PROJECT MUSE®

In the Crosshairs: Kurt Ziesel's Adenauer-Era Campaign to Expose the Nazi Pasts of West German Intellectuals

Axel Schildt, Sinéad Crowe

German Yearbook of Contemporary History, Volume 5, 2021, pp. 22-59
(Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/gych.2021.0007>

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/804864>

In the Crosshairs

Kurt Ziesel's Adenauer-Era Campaign to
Expose the Nazi Pasts of West German Intellectuals

AXEL SCHILDT

TRANSLATION BY SINÉAD CROWE

In late 1957, a book titled *Das verlorene Gewissen* ("The Lost Conscience"), written by the conservative, right-wing publicist Kurt Ziesel (1911–2001), caused a sensation in West Germany. Ziesel's work attacked the careers of many German intellectuals who, having been active in the Third Reich, embraced democracy and publicly supported liberal views after 1945, all the while concealing their highly problematic Nazi-era positions and publications. The article analyzes Ziesel's methods of exposing the pasts of these prominent writers, and examines their reactions to Ziesel's accusations. As author Axel Schildt shows, despite the support from prominent voices such as Heinrich Böll, Theodor Heuss and others, those targeted by Ziesel did not succeed in fighting the accusations effectively. Ziesel was nevertheless unable to turn his efforts into long-term political gains. While he received much applause from staunchly conservative circles, his campaign began to falter in the mid-1960s. However, his methods became part of the arsenal of political conflict in the Federal Republic.

Introduction

The last third of the 1950s saw the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) begin an extensive critical engagement with its Nazi past.¹ Tainted biographies were uncovered, and Nazi criminals who had adopted the roles of upstanding citizens in the postwar period were brought to justice in highly publicized trials. The public's growing interest in confronting the past is often attributed to the new generation of journalists who had begun working for West Germany's newspapers and broadcasters.² However, this explanation fails to take into account an important phenomenon that continues to attract media attention to this day, namely sensationalistic revelations made by right-wing conservatives about the careers of certain writers and journalists during the Third Reich. Not only had these writers and journalists settled comfortably into life in the FRG, but, without so much as mentioning their earlier political beliefs or of-

fering any explanation for their change of heart, they had become proponents of liberal positions. From the vantage point of 1978, Armin Mohler, a prominent advocate of traditional values and an intellectual heir to the conservative revolutionary movement, argued: “The fact that there is no conservative press worth mentioning in the FRG today is primarily the fault of a certain breed of journalists—a breed that enjoyed the benefits of the Third Reich and then tried to erase [their pasts] after 1945 by obsequiously adopting the catchphrases and buzzwords of reeducation.”³

Such polemics against “cowardly” conformity with the zeitgeist have been a recurring feature of debates about the German past since the late 1950s. During the “Fischer Controversy” of the early 1960s (a debate among academics about the extent to which Germany was responsible for the outbreak of the First World War), for example, national-conservative historians accused Fritz Fischer, a former Nazi careerist, of betraying nationalist historiography for opportunistic reasons. In personal correspondence, Fischer’s rival Gerhard Ritter scornfully referred to him as a “convert.”⁴

By contrast, figures who refused to adapt their views to the times were widely admired in the conservative postwar years. Carl Schmitt, the former “crown jurist” of the Nazi regime, was much sought after even by respectable media organizations, with the prestigious weekly *Die Zeit* among the newspapers that published his articles.⁵ In an interview in the mid-1960s the news magazine *Der Spiegel* allowed the philosopher Martin Heidegger, an unrepentant antisemite who had furthered the Nazi agenda in his position as rector of Freiburg University, to whitewash his past.⁶

In exposing the Nazi associations of certain intellectuals, conservative journalists were motivated neither by a genuine interest in shedding light on National Socialism, nor by a desire to highlight character flaws. Instead, their main goal was to fight the liberalism believed to be on the rise in the 1950s. It is hardly surprising, then, that the focus was on the Nazi pasts of those intellectuals who had joined the journalistic mainstream after the Second World War or who were seen as liberal or left-wing. Conservatives held such “hypocrites” and “opportunists” in utter contempt. Kurt Ziesel’s book *Das verlorene Gewissen* (“The Lost Conscience,” 1957) is a prime example of this type of conservative exposé.⁷

Kurt Ziesel (1911–2001): Biographical Details

The Innsbruck-born Ziesel joined the National Socialist German Students’ Association in 1930 and the Nazi Party in 1931.⁸ By then he was already

writing for the Nazi press, and he remained a regular correspondent for the *Deutschösterreichische Zeitung* in Vienna until it was banned in 1933. Ziesel then moved to the Prussian city of Königsberg to work as an editor for the *Preußische Zeitung*. In April 1934, after being accused of having a relationship with a Jewish woman, demonstrating “youthful arrogance,” and circulating “news about atrocities” (*Greuelnachrichten*), he was fired, remanded in custody for several weeks, and expelled from the Nazi Party. Ziesel, whose wife was expecting their second child, turned to Rudolf Heß for help. As a member of the party’s old guard (*alter Kämpfer*), Ziesel begged Heß not to allow him and his family to “starve to death.” As a result of Heß’s intervention, Ziesel’s expulsion from the party was lifted after a few months, in late 1934. In the fall of 1935, Ziesel found another editorial position in the Nazi press, this time with the *Westfälische Landeszeitung Rote Erde* in Dortmund, but friction soon led to his dismissal from this newspaper as well. At the time Ziesel also wrote for several other newspapers, including the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* in Cologne, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, the *NSZ-Rheinfront*, and the *Stuttgarter NS-Kurier*.

