Holocaust – eine neue Zivilreligion für Europa? In: Bergem (ed.): *Die NS-Diktatur im deutschen Erinnerungsdiskurs*, pp. 227–238, here p. 230.

22 Giesen: The Trauma of Perpetrators, pp. 144–145.

23 Wolfgang Bergem: Barbarei als Sinnstiftung? Das NS-Regime in Vergangenheitspolitik und Erinnerungskultur der Bundesrepublik. In: Id. (ed.): *Die NS-Diktatur im deutschen Erinnerungsdiskurs*, pp. 81–104, here p. 99.

24 Yehuda Bauer: *Rethinking the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press 2001, p. xi.

25 Rossella Savarese: 'Infosuasion' in European Newspapers: A Case Study on the War in Kosovo. In: *European Journal of Communication* 15,3 (2000), pp. 363–381; Reiner Grundmann / Dennis Smith / Sue Wright: National Elites and Transnational Discourses in the Balkan

memory has never been systematically applied to the international media coverage of the violence in Bosnia and Kosovo.

German Foreign Policy

Parallel to the progression of collective memory in Germany, the changing nature of post-1945 German foreign policy must be considered at this point.²⁶ A number of academics have argued that West-German foreign policy after the Second World War was marked by a sense of responsibility evoked by the country's previous militarism as well as the Holocaust, which resulted in an unwillingness to assert military power to attain national interests.²⁷ Labels such as 'tamed power' [Peter Katzenstein] or 'civilian power' [Hanns Maull] to describe Germany encapsulate this foreign policy.²⁸ Defining the latter term as "[...] a particular foreign-policy identity which promoted multilateralism, institution-building and supranational integration [...]"²⁹ Maull postulates

War: A Comparison between the French, German and British Establishment Press. In: *European Journal of Communication* 15,3 (2000), pp.299–320; Christiane Eilders / Albrecht Lüter: Germany at War: Competing Framing Strategies in German Public Discourse. In: *European Journal of Communication* 15,3 (2000), pp.415–428.

26 Arnulf Baring: *Germany's New Position in Europe: Problems and Perspectives*. Oxford: Berg 1994; Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen: *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 2006; Scott Erb: *German Foreign Policy: Navigating a New Era*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2003; Adrian Hyde-Price: Germany and the Kosovo War: Still a Civilian Power? In: Douglas Webber (ed.): *New Europe, New Germany, Old Foreign Policy? German Foreign Policy since Unification*. London: Routledge 2001; Josef Janning: A German Europe – a European Germany? On the Debate over Germany's Foreign Policy. In: *International Affairs* 72,1 (1996), pp.33–41; Rainer Lepsius: Das Erbe des Nationalsozialismus und die politische Kultur der Nachfolgestaaten des „Großdeutschen Reiches“. In: Max Haller / Hans-Jürgen Hoffmann-Nowotny / Wolfgang Zapf (eds): *Kultur und Gesellschaft: Verhandlungen des 24. deutschen Soziologentages, des 11. österreichischen Soziologentags und des 8. Kongresses der schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Soziologie in Zürich 1988*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus 1989; Hanns Maull: Germany in the Yugoslav Crisis. In: *Survival* 37,4 (1995), pp.99–130; Hanns Maull: Germany and the Use of Force: Still a "Civilian Power"? In: *Survival* 42,2 (2000), pp.56–80

27 Including: Hyde-Price: Germany and the Kosovo War; Ronald Asmus: *German Strategy and Opinion after the Wall: 1990–1992*. Santa Monica: RAND 1994, p.12; Janning: A German Europe – a European Germany?; Michael Schwab-Trapp: Der Nationalsozialismus im öffentlichen Diskurs über militärische Gewalt: Überlegungen zum Bedeutungswandel der deutschen Vergangenheit. In: Bergem (ed.): *Die NS-Diktatur im deutschen Erinnerungsdiskurs*, pp.171–185, here p.173; Jonathan Bach: *Between Sovereignty and Integration: German Foreign Policy and National Identity after 1989*. Hamburg: LIT 1999, pp.120–121.

28 Maull: Germany and the Use of Force; Maull: Germany in the Yugoslav Crisis; Hanns W. Maull: German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a "Civilian Power"? In: *German Politics* 9,2 (2000), pp.1–24; Peter Katzenstein: United Germany in an Integrating Europe. In: Id. (ed.): *Tamed Power: Germany in Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1997, pp.1–48, here pp.2–3.

