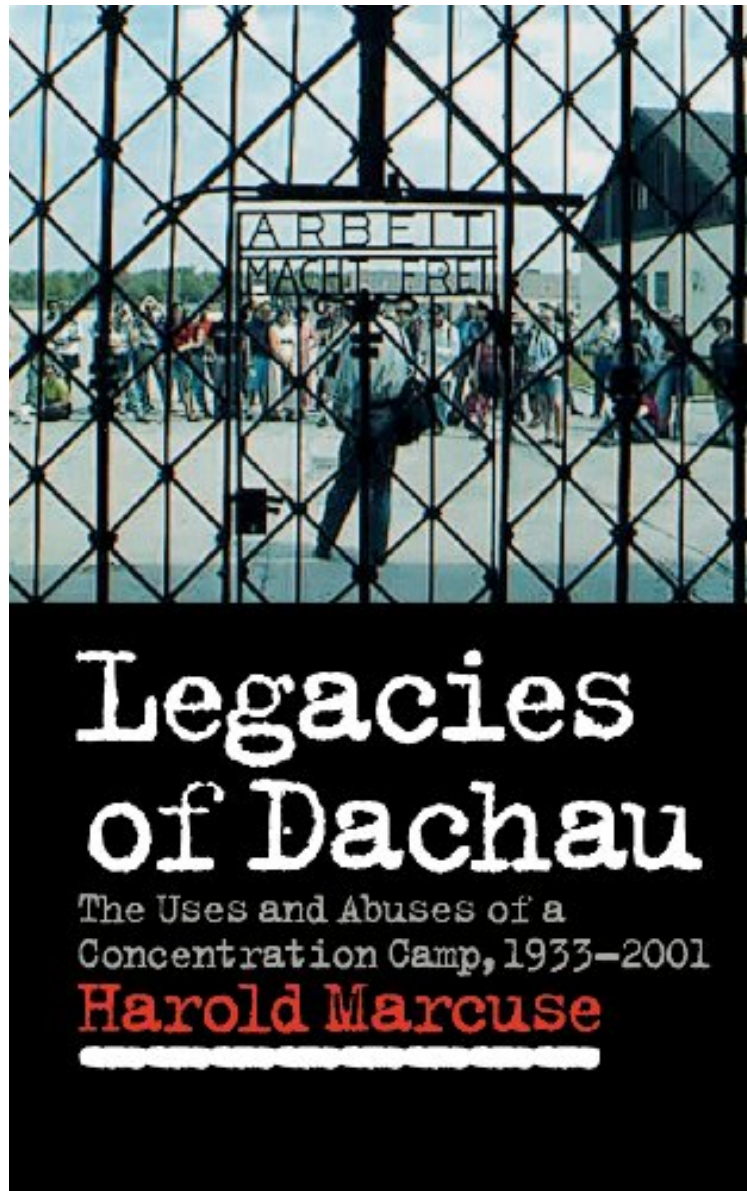


[PDF] Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001

Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001

Professor Harold Marcuse

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Professor Harold Marcuse : Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Insightful Analysis By Matt Tippens