Ziesel’s journalistic pieces centered mainly on “German culture’s” battle to defend itself from Jewish influences. From 1936 to 1939 he served as publisher and editor-in-chief for the *Hanseatendienst*, a Hamburg-based “news agency for the entire press” with a pronounced antisemitic agenda. After the Anschluss, Ziesel also became an editor for the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* in Vienna while continuing to contribute to Nazi newspapers in the “Altreich.” Written in a radically polemical style that one scholar has accurately likened to “verbal persecution of the Jews,”⁹ Ziesel’s articles repeatedly demanded that the party and the state take action against the “Jewish-infested petty bureaucrats” within organizations such as the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The belligerent tone of his texts caused friction across the Nazi cultural industry. When one publisher refused to include one of his essays in a series because its scope was too narrow, Ziesel promptly complained to the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (Reich Chamber of Literature) that “truly Jewish methods” were being used against him. He did not shy away from leveling antisemitic accusations even at prestigious authors who enjoyed the favor of the Nazi regime, such as Manfred Hausmann. As a result, during the Third Reich Ziesel became embroiled in a series of disputes, many of which came before the courts.

In the mid-1930s Ziesel began a literary career that ran parallel to his career as a political journalist. By 1943 his first novel, *Verwandlung der Herzen* (“Transformation of the Hearts,” 1938), had been reprinted twice and also

published in two editions designed for soldiers, bringing the total number of copies to 350,000, according to Ziesel himself. The novel's plot revolves around a courageous National Socialist soldier who is crippled at the front during the First World War. With its combination of light fiction and political propaganda, the novel exemplifies a popular genre of the time. Ziesel's second, equally successful novel, *Der kleine Gott* ("The Little God," 1939), which had been reprinted twice and published in two editions for the troops by 1944, also promoted "National Socialist ideology in the form of simple popular fiction."¹⁰ Here, Ziesel celebrated "the power of a woman's love" and motherhood as the ultimate realization of this love. The SS newspaper *Das schwarze Korps* praised the manner in which the novel brought the *Lebensborn* idea to literary life. A few contributions to literary anthologies cemented Ziesel's position as an extremely productive young writer who enjoyed regular acclaim in the literary pages of the newspapers. By the eve of the Second World War, the twenty-eight-year-old belonged to the highest echelons of the Nazi literary scene.

In 1940 Ziesel was called up for service in the *Wehrmacht*, where, in his role as a war correspondent, he proved himself adept at giving meaning to the war. That same year he celebrated another literary success with the 500-page anthology *Krieg und Dichtung* ("War and Literature"), in which he sought to make his own prose continue the venerable tradition of German classicism. In August 1941, just a few weeks after German forces launched their invasion of the Soviet Union, Ziesel wrote to the Reich Ministry of Propaganda requesting a car and a chauffeur. His plan, he explained, was to travel along the entire Eastern Front so that he could "examine the psychological experience of war" and "provide a unique impression of the whole front." In March 1942 he was detailed as a *Sonderführer*, or "specialist," to the Correspondents' Section of the Army High Command. It was there, in early 1943, that he discovered a new calling as an estate owner who would "command the countryside" and promote love for "the East" through his writings. In 1943 Ziesel had himself redeployed from the Eastern Front to the Balkans. He maintained his high fiction output until the end of the war.

Little is known about Ziesel's activities in the immediate postwar years, apart from a spell running an Austrian farm he had owned since the late 1930s. His books were banned in Austria, however, and he was prohibited from making speeches in public. This transitional period ended in 1948, and in the 1950s he moved to Munich, though he retained his residence in Austria.

Ziesel's attempts to find employment with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) were quickly thwarted, though how and by whom remains largely unclear. In

late 1951 the publisher Kurt Desch wrote the following lines to Max Steff, a well-known expert on the work of Adalbert Stifter, a librarian at the Bavarian State Library in Munich, and an authority on the local intellectual scene:

We've known for some time now that the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* feuilleton tries to pursue its political agenda in as subtle a manner as possible. The tactics are pretty simple: On the one hand, things that the gentlemen of the feuilleton would rather not see, hear, or read are omitted. This evades the notice of most readers. On the other hand, they allow dyed-in-the-wool Nazis to throw a couple of poison darts in the wrong (i.e. "right") direction every now and then. [. . .] In any case, it is gratifying to see that questions are indeed being raised thanks to our interventions, and that Dr. Schöningh has informed you that no sentence by Mr. Ziesel will ever be published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* again.¹¹

There is no evidence of any articles attributed to Kurt Ziesel appearing in the SZ feuilleton in 1951. Between 1952 and 1963 Ziesel self-published the *Europäischer Kulturdienst* in Salzburg. The title of this publication alone, which translates as "European Cultural Service," prompted *Michael*, a Catholic weekly based in Düsseldorf, to associate it with the "neofascists" who had adopted "European" as their new buzzword. They had established the *Deutsches Kulturwerk Europäischen Geistes* (German Cultural Association for the European Spirit), the book distribution service *Die Europäische Nationale*, the magazine *Nation Europa*, and other initiatives featuring "Europe" in their titles to disguise their extremist views. The author of the article in *Michael* concluded by asking, "Has Mr. Ziesel joined the ranks of these idiots, or—dare we say it—does he simply lack character?"¹²

Ziesel's application to join the *Bayerischer Schriftstellerverband* (Bavarian Writers' Association) was also turned down. The explanation provided by the committee—namely, that his Austrian citizenship precluded him from joining—was little more than a feeble excuse, Ziesel claimed, given that he now resided in Munich.¹³ He maintained that his application had in fact been blocked by Max Steff, the selection committee's "political advisor," at the behest of the writer Hermann Kasack. These allegations were publicly denied by Steff, who said that the decision to reject Ziesel's application had been taken at a board meeting of the *Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller* (Association for the Protection of German Writers) in October 1954. Steff claimed that he had not informed Kasack of the decision until February 20, 1955, and so the latter could not have played any role in the matter.¹⁴

It is impossible to determine whether Kasack and Steff's account of events is

true. What is clear, though, is that by the mid-1950s Ziesel was widely seen as a right-wing troublemaker and unrepentant Nazi. According to Kasack, both Ziesel and the publisher Georg von Holtzbrinck—the majority shareholder of the conservative religious weekly *Christ und Welt*, whose own publishing house, *Deutsche Volksbücher*, had published some of Ziesel's novels—moved in the same “right-wing circles.”¹⁵ Ziesel was not prepared to take such attacks lying down. After learning that Stefl had warned about Ziesel in a letter to Walburga Rucker, the wife of August Rucker, the Bavarian minister of education and cultural affairs, Ziesel sent Stefl a registered letter repudiating the “vile slurs” and “outrageous” claim that he was “still propagating [his] old ideals.” In fact, Ziesel maintained, his writing was driven by a moral impulse: “The targets of my public battle are the people who attack those who made mistakes in the past, directing implacable hatred at them while using the exact same Nazi methods of psychological and economic terror and practicing the same anonymous smear campaigns that the Nazis did.”¹⁶ Ziesel issued an ultimatum: either Stefl recant, in appropriate detail, the claims made in his letter to Walburga Rucker “and apologize for this defamation” within eight days, or the matter would be brought to court.¹⁷