29 Maull: Germany and the Use of Force, p.56.

with this seminal theory that Germany's militaristic past created a hesitance to step outside multilateral bodies in terms of foreign policy. Indeed, Germany refused military involvement, even within its multilateral alliance structures. Simultaneously this meant that post-war West-Germany was largely reliant on the "guaranteed protection" from America and NATO, Nina Philippi asserts.³⁰ In this context, Germany's Minister of Defence between 1992 and 1998, Volker Rühle (CDU), coined the term 'culture of reticence'.³¹

However, the unification of East and West Germany in 1990 was a significant turning point, after which the country had to reposition itself in the global context. Amongst other issues, its foreign political stance had to be redefined, which included the discussion whether German forces should and would participate in "collective security actions", as Ronald Asmus calls them.³² From the vantage point of a strong, unified Germany, retaining Rühle's concept of 'culture of reticence' as a continuing foreign and defence policy approach was viewed by some as continuing proof that the country had learned from its past by limiting its militaristic possibilities. Opponents saw it as an 'easy way out' with regard to collective security – benefitting from multilateral structures while not contributing enough.³³ Germany faced this dilemma debating various UN and NATO-missions of the early 1990s such as Iraq, Cambodia, Somalia and later Bosnia, to which Germany was asked to contribute forces by its alliance-partners.³⁴

Against this backdrop of finding a new and comfortable foreign policy for a unified Germany while simultaneously adhering to the demands of its allies, a noteworthy milestone occurred in 1994. On 12 July, Germany's Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) ruled that the *Grundgesetz* enabled the participation of the *Bundeswehr* in out-of-area operations with a majority approval in the *Bundestag*.³⁵ While the constitutional framework of multilateral

30 Nina Philippi: *Bundeswehr-Auslandseinsätze als außen- und sicherheitspolitisches Problem des geeinten Deutschland*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang 1997, p. 203.

31 Asmus: *German Strategy*, pp. xv and 5.

32 Ibid., p. 55; also in Michael Schwab-Trapp: *Kriegsdiskurse: Die politische Kultur des Krieges im Wandel 1991–1999*. Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2002, p. 119; Alexander Siedschlag: *Die aktive Beteiligung Deutschlands an militärischen Aktionen zur Verwirklichung kollektiver Sicherheit*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang 1995, p. 50.

33 Asmus: *German Strategy*, p. 55; Gregor Schöllgen: *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Munich: C.H. Beck 2004, p. 210.

34 Explored in Schöllgen: *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, p. 211; Philippi: *Bundeswehr-Auslandseinsätze*, pp. 156–161; Siedschlag: *Die aktive Beteiligung Deutschlands*, pp. 43–44.

35 Schöllgen: *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, p. 216; Thomas Banchoff: *The*

peacekeeping operations had been subject to debate since the early 1990s, it was the “high emotions surrounding the war in former Yugoslavia [that] finally pushed the out-of-area debate towards its [...] resolution” Jonathan Bach writes.³⁶ Consequently, future involvement in collective security missions which included UN, NATO and WEU³⁷-deployments outside of the alliance’s territory was legally possible.³⁸

In spite of this ground-breaking shift in the country’s legal framework, Germany’s past and the lessons to be learned from it remained a prominent issue. Bach asserts that the 1994 court ruling was more than a judicial decision. Rather it reinforced the political questions of ‘normalcy’ and ‘historical responsibility’ in relation to German foreign policy.³⁹ Accepting on the one hand that the country held a particular obligation to deliberate employing militaristic means to implement its foreign policy, various politicians (especially from CDU⁴⁰ and FDP⁴¹) argued that Germany could not continue to restrain itself from combat while its allies shoulder the burden of international security. Consequently, a ‘discourse of normalcy’ could be detected in political speeches of the 1990s, as Bach postulates. The ‘normalcy’ arguments maintained that in light of Germany’s size, economic strength and geographical location, it had to assume a more prominent position in collective security. “This role is nothing less than what is ‘normal’ for a country with Germany’s characteristics,” as Bach paraphrased Klaus Kinkel (FDP), Germany’s Foreign Minister between 1992 and 1998.⁴² Moreover this allowed the country to meet its allies’ expectations regarding Germany’s contribution to ‘global peacekeeping tasks.’⁴³ The opposition parties, Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, or SPD, the Green Party and the Party of Democratic Socialism (*Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*, or PDS initially

German Problem Transformed: Institutions, Politics, and Foreign Policy, 1945–1995. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 1999, p.136; Bach: *Between Sovereignty and Integration*, p.119; Anthony Glees: *Reinventing Germany: German Political Development since 1945*. Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic 1996, p. 273; Philippi: *Bundeswehr-Auslandseinsätze*, pp. 48–58.

36 Bach: *Between Sovereignty and Integration*, p.126; also discussed in Philippi: *Bundeswehr-Auslandseinsätze*, pp. 143–146, and Schwab-Trapp: *Kriegsdiskurse*, p. 115.

37 Western European Union, a forum for matters of European security and defence.

38 Philippi: *Bundeswehr-Auslandseinsätze*, p.53.

39 Bach: *Between Sovereignty and Integration*, pp.121, 130–136; Schwab-Trapp: *Kriegsdiskurse*, pp.115–119.

40 Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*).