Auschwitz, Belsen, Dachau. Generations later, these names still evoke the horrors of Nazi Germany around the world. What should be done with the sites where hundreds of thousands of people were murdered and cremated? Punish Nazis? Tear down the buildings and plant trees? Build stores and apartments? Educate teenagers? All of these things happened at former concentration camps after 1945. Historian Harold Marcuse takes one of these sites, Dachau, and traces its history from the beginning of the twentieth century, through its twelve years as Nazi Germany's premier concentration camp, to the camp's postwar use as a prison, residential neighborhood, and, finally, museum and memorial site. From the outset, the Dachau concentration camp occupied an especially prominent place in the Nazi concentration camp system. It was the first camp to be set up in 1933, and it was the first to be under the direct supervision of Heinrich Himmler, who later controlled the entire concentration and extermination camp network. The Dachau system became a model for all other Nazi concentration camps. It also served as a "school of violence" for concentration camp leaders including Adolf Eichmann, the bureaucrat who masterminded the industrially organized extermination of the Jews, and Rudolf Hss, the infamous commandant of Auschwitz. Dachau was also the camp where the Nazi's regime most prominent prisoners, including chancellors and cabinet ministers from occupied countries, as well as high-ranking religious leaders, were incarcerated. Dachau served as a concentration camp until it was liberated by American troops on April 29, 1945. Since that time, more than 21 million people have visited the site, 19 million of them, 90 percent, since the camp was designated as a memorial in 1965. Few of them know how the site was used in the twenty years before it was turned into a memorial, nor are they aware of the many choices that were made in the creation and modification of the present memorial site. How did the Dachau memorial come to be? What lessons does it teach us? How are the site's messages received by visitors, and what short and long-term effects does a visit have upon them? Marcuse attempts to provide answers to those questions. The book is divided into four parts. The first recounts the history of Dachau from its beginnings as a market town and dynastic residence centuries ago through its repressive and genocidal phase, from 1933 to 1945. Three phases of the camp's history after 1945 are examined in the following three parts. Part II focuses on the decade from 1945 to 1955. It begins with a portrayal of three primary responses to the crimes symbolized by Dachau: the myth that the German people had been victimized by the Nazis, the myth that most Germans had been ignorant of the crimes their neighbors, friends, and relatives were committing, and the myth that most Germans had been upright citizens who resisted Nazism as much as possible without taking inordinate risks. From the early 1950s those myths of victimization, ignorance, and resistance were expressed by three inversions of historical fact. Those inversions are the subject of the three chapters in part II, which show the development and effects of the conception that Nazis had been "good," the consequences of the feeling that concentration camp survivors had been and still were "bad," and the transformation of Dachau and other former concentration camps into "clean" camps. Because these three historical myths and the resulting mythic inversions played an important role in the establishment of the West German state and the peculiar nature of its politics from the late 1940s until the turn of the millennium, they are referred to as the three founding myths. Part III traces the images of Dachau embraced and propagated by the groups most involved in shaping its postwar history. It focuses on the period from 1955-1970, although it begins with a survey of the first impulses to memorialize the Dachau camp after the war. Subsequent chapters examine how the camp survivors, German Catholics, Jews, and Protestants, worked to represent their own present conception of the meaning of the concentration camp's past. The final chapter of part III introduces a theory of generational cohorts to demonstrate how, at the end of the 1960s, a generation of Germans born between roughly 1937 and 1953 began openly to challenge the veracity of the three founding myths. However, those children of the "generation of perpetrators" were themselves enmeshed in the distortion of their parents' myths. While they denied their parents' claim of victimization, they saw themselves as victims. While they rejected their elders' profession of ignorance and sought knowledge about the Nazi past, their own understanding remained abstract, intangible, and unconnected to real life. While they scoffed at claims of resistance during the Nazi years, their own resistance against present injustices was at times motivated more by a desire to compensate for past injustices than justified by the consistent application of moral principles. Part IV outlines the process of overcoming, since 1970, the mythically distorted collective images of the Nazi era. It examines how the perpetrator and the first postwar generations' legacies of victim identification, historical ignorance, and overblown resistance have been challenged and even overcome by members of younger age cohorts. Taken together, the three founding myths had served to establish Germans' innocence of Nazi crimes. Overcoming them entailed recognizing guilt and accepting responsibility for those crimes, as well as correcting the inversions that emerged from the three founding myths during the 1950s. At the close of the twentieth century, Nazi-era Germans are once again becoming "bad," Hitler's victims are regaining their "good" standing (additional groups are being compensated for their losses and persecution), and the former concentration camps are losing their "cleanliness" as recent historiography and renovations seek to recreate long-destroyed or ignored aspects of the past. Finally, the book concludes with an examination of the renovation of Dachau originally slated for completion in 2001. It explores in detail some of the questions of commemoration, pedagogy, and meaning raised in previous chapters. Specifically, it looks at ways in which the founding myths and their legacies have found expression in the current redesign plans, and suggests ways in which uses by a post-millennial generation might be considered, in order to avoid the distortion of