In the 1950s Ziesel set out to repeat the success he had enjoyed in the 1930s by establishing a literary career that would run parallel to his political journalism, now a mixture of “Occidental” European ideology, radical anti-Bolshevism, and aggressive anti-liberalism. His novel *Der kleine Gott* was reprinted by an Austrian publishing house as soon as his publication ban was lifted in 1948, and his first postwar novel was published in 1952. Entitled *Daniel in der Löwengrube* (“Daniel in the Lion’s Den”), the novel jarred some observers and led them to believe that the author had undergone a baffling political and ethical transformation. It tells the story of a non-Jewish artist, Daniel Gurett, who accidentally stumbles into a Jewish ghetto, identifies with the people there, and is murdered alongside them. *Daniel in der Löwengrube* contained a mixture of faux philosemitism and antisemitic *ressentiment*. Ziesel held Hitler solely responsible for the Holocaust: what Hitler’s “murder of the Jews had done not just to them, but to us, the German people” was “unfathomable,” as Ziesel put it in a later work.¹⁸ Where it was reviewed at all, the novel was panned, particularly in the light of Ziesel’s own past,¹⁹ but this did not stop *Daniel in der Löwengrube* and his novels published between 1954 and 1957 from commanding five-figure print runs.²⁰

In later autobiographical statements, Ziesel liked to portray himself as a “fully recovered National Socialist”²¹ and to highlight the fact that he had been involved in numerous disputes during the Nazi regime. In characterizing

these disputes as acts of political resistance, Ziesel painted himself as a writer who, though briefly led astray in his youth, had become a morally upstanding opponent of the Nazi regime. While narratives like these were very common at the time, Ziesel went one step further. He claimed that he was being ostracized by the Federal Republic's most intellectually influential media organizations because the key positions in these organizations were occupied by opportunists who had once played the role of enthusiastic Nazis and were now posing as defenders of democracy. According to Ziesel, these "opportunists" formed the basis of a left-wing intellectual cartel which, "due to the inner putrefaction of West German democracy in its entirety," posed a danger to "the free world."²² He repeatedly bemoaned "the dubious nature of press freedom today," the "terror" unleashed by "this degenerate freedom," and the "systematic destruction of faith, values, national sentiment, and unsullied allegiance to one's state" caused by the "commentariat gangsters" of the "licensed press."²³ These "gangsters" had betrayed their true beliefs, Ziesel claimed, and they had been systematically boycotting him since the war ended; it was them whom he was determined to expose and undermine.²⁴

In what follows, I will outline Ziesel's argumentative strategies before turning my attention to the counterstrategies deployed by the intellectuals he attacked for their behavior in the Third Reich. Even at the time, the rows between Ziesel and the subjects of his revelations were difficult to keep track of, with numerous public spats and legal disputes taking place alongside more covert attempts to discredit and isolate Ziesel. These rows can be seen as part of a process of self-reflection undergone by those left-wing and liberal intellectuals who had supported National Socialism when they were journalists in the Third Reich and who now, more than a decade later, were being confronted with the texts they had once written.

Das verlorene Gewissen

Ziesel's opening salvo was *Das verlorene Gewissen*, an exposé that garnered the most public attention of all his books. First published in December 1957 by J. F. Lehmanns Verlag in Munich, *Das verlorene Gewissen* was on its second print run six weeks later, its fifth print run in the fall of 1958, and its eighth print run two years later.²⁵ In his monumental work on right-wing politics in the FRG, the American historian Kurt P. Tauber writes that, judging by the amount of controversy he generated, Ziesel ranked among West Germany's most influential right-wing journalists, and the impact of *Das verlorene Gewissen*, in particular, was "like a bomb-shell."²⁶

It is no coincidence that Ziesel's exposé begins with a relatively respectful discussion of Rudolf Pechel. At the time, the seventy-six-year-old was widely seen as a representative of the righteous resistance to Hitler and the Nazi regime. In his youth Pechel had moved in the conservative revolutionary circles associated with Arthur Moeller van den Bruck. In 1919 he joined the political and literary journal *Deutsche Rundschau*, first as editor-in-chief and then, until his arrest by the Gestapo in April 1942, as publisher.²⁷ Surprisingly, despite his close links with Carl Goerdeler and other figures in the conservative resistance, Pechel was acquitted by the Nazi *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court) in February 1945 due to a "lack of evidence." After the war he helped establish the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU, *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*) in the Soviet Occupation Zone, but he soon became disillusioned and distanced himself from party politics. In 1946 he resumed his position as publisher of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, for which he had obtained a press license from the British authorities. During the Cold War, Pechel was a prominent advocate of Western freedom and a leading figure in the PEN Center, first in the all-German PEN Center, then in the West German PEN Center.²⁸ He also sat on the executive committee of the *Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit* (Congress for Cultural Freedom), which was established in 1950.²⁹ Pechel's radically anticommunist rhetoric—he compared East Germany to a concentration camp, for example—posited an equivalence between all forms of totalitarianism.³⁰ Most likely, his *Deutsche Rundschau* survived the 1950s only thanks to generous subsidies from the *Bundesministerium für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen* (Federal Ministry of All-German Affairs), which saw to it that copies were smuggled into the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and subscriptions from numerous Bonn-based agencies.³¹