41 Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei*).

42 Bach: *Between Sovereignty and Integration*, p. 140.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 141–142.

objected to this interpretation of Germany's historical responsibility leading to 'normality,' arguing that the lesson to be drawn from the country's past was never to engage in combat again, even as part of a peacekeeping-mission.⁴⁴ However, as Nina Philippi demonstrates, from 1992 onwards, various opposition politicians also called for military intervention in Bosnia to stop the on-going violence.⁴⁵

Indeed, the violence in former Yugoslavia proved instrumental in solidifying a post-unification foreign policy in Germany.⁴⁶ Josef Janning contends that for many observers, the Yugoslav wars eroded the legitimacy of pacifism and argues that Germany should discard any illusionary pacifism and no longer seek special excuses for free-riding in terms of foreign policy.⁴⁷ Similarly, Adrian Hyde-Price argues that in Bosnia one was " [...] confronted by mass murder and ethnic cleansing, [and thus] traditional pacifist ideas proved inadequate," allowing room for political transformation.⁴⁸ Michael Schwab-Trapp asserts that while previously Germany's past did not allow German soldiers to engage in active combat, a new argumentation developed that Germans had a particular duty *because* of their past. Consequently they were responsible, even obliged, to prevent or combat comparable crimes elsewhere in the world, which echoes Bernhard Giesen's concept of 'meta-physical guilt'.⁴⁹ Hence, it was during the Balkan violence in the early 1990s that for the first time, the German past was used to legitimise a military intervention rather than a non-intervention.⁵⁰

However, as the violence spread to Kosovo in the late-1990s, the foreign political predisposition in Germany changed.⁵¹ By the time violence erupted

44 Bach: *Between Sovereignty and Integration*, p. 145.

45 Philippi: *Bundeswehr-Auslandseinsätze*, pp. 147–148.

46 Klaus Becher: Nationalitätenkonflikte auf dem Balkan. In: Karl Kaiser / Hanns Maull (eds): *Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik*, vol. 2: Herausforderungen. Oldenburg: Forschungsinstitut der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik 1995, pp. 137–155; Karl Kaiser / Joachim Krause: Deutsche Politik gegenüber dem Balkan. In: *Iid.* (eds): *Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik*, vol. 3: Interessen und Strategien. Oldenburg: Forschungsinstitut der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik 1996, pp. 175–188.

47 Janning: A German Europe – a European Germany?

48 Hyde-Price: Germany and the Kosovo War, pp. 19–21.

49 Schwab-Trapp: Der Nationalsozialismus im öffentlichen Diskurs über militärische Gewalt, pp. 173–174.

50 Schwab-Trapp: Der Nationalsozialismus im öffentlichen Diskurs über militärische Gewalt, p. 183; Brendan Simms: From the Kohl to the Fischer Doctrine. In: *German History* 21,3 (2003), pp. 393–414, here p. 404.

51 Much of the most important literature on the topic has been summarised and condensed in Brendan Simms' review article: From the Kohl to the Fischer Doctrine, pp. 393–414.

in Kosovo, Kohl's government had been replaced by a red-green coalition which had been elected in October 1998. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD) and Foreign Minister Joseph – more widely known as Joschka – Fischer of the Green Party (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) governed Germany. Both parties were traditionally sceptical of war; the Green Party had even been founded on the principle of pacifism. Nonetheless, it was this government that decided to contribute *Bundeswehr*-soldiers to the 1999 NATO-intervention in Kosovo, initiating the first deployment of German soldiers into active combat since the Second World War. This decision was explained by drawing on the previously mentioned paradigm 'Never again war' which was associated with 'Never again Auschwitz'. Accordingly, Fischer along with other politicians of the red-green coalition argued that in the case of Kosovo, military means were necessary to ensure that genocide would not ensue and international human rights were protected.⁵² This will be discussed further in the chapter discussing the German press coverage of the Račak incident and the NATO-intervention.⁵³ However, for now it is important to note the changing perceptions and interpretations of German foreign policy, which permeated the 1990s and thus influenced the country's stance on the violence in Bosnia and later Kosovo. The extent to which Germany's past still played a role in the German press' debates about the country's involvement in the region will be traced in this book.

Note on Terminology

Before proceeding, a brief note on terminology is necessary. Two controversial terms will re-appear throughout this media analysis of the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, namely 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing.' According to Daniel Chirot and Clark McCauley, in some cases the two are difficult to distinguish, as there can be an overlap.⁵⁴ The term 'genocide,' a compilation of the Greek word '*genos*' meaning race or tribe and the Latin '*cide*', which means killing,⁵⁵ was more commonly used than 'ethnic cleansing,' until the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s.⁵⁶ The former was coined in 1944 by the Polish-Jewish jurist

52 Volmer: *Die Grünen und die Außenpolitik*, pp.464–467, 563.

53 See pp.225–228 and pp.254–256.

54 Daniel Chirot / Clark McCauley: *Why Not Kill Them All: The Logic and Prevention of Mass Political Murder*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2006, p. 11.