past abuses. Marcuse's insightful narrative combines meticulous archival research with an encyclopedic knowledge of the extensive literatures on Germany, the Holocaust, and historical memory. "Legacies of Dachau" unravels the intriguing relationship between historical events, individual memory, and political culture, enabling it to offer a unifying interpretation of their interaction over the entire sweep of German history from the Nazi era into the twenty-first century.⁵ of 7 people found the following review helpful. Winner of Hans Rosenberg Prize
By Harold Marcuse
In January 2003, the Conference Group for Central European History explained its selection: To stand out among 49 submissions, the award-winning book had to be challenging and ambitious, theoretically informed, solidly researched, wellwritten, and nicely produced. The winner of this year's Hans Rosenberg Book Prize is *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* by Harold Marcuse, published in 2001 by Cambridge University Press. The title suggests only part of the sweep of this well-illustrated book. Marcuse traces the multiple transformations of the camp in Dachau from a concentration camp to a camp for displaced persons to an internment camp for Nazis to a heavily-visited memorial and museum site, but he also includes the adjacent site that housed first an SS garrison, then a US army unit, and then part of the Bavarian state police. These multiple uses, as Marcuse shows, point to the difficulty in fixing the memory of Dachau in both the professional and public understanding of the history of not just this site but also the broader histories of Nazism, the Holocaust, the postwar occupation, and the Federal Republic. The uses and abuses of Dachau illuminate how different age cohorts of postwar Germans selectively remembered and forgot parts of their history and how they created and challenged what Marcuse calls the founding myths of victimization by, ignorance of, and resistance to Nazism. Because these cohorts confronted each other as they evolved, *Legacies of Dachau* is a story of the intellectual growth of postwar Germany. Just as Dachau Concentration Camp is itself a site for education, reflection, and memorialization, this book will help readers better understand the events that transpired there and the complex, contested ways in which Germans have come to grips with those events.² of 3 people found the following review helpful. Meticulous history
By B. Roth PhD
A well planned and researched history of the constant presence of a killing site. Crafted to reveal its intricate history, and place in WW2 history, a readable account of its role in the Nazi firmament . Prof M 's devotion is obvious .

Dachau was the first among Nazi camps, and it served as a model for the others. Situated in West Germany after World War II, it was the one former concentration camp most subject to the push and pull of the many groups wishing to eradicate, ignore, preserve and present it. Thus its postwar history is an illuminating case study of the contested process by which past events are propagated into the present, both as part of the historical record, and within the collectively shared memories of different social groups. How has Dachau been used--and abused--to serve the present? What effects have those uses had on the contemporary world? Drawing on a wide array of sources, from government documents and published histories to newspaper reports and interviews with visitors, *Legacies of Dachau* offers answers to these questions. It is one of the first books to develop an overarching interpretation of West German history since 1945. Harold Marcuse examines the myth of victimization, ignorance, and resistance and offers a model with which the cultural trajectories of other post-genocidal societies can be compared. With its exacting research, attention to nuance, and cogent argumentation, *Legacies of Dachau* raises the bar for future studies of the complex relationship between history and memory. Harold Marcuse is Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he teaches modern German history. The grandson of German emigr philosopher Herbert Marcuse, Harold Marcuse returned to Germany in 1977 to rediscover family roots. After several years, he became interested in West Germany's relationship to its Nazi past. In 1985, shortly before Ronald Reagan and Helmut Kohl visited Bitburg, he organized and coproduced an exhibition "Stones of Contention" about monuments and memorials commemorating the Nazi era. That exhibition, which marks the beginning of Marcuse's involvement in German memory debates, toured nearly thirty German cities, including Dachau. This is his first book.