As well as painting Pechel as a conservative revolutionary supporter of the Nazi seizure of power, *Das verlorene Gewissen* argued that Pechel's *Deutsche Rundschau* articles had served to "dispel any remaining doubts we young National Socialists may have had in Hitler and the Nazi revolution."³² In what was an attempt to justify his own career, Ziesel quoted from the April 1933 issue of the journal, in which Pechel had enthused about the "national revolution" and expressed satisfaction at the demise of left-wing and Jewish literary figures.³³

Indeed, Ziesel explicitly defended Pechel's stance toward National Socialism:

In all probability [Pechel] hoped that his journalism, which was critical in its support and always prepared to raise an admonitory finger, would

contribute to the ideal development of the new national state reflecting the ideals he had long fought for. Far into the war years, he courageously continued to object to injustices and threats to development while remaining fundamentally supportive of the whole course.³⁴

Given the selfless bravery Pechel had demonstrated during the Third Reich, it was difficult to understand why he had since joined the ranks of the opportunists who dragged decent men through the mud, Ziesel wrote:

Neither Kolbenheyer nor Hans Grimm, neither Zillich, Johst, Agnes Miegel, Alverdes, nor Ida Seidel, neither Carossa nor Jünger nor Benn ever glorified Hitler's crimes or committed crimes themselves. They believed in Hitler. It may be true that, after the path he had taken had become evident to even the most politically immature of these writers, they remained silent, telling themselves that everything would change once the war was over. But not one of them was a deliberate barbarian, warmonger, or murderer.³⁵

Ziesel complained that these writers' "books were now banned," that they were "driven out of their homes, put into camps," that "the venal opportunists of the press maligned them in the crudest terms," and that "low-rent writers whose oeuvre largely comprised pornographic rags and fashion magazines" were being allowed to hound them with impunity.³⁶ Ziesel's claims here were simply untrue, however. They did not apply by any stretch of the imagination to the media stars Ernst Jünger and Gottfried Benn, and even the other, less famous, figures he sympathized with soon found their (now mostly elderly) audience. But that was of little interest to Ziesel: the jumble of terms in a statement such as "deliberate barbarian, warmonger, or murderer" is characteristic of his montages of facts, lies, and half-truths. In reality no one had ever accused these writers of killing anyone, nor had it ever been claimed that they had "deliberately" become barbarians during the Nazi regime. What was true, however, was that some of them, like Ziesel himself, had lauded the Führer as a brilliant military strategist and extolled the beauty of his war.³⁷ To underscore his own supposed victim status, Ziesel quoted (without providing a page number) the following sentence aimed at Kolbenheyer from a 1956 issue of the *Deutsche Rundschau*: "The brown rats must be stamped out, once and for all."³⁸

Ziesel regarded Hans Friedrich Blunck as an opportunist nonpareil, though in this case Ziesel's accusations were not entirely unfounded. In 1957 *Die Zeit* had given Blunck, the former president of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*, an

opportunity to absolve himself of any political responsibility in a letter to the editor.³⁹ But, according to Ziesel, Blunck was just one example of many writers who saw values such as “friendship, loyalty, trust, and conscience” only as “a means to an end.”⁴⁰ Ziesel also dredged up the past of the writer Jürgen Eggebrecht, who had been a member of PEN since 1958 and now developed intellectual evening programming for the public broadcaster *Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk* (NWDR) and worked for the northern German regional television station *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* (NDR). Ziesel claimed to have been close friends with Eggebrecht during the war, when Ziesel had served in a *Wehrmacht* propaganda company and Eggebrecht had been the “Armed Forces High Command’s high priest of censorship.”⁴¹ According to Ziesel, Eggebrecht had refused to authorize Ziesel’s novel *Der Vergessene* (“The Forgotten Man,” 1941) for the troops, and later, in his influential postwar position as a broadcast editor, saw to it that Ziesel’s publications never received any coverage.

Walter Hilpert and Wolfgang Weyrauch were two more players in this conspiracy of silence, Ziesel maintained. Hilpert, who prior to 1945 had worked for the regional Nazi radio station *Reichssender Königsberg*, joined NWDR in 1945 and was appointed the first director general of NDR in 1956. Meanwhile, Weyrauch, who had once given Ziesel a rave review in the Nazi newspaper *Das Reich*,⁴² had supposedly adopted a “new democrat” persona after the war, both in his position as editor at the publisher Rowohlt and as a member of the Grünwalder Kreis, a group of pro-democracy intellectuals.⁴³ Ziesel also characterized the feuilleton editors of some leading German newspapers as erstwhile acolytes of Hitler. One of them was Bruno E. Werner of the *Tagesspiegel*, who for more than a decade had been in charge of the cultural pages of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, until just before its demise in 1945. Ziesel described Werner as “one of the most loyal and zealous servants of Nazi cultural policies”; so loyal, in fact, that he had been “allowed to hold on to his position in spite of his ancestry, which was not purely Aryan.”⁴⁴ While Paul Hühnerfeld, who worked first for *Die Zeit* and then for *Die Welt*, was still too young in 1945 to have written embarrassing journalistic texts in previous years, his “dictatorial regime” as an editor was “no doubt [. . .] a remnant of his years in the Hitler Youth.”⁴⁵ *Die Zeit* editor Josef Müller-Marein, “one of the Luftwaffe’s star war correspondents,”⁴⁶ was not spared Ziesel’s ire, nor was his colleague Walter Abendroth (1896–1973), whom Ziesel depicted as an “exceptionally fanatical race and nationhood zealot in the musical sphere.”