55 Raphael Lemkin: *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. Clark: The Lawbook Exchange 2005, p. 79.

56 Chirot / McCauley: *Why Not Kill Them All*, p. 11.

Raphael Lemkin, who, in the context of the National-Socialist Holocaust, defined genocide as

a coordinated plan [...with the objective of disintegrating] the political and social institutions of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.⁵⁷

Lemkin's rather narrow definition foresaw the complete destruction of a national group and was the basis for the broader "United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," which was passed in 1948. Articles I and II stated that all contracting parties would "[...] undertake to prevent and punish" genocide, which was defined as "[...] acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group [...]"⁵⁸ The Convention listed these acts in five bullet points:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.⁵⁹

This definition of genocide with its focus on ethnic and national groups has since been criticised as too limiting, as it disregards the systematic killing of political enemies, for example, as practiced by Joseph Stalin.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it continues to form the crux of the UN Genocide Convention. The legal obligation of the contracting parties to stop genocide when it occurs anywhere in the world is the most important statement of the document and is the central difference for the international community between genocide

57 Lemkin: *Axix Rule in Occupied Europe*, p.79.

58 United Nations: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948. <http://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2078/volume-78-I-1021-English.pdf> (accessed 25.08.2014), p. 3.

59 Ibid.

60 Chirof / McCauley: *Why Not Kill Them All*, p. 16; Adam Jones: *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. London: Routledge 2011, p. 11.

and ‘ethnic cleansing,’ which does not demand such a binding international reaction.⁶¹

The term ‘ethnic cleansing’ was formally defined by the UN in 1994 as “[...] rendering an area ethnically homogenous by using force or intimidation to remove from a given area persons from another ethnic or religious group,”⁶² which seems to reflect the way it was used and understood prior to 1994. However, this is often difficult to demarcate from other forms of mass violence, as Andrew Bell-Fialkoff explained. “At one end it is virtually indistinguishable from forced emigration and population exchange while at the other it merges with deportation and genocide.”⁶³ According to the historian Norman Naimark, the first peoples to use the term ‘ethnic cleansing’ to describe their experiences was the Serbian minority population living in Kosovo, who in the 1980s felt discriminated against by the dominant Kosovo-Albanian population.⁶⁴ However, it became more widely known during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s and was generally associated with the Serbian policy towards Bosnian Muslims and later Kosovo-Albanians. As Bell-Fialkoff stated, “the central aim of the Serbian campaign [was] to eliminate a population from the ‘homeland’ in order to create a more secure, ethnically homogeneous state [...]”⁶⁵

The utilisation of the two terms ‘genocide’ and ‘ethnic cleansing’ is not merely a matter of semantics and will be traced throughout the German print media coverage. The distinction between these terms was imperative to the formation of Germany’s foreign policy and the press’ interpretation of the violence in Bosnia and Kosovo. Thus, I will pay special attention to the manner in which these terms were employed in the German press and with what intention. For example, did publications use ‘genocide’ to suggest an international intervention to stop it, as the UN Genocide Convention stipulates? Were there instances where the term was rather used as a hyperbole to shock the reader of the gruesome violence? Considering these significant repercussions, I will refrain from using both terms on my own accord throughout this book. Instead I will draw on vocabulary such as “violence” or “killings”. While at

61 UN: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

62 United Nations: The Policy of Ethnic Cleansing, 28.12.1994. <http://ess.uwe.ac.uk/comexpert/ANX/IV.htm> (accessed 25.09.2012).

63 Andrew Bell-Fialkoff: A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing. In: *Foreign Affairs* 72,3 (1993), pp. 110–122.

64 Norman Naimark: Ethnic Cleansing. In: *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*. http://www.massviolence.org/IMG/article_PDF/Ethnic-Cleansing.pdf (accessed 25.08.2014).

65 Bell-Fialkoff: A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing, pp. 110–122.

times such vague terminology may appear forced or disparaging to the reader, this ensures that I do not superimpose the conflictive terms where they were not initially utilised. This in turn allows a more distinct linguistic analysis: when they appear in this book, the terms will either be paraphrased or in quotation. In both cases a reference will indicate the source. These deliberations regarding the terms 'genocide' and the potential political ramifications of its utilisation introduce a central theme throughout this press analysis, namely the prevalence of the Holocaust in arguing both for and against a potential German involvement in any wars. The only exception is the Srebrenica Massacre, which I analyse in chapter four. The International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has designated Srebrenica to have been genocide. As the word is part of the legal understanding of the massacre, I deem it acceptable to utilise it without restrictions.