From Publishers Weekly
The title of this creative, dense book is slightly misleading: in fact, it casts a wider net over the ways in which Germany as a whole, not just Dachau, has dealt with the legacy of Nazism. Marcuse, a professor of history at UC-Santa Barbara, examines Germany's attempts during the past half-century to come to terms with its horrific wartime actions. Using a variety of sources, including interviews with survivors and Nazis, Marcuse shows how historical myths were constructed and how these myths affected the memorials built at places like Dachau, the first Nazi concentration camp; such memorials, says Marcuse, "generally reveal far more about the groups that create them than about the history they purport to represent." Marcuse, grandson of philosopher Herbert Marcuse, posits that the struggle to memorialize the events of the Holocaust is a generational one. The first generation, many of whom were complicit in Nazism, shielded themselves from the past by claiming themselves to have been the victims, and by claiming ignorance and by resisting attempts to memorialize the past. Dachau itself had no memorial for many years. Many in the second generation, who came of age during the tumultuous 1960s, reacted against their parents' denial, he argues, by launching a full-scale political critique of German society, European democracy and even the Vietnam War. Only in the past few decades, Marcuse concludes, has a synthesis been reached that is beginning to allow Germany to create memorials that promote the "experiential learning" he believes is most beneficial for its hundreds of thousands

of visitors. What is most striking about Marcuse's complex analysis is his innovative look at history through a culture's acts of memorialization; still, this book will appeal more to those within the scholarly community than to lay readers. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Dachau was the first concentration camp to be set up. More than 200,000 prisoners were held there, and about 35,000 were documented to have died or been killed there. In the first 50 years since it was liberated, in April 1945, more than 21 million people visited the site. How did the Dachau memorial site come to be? What are the lessons it teaches, and who decided how to convey them? Marcuse wrote this book to provide answers to those questions. Part 1 recounts the history of Dachau, from its beginnings as a market town centuries ago through its repressive and genocidal phase, 1933 to 1945. Part 2 focuses on the decade from 1945 to 1955. Part 3 traces the images of Dachau embraced and propagated by the groups most involved in shaping its postwar history. Part 4 outlines the process of overcoming, since 1970, what Marcuse terms "the mythically distorted collective images of the Nazi era." This massive study is a crucial and definitive account of one important aspect of the Holocaust. George Cohen Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Four hundred pages of text, 160 pages of endnotes, and 88 well-chosen, carefully explained illustrations compose the definitive history of Dachau... Clearly and sensitively written, the book is accessible to a broad audience. It belongs in every library." Choice "Legacies of Dachau is an important addition to the bibliography of the manner in which Germans have chosen to remember and commemorate the Nazi past. And for those interested in or involved with public history, Marcuse's book is a 'must-read' as it shows the problems and paradoxes that shape the stewardship of any historically significant site... [This book] analyzes one of the most important of these public places, and his insights are therefore important for our understanding of the shape of the current public domain." The Public Historian "A new and important book that sheds light on the means by which the Nazis eliminated dissent in Germany." Jewish Post Opinion, Indianapolis, IN "This massive study is a crucial and definitive account of one important aspect of the Holocaust." Booklist "Marcuse's book is meticulously documented. It is clearly the result of painstaking careful research, as demonstrated by its more than a hundred and thirty pages of footnotes. And yet, it is more than just a work of academic scholarship. It is a cry from the heart that Dachau remain--in the consciousness of Germany and in that of all humanity--not just as a memorial, but as a warning of how thin the veneer of human sanity can be and how fragile goodness is." South Florida Jewish Journal "What is most striking about Marcuse's complex analysis is his innovative look at history through a culture's act of memorialization." Publishers Weekly "This is a very learned book, but a book likely to be appreciated primarily by the very informed and the very patient." The New Republic