Ziesel quoted from a 1939 essay by Abendroth for the periodical *Deutsches Volkstum* on the history of the relationship between intellectuals and the *Volk*:

It is quite a leap from such justified awareness of one's genuine superiority to the "wise guy's" arrogant sense of detachment from his *Volk's* natural bonds of blood, tradition, and fate and his snooty lack of interest in the work and struggles that sustained him and indeed made his very existence possible. But many "intellectuals" have had the effrontery to take this leap at decisive historical junctures. In so doing, they have become—whether wittingly or not—welcome victims of the Jewish strategy. For the Jew himself, intellectualism is an effective subversive tool, an explosive that divides the people he rules into impotent classes.⁴⁷

One of the most prominent intellectuals Ziesel attacked was Karl Korn, feuilleton editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ). For a short period Korn had held the same position at Goebbels's weekly *Das Reich*, where, according to Ziesel, he was well paid, could write his lofty prose, and was exempted from serving at the front: "And so they all came running [to the Nazis], all these 'inner emigrants': Mr. Korn, Mr. Süskind, Mr. Petersen, Mr. Weyrauch, Mr. Schüddekopf, and whatever the rest of them are called, all these people who now claim to have been resistance fighters against Goebbels and Hitler."⁴⁸

For Ziesel, the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung* (German Academy for Language and Literature) was a hotbed of hypocrisy whose members—presided over by opportunistic Nazi-era careerists such as its president, Hermann Kasack, and the writer Kasimir Edschmid—had styled themselves as victims of the Third Reich. Ziesel maintained that this was a grotesque misrepresentation of their true roles.⁴⁹

The Public Reaction and the Responses of the Accused

With its explosive revelations substantiated by striking juxtapositions of quotes from before and after 1945, its withering contempt for opportunistic "converts" who were allegedly continuing to abuse their powerful positions in the media, and its praise for supposedly principled figures who had stood by their values, *Das verlorene Gewissen* caught the public's attention. Of course, it also caused great unease among those whom Ziesel accused, figures who, in the immediate postwar years, had become accustomed to not being questioned about their pasts.

Ziesel documented the reactions to his exposé in *Die Geister scheiden sich* ("Opinions Differ"), a book spanning more than two hundred pages

published just two years later by the same publishing house.⁵⁰ *Die Geister scheiden sich* makes it relatively easy to reconstruct the various responses. The first section provides samples of letters Ziesel received.⁵¹ Strikingly, all of the letters sent by politicians were from members of the government, including Franz Blücher, Max Becker, Ewald Bucher, and Hermann Schwann from the Free Democratic Party (FDP, *Freie Demokratische Partei*), as well as Werner Dollinger, Karl Theodor Freiherr zu Guttenberg, and Franz Josef Strauß from the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU, *Christlich-Soziale Union*). Strauß's congratulatory letter, which commended Ziesel on having the "courage to poke a wasp's nest," is typical of the positive responses. "I am convinced of the integrity of your intentions," Strauß continued, "as in view of the current situation in German literature and the German media—a situation you yourself have described—this book is likely to win you enemies as well as friends." Strauß congratulated Ziesel again on the publication of the second edition of the book, which, according to Strauß, provided a fuller picture, and again on the fourth edition, which proved "that your brave writing has struck a chord and met with a positive reception in all circles."⁵²

The majority of letters sent by writers were commendations from former members of the Third Reich's literary elite. Manfred Hausmann—who, as mentioned above, had been a target of Ziesel's criticism during the Nazi years—wrote: "I do not envy your Herculean labor in the Augean stables."⁵³ Bernt von Heiseler invoked the same image: "But the writer's courage deserves admiration and appreciation, what with the Augean stable boys maintaining that everything is in perfect order. It is not easy to say to their faces what condition the stables are really in."⁵⁴ Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer professed admiration for Ziesel's "brave attack on corruption."⁵⁵ Bruno Brehm, Hans Grimm, and a few others sent similarly enthusiastic responses.

Hans Werner Richter, a member of *Gruppe 47*, had also written to Ziesel. His letter was probably included to create an impression of objectivity:

I have read your book. I will provide a detailed response shortly. [. . .]
 I wish to clarify all the points you raise in your book. For instance, you write about left-wing intellectuals' "depraved misrule." But when I look at the names of the journalists you attack in your book, nearly all of them are conservatives, or at least people who belonged to the conservative camp in 1933, when almost all "left-wing intellectuals" disappeared from the public eye. These intellectuals never really got anywhere after 1945, either—certainly not in any "dominant and powerful sense." [. . .]

Or are you claiming that people like Zehrer, Wirsing, Süskind, Sperr, Korn, etc. are “left-wing intellectuals”?⁵⁶

Ziesel received letters from conservative and national liberal politicians, functionaries from German expellee organizations, and right-wing Catholic writers such as Emil Franzel and Herbert Graber, editor of *Deutsche Hochschulelehrerzeitung*, a publication for people who had been “driven out of office” after the war. Strikingly, however, hardly any well-known intellectuals or contemporary authors wrote to him. Hans Werner Richter was one exception; another, more surprising, exception was Kurt Hiller, a left-wing intellectual who had achieved prominence in the Weimar Republic as a radical pacifist, independent socialist, and contributor to the weekly news magazine *Die Weltbühne*.⁵⁷ Ziesel presented Hiller’s letter of praise as if it were a trophy, publishing it beneath the heading “Emigrant, Jew, Left-Wing Socialist”:

Dear Mr. Ziesel, You and I work from diametrically opposing stand-points. But that does not prevent me from applauding many things: your determination to reveal the truth; the soundness and integrity of your hatred; your genuine (from your perspective) patriotism; and your articulateness. I am your opponent, not your enemy. And I was especially gratified by the powerful, sober manner in which you exposed those gentlemen who—partly due to what I know about them, partly due to gut instinct—have always sickened me.⁵⁸

Hiller, himself no stranger to controversy, charged into the fray to defend Ziesel. In response to a letter from the editor-in-chief of the SZ, Werner Friedmann, who had described Ziesel as a “defamer,”⁵⁹ Hiller wrote that he welcomed Friedmann’s decision to sue Ziesel. If Ziesel lost, he would be finished, Hiller admitted, but this outcome was unlikely:

The schmuck who can write right or write left depending on who is paying him did not die out with Gustav Freytag. Should fate present us tomorrow with a clerical fascist dictatorship, yesterday’s babbler in *völkisch* ideas and today’s serious liberal democrat will tomorrow start singing a clerical fascist tune. And should Nazism reemerge the day after tomorrow, he will once again start spewing Nazi drivel. And, needless to say, should Ulbricht rule all of Germany the day after tomorrow (something the UN or Juno would hopefully not allow to happen), this same schmuck will toe the Communist Party line. It nauseates me more than Hitler, Ulbricht, and Adenauer combined.⁶⁰

In the meantime, Hiller passed Friedmann's letter on to Ziesel, who then threatened to sue Friedmann, as a result of which the latter was forced to retract his claim that Ziesel was a "defamer."⁶¹ When Friedmann subsequently reproached Hiller for his disloyalty in passing the letter on to Ziesel, Hiller merely continued his diatribe against opportunistic intellectuals. He wrote that he would stick by his "friend Ziesel," a person "with whom I may have several political differences, but with whom I have a great deal in common when it comes to morals. [. . .] Give me someone with strength of character from the right over a left-wing swine any day."⁶²

Ziesel and Hiller, two troublemakers from opposite ends of the political spectrum, continued to correspond regularly for a decade after Hiller first contacted Ziesel in February 1958. In his second letter, Hiller invited Ziesel to Hamburg to discuss the question of "whether, leaving aside any shared character traits, it is possible to build an ideological bridge between decent people from the right and decent people from the left."⁶³ Ziesel was "greatly moved" by this conversation, which took place in Hamburg in the spring of 1958. He sought to repay Hiller for passing on Friedmann's letter by attempting to persuade Lehmanns to publish an updated edition of Hiller's booklet *Rote Ritter* ("Red Knights"), a settlement of scores with German communists living in exile.⁶⁴ Ziesel also invited Hiller to write short glosses for his *Europäischer Kulturdienst*, though he warned Hiller that he could not really offer a proper honorarium.⁶⁵ In March 1961 Ziesel went so far as to propose that Hiller, a committed leftist, write a regular column for a "major new German news magazine" of which Ziesel would be editor-in-chief. In his letter Ziesel reiterated the view he shared with Hiller: "I wish to embolden [. . .] the decent people of all parties and all directions and to scalp the swine of both the left and the right."⁶⁶ However, the news magazine, which was supposed to be launched in May 1961, never materialized.

It was probably through Hiller that Ziesel found a surprising forum in the shape of *Konkret*, a Hamburg-based monthly magazine read by many intellectuals and, until 1964, clandestinely subsidized by the GDR.⁶⁷ Ziesel expressed delight at having the opportunity to contribute to a publication whose "leanings are in many respects the opposite of my own cultural and political views." In "offering people with different views the space to share their opinions," Ziesel wrote, *Konkret* demonstrated a sense of "fairness and integrity that has become rare in contemporary journalism [and that] fills me with respect."⁶⁸ This did not stop *Konkret* from also publishing reviews of those earlier works in which Ziesel had worn "his brown coat."⁶⁹

Though he was loath to admit it, Ziesel was disappointed by the press coverage of *Das verlorene Gewissen*. Several newspapers had initially reported that an injunction would prohibit the book from entering a second print run, thereby creating the impression that Ziesel's work was not to be trusted and that there was therefore no need for reputable publications to review it. But these reports were premature or indeed outright false, and *Das verlorene Gewissen* was reprinted just a few weeks later. Ziesel himself claimed that his book had received positive reviews in 70 percent of German newspapers, though he admitted that none of these were major titles.⁷⁰

In reality, with the exception of a sympathetic review by Walter Görnitz in *Die Welt*—albeit one that barely engaged with the book's content⁷¹—there were hardly any noteworthy press reactions for Ziesel to document in *Die Geister scheiden sich*, a fact that no number of reviews from second- and third-rate publications could disguise. *Das verlorene Gewissen* was not covered in the *SZ*, *Die Zeit*, the *FAZ*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, or the *Rheinischer Merkur*. Even *Der Spiegel*, which had received the galley and was usually reluctant to let a scandal pass it by, demonstrated no interest in covering the book. Ziesel bemoaned the “radio silence” also maintained by the country's influential public broadcasters,⁷² of which only Radio Bremen discussed *Das verlorene Gewissen*. Some publications whose editors Ziesel had personally attacked—including Wilhelm Westecker, arts editor of *Christ und Welt*—published disparaging articles.⁷³ In general, however, the media regarded Ziesel as a conceited braggart and malinger who ought not to receive publicity.

Not even members of the Social Democrat press were prepared to exploit the attacks on their conservative colleagues. In the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD, *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) newspaper *Der neue Vorwärts*, Rolf Schroers, a member of *Gruppe 47*, called Ziesel's book a “smear campaign” and “diatribe” that revealed “the author's pathological defect.” Meanwhile, the *Hamburger Echo* compared Ziesel's tone to that of a “thug from the SA.”⁷⁴ Even the *Weltbühne* in East Berlin professed that it did not “wish to capitalize on Ziesel's pamphlet.” At the same time, however, the *Weltbühne* opposed any attempts to “hush up” the past. In a response to a letter from Rudolf Pechel praising the restraint of the “respectable press,” the *Weltbühne* asked why, exactly, the “respectable press” was remaining silent, and suggested that it was because people did not wish to confront potentially embarrassing realities.⁷⁵

The press had almost entirely closed ranks, with publications either refusing to even mention *Das verlorene Gewissen* or else failing to address its key point, the incriminating pasts of the West German journalistic elite. But the

book was nonetheless read behind closed doors, particularly in intellectual circles. Hans Werner Richter therefore decided that a strategy of silence was not enough; he wished to refute Ziesel's claims. Ziesel had written to Richter in the mistaken belief that the latter had allowed *Das verlorene Gewissen* to be slammed in *Kultur* by Josef Winckler,⁷⁶ a writer with Nazi links who had previously lambasted Ziesel's novel *Daniel in der Löwengrube*. "If, however, this mentorship or responsibility no longer exists," Ziesel wrote, "I believe it is high time for a man like you to finally stand up and object to the depraved misrule imposed by the left-wing intellectuals of our Federal Republic's consumer cooperative. Decent people on all political sides, including your own, have long been waiting for you to do so."⁷⁷

In his friendly reply, Richter pointed out that he had stopped working for *Kultur* one year previously. His promise to provide a more detailed response to *Das verlorene Gewissen* strengthened Ziesel's hope of organizing "a revolt by upstanding people across the entire political spectrum."⁷⁸ In the end Richter invited Ziesel to a discussion of *Das verlorene Gewissen*, which Ziesel accepted along with Richter's conditions: "It will be private, not public. It will not be exploited for journalistic purposes either by you or by us. [. . .] I will invite between twenty and thirty members of the Grünwalder Kreis to participate. [. . .] Once again, I would ask that we avoid any media fuss for the time being. I will oblige all participants to adhere to this rule."⁷⁹

Richter explained his strategy in a letter to Jürgen Eggebrecht, whom Ziesel had attacked particularly virulently. In this letter Richter subtly criticized the manner in which Ziesel's allegations had been handled up to that point:

Dear Jürgen, after lengthy consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it is no longer possible to maintain our long silence on Ziesel. As there has been no response from the direct targets of his allegations, I will respond. The book is not just being read in right-wing circles, it is being read everywhere, and unfortunately it is receiving a positive response, even from many leftists. It is therefore dangerous. Here are some preliminary thoughts:

1. I will appear here on the *Bayerischer Rundfunk* [public broadcaster] with a response of around thirty minutes. Could you do the same on NDR?
2. The Journalists' Club⁸⁰ has decided that it is crucial to write an "anti-Ziesel." Kuby is already in talks with Ullstein, but Desch is another possibility. I would write this "anti-Ziesel" myself, with everyone's help, of course. My assistant would be Theo Pirker.

3. Ziesel has written to me. He is ready to engage in a discussion with the Grünwalder Kreis. I am considering it. The discussion would take place in private here in Munich (probably within the next fourteen days). Would you be interested in taking part?⁸¹

Richter invited mainly Munich-based journalists to the meeting, which took place at eight o'clock on the evening of March 12, 1958, in the Hotel Platzl. Most of the invitees, including the journalists Erich Kuby and Rudolf Pechel, were from Richter's own circle of political acquaintances.⁸² In his invitation to Pechel, Richter made a case similar to the one made to Eggebrecht, arguing "that the time has come to touch Ziesel, even if we need to use a ten-foot pole."⁸³ In a subsequent letter to Pechel, who was unable to make up his mind about whether to accept Richter's invitation and confront Ziesel in person, Richter wrote:

I continue to believe that this "discussion" must be followed by a journalistic war on Ziesel. This cannot be a defensive war, however; it must be offensive and waged on all fronts. We have no choice but to use his own defamatory methods against him as aggressively as possible. I will do whatever I can in this regard. I am well aware that the motive behind Ziesel's attacks is to attract publicity, but he has already achieved that by now anyway. His book is not just being widely read, it is also, unfortunately, widely believed. [. . .] He is a swine, a kind of Freisler of journalism, but he is wreaking havoc, utter havoc.⁸⁴

The outcome of the meeting on March 12, 1958, does not appear to have been documented, so it would appear that the participants honored their promise of confidentiality. They would subsequently encounter Ziesel at the odd event in the city, and Stefl even continued to write to him for a while. In one densely typed six-page letter, Stefl explained why he had not wanted to go for coffee with Ziesel after one of the latter's public lectures. Ziesel had delivered a "miniature Sportpalast speech," Stefl complained, in which the word "intellectual" had been used as a term of abuse and Ziesel had vilified his critics, not for being Nazis, but for "having betrayed Nazism." Moreover, Stefl continued, Ziesel's attacks on left-wing intellectuals had been disingenuous, given that he had failed to define what he meant by "left": "Is Mr. Korn left-wing? Mr. Süs-kind? Mr. Weyrauch? Is the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* left-wing? Is the SPD left-wing?" Ziesel had attacked the "pseudo-left" in order to "damage the left," Stefl maintained.⁸⁵ But by this point, with opinions hardened on both sides, there

was nothing to be gained by arguing any further. In the years that followed, all disagreements were handled by lawyers.

In the last chapter of *Die Geister scheiden sich*, Ziesel comments on the reactions of the central figures exposed in *Das verlorene Gewissen*—Rudolf Pechel, Hermann Kasack, Bruno E. Werner, Karl Korn, W. E. Süskind, and Werner Friedmann—and tears apart with relish their attempts to justify themselves. Pechel was the only one of these men to make public statements in his defense. The arguments he made, in his own *Deutsche Rundschau* in February 1958 and later in a letter to the *Weltbühne* in the GDR, were easily refutable. Pechel characterized Ziesel's "toxic book" as a "rotten-egg omelet that rehashes numerous long-disproved accusations." As proof, Pechel recalled meeting Hitler in 1922 and being left with "such a lasting sense of the inferiority of the man" that he was unable to harbor "even a moment's sympathy for this movement."⁸⁶ However, this rather desperate diversionary tactic merely allowed Ziesel to point to a series of *Deutsche Rundschau* articles from spring 1933, in which Pechel had celebrated the Nazi seizure of power and welcomed the exclusion of Jewish intellectuals.

The unearthing of these articles sowed doubt even among Pechel's allies. Pechel noted with some bitterness that Joachim Günther, the editor-in-chief of *Neue Deutsche Hefte*, whom Pechel had known well since the 1930s, took Ziesel's side in this matter. Pechel saw this as a black mark "not just against his [Günther's] judgment, but also against his character, and for me it signifies the complete breakdown of our relationship."⁸⁷ Pechel's final years were overshadowed by the defamation action he had brought against Ziesel. In a rather mawkish letter to President Theodor Heuss, whom he knew well, Pechel announced his decision to move to Switzerland:

I have always felt an affinity with you due to our shared opposition to certain trends. So you, of all people, will understand why, after a long period of fighting on the front line, I now wish to withdraw from the front and gain some distance from the insults and slander directed at me over the past few years. All the dirt thrown at me does not really hurt. It is just irksome that the courts move so slowly and that the dirt remains unrefuted in the public sphere. To avoid any suspicions of interfering with an ongoing case, I am unable to refute in my journalism all the nonsense.

To make matters worse, my complaint against Ziesel and the publisher Lehmann[s] has been redirected to the public prosecutor's office in Munich, [. . .] which appears to be reluctant to take legal action against

former Nazis, seeing as [its] decision has been pending for more than half a year now. I will try to leave Germany without bitterness, though it entails the risk of cutting myself off from the rest of the world.⁸⁸

Pechel did not write a single sentence explaining or attempting to justify the articles celebrating the “national revolution” of 1933 that had been the catalyst for Ziesel’s invective. He did not win his libel suit against Ziesel. On December 29, 1960, the Munich public prosecutor’s office ordered the dismissal of proceedings. Even before this, Pechel’s lawyer had given him the following advice: “Please don’t get too worked up. There’s no point, and Ziesel is not worth it. That bothersome foreigner will get what’s coming to him one day, and I will try to see to it that he is thrown out of the country.”⁸⁹ Pechel died in Switzerland a year later.

The Case of Karl Korn

Karl Korn was another journalist greatly troubled by Ziesel’s revelations, though these were initially a little vague in his case. It was already common knowledge that Korn, the FAZ “high priest of culture,” had once been the “literary star” of *Das Reich*.⁹⁰ But *Das verlorene Gewissen* focused on articles published in the Nazi newspaper in 1942, by which point Korn was no longer responsible for the arts pages.⁹¹ As a result, Ziesel’s criticism of Korn’s involvement with *Das Reich* was rather indirect. Ziesel brought up Korn’s *Wehrmacht* career, pointing out that Korn had participated in the development of ideological training material for the *Wehrmacht* and held the rank of *Sonderführer*. His colleague Margret Boveri, whom Korn had met when she was a trainee at the *Berliner Tageblatt* in 1934,⁹² wrote that she was “greatly saddened” by Korn’s decision to take legal action against Ziesel:

Apart from his book, has he done anything to you? I’ve read almost all of the book (got a copy from Heuss), and as Ziesel attacks you only for being a “high priest of culture” without quoting anything you’ve written, I didn’t think it was that bad. I met Fracklers in Munich in September, and he told me that Süskind hasn’t taken any action against Ziesel. And he would have more reason to do so than you.⁹³

Korn also informed Theodor Heuss, whose term as federal president was due to end in a few weeks’ time, of his decision to sue Ziesel and asked Heuss “to confirm in a letter what you know about the journalist Karl Korn in the Third Reich.” Heuss sought to reassure Korn in a letter dated August 5, 1959: “Fairly

regularly in the Soviet Zone press, and later in the cheap nationalism that has reemerged in some German magazines, I myself have been denounced as one of Goebbels's accomplices, all because of a few book reviews and three essays I published in the 'Reich.'" Heuss pointed out that it was Korn and Boveri who had initially invited him to write for *Das Reich*, but that he had stopped after Goebbels turned the newspaper into his personal platform.⁹⁴ In circumstances that remain unclear, Heuss's letter ended up in the hands of Ziesel, who then published it in his *Europäischer Kulturdienst*.⁹⁵

There was no shortage of support for Korn in other quarters, either. Though he was not particularly well acquainted with Korn, Kasimir Edschmid, secretary-general of the West German PEN Center—the country's most prestigious writers' association—wrote to express his solidarity. Without even mentioning Ziesel's name, Edschmid, who had also been mentioned in *Das verlorene Gewissen*, recalled the experience he and Korn had shared as writers in the Third Reich. Such an experience, Edschmid insisted, could be judged only by those who had been there:

Many people today find it difficult to grasp that, back then, it was understood that you had to do certain things for the sake of self-preservation and disguise. But everyone knew who they were dealing with, who was writing. Of course, when wrenched from the climate and the circumstances of the time, sentences can have a completely different meaning for people who read them in bad faith.⁹⁶

Ernst Niekisch, a one-time national revolutionary once imprisoned by the Nazis and largely boycotted in the postwar FRG due to his membership in the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED, *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*), offered more words of reassurance. He advised Korn to keep calm: "I know how sensitive you are, and I fear that you will allow Ziesel's actions to upset you more than is necessary."⁹⁷ In his reply Korn admitted "that this vile episode with Ziesel is gnawing away at me":

My friends and I believe that I myself am not the real target here—Ziesel is not interested in me. He wants to create an initial breach so that he can then bring everyone else down. He wants to get the people who were young and unexperienced under National Socialism but who are now entirely cured. Your words have done me good. I may not have been a hero, but I was not a villain either.⁹⁸

In an attempt to contest biographical inaccuracies, Korn filed for an injunction at the Munich Regional Court. The injunction was only partly granted,

however, as the court found that most of the statements Ziesel had made about Korn were based on verifiable facts.⁹⁹ Ziesel's publisher, Lehmanns, immediately publicized the court's decision, against which Korn swiftly appealed. *Die Welt* was the first newspaper to report on Ziesel's victory.¹⁰⁰ Korn's fellow editor at the FAZ, Erich Welter, eventually managed to dissuade Korn from publishing his own account of the case, arguing that this would merely provide Ziesel with even more publicity. However, other newspapers soon covered the case.

One of the unwanted side effects of Korn's lawsuit was that it prompted observers to take a closer look at his articles for *Das Reich*. In the fall of 1959, *Der Hoff Jude* ("The Court Jew"), a 1940 article by Korn with inexcusable antisemitic content, circulated among fellow journalists. A discussion of Veit Harlan's film *Jud Süß*, the article was filled with antisemitic clichés. For example, it invoked the specter of "an alien race" penetrating "the framework of the German economy," and lamented "the thirst for revenge of an underworld that has twisted the 'chosen' people's sense of mission into Talmudic nihilism." These developments bore the danger of "Jewish hunger for power and Talmudic hatred" forming an alliance with a "ruler alien to the *Volk*." Finally, at a time when the mass murder of Europe's Jews was under way, Korn stated, "This film gives one a tangible sense that the Jewish problem in Germany has been overcome internally."¹⁰¹

A deeply concerned Korn sent a copy to Theodor Heuss, who had just completed his presidential term, in the hope that Heuss would again come to his defense. He refused to provide any justification for the article, however: "I do not wish to have anything to do with this *Jud Süß* business," he wrote, adding that while he would like to defend Korn from "subalterns running amok," he was not prepared to be a "key witness."¹⁰² Korn hoped to receive a more positive reaction from his friend Walter Dirks. In response to Korn's request for advice, Dirks wrote:

I must say in all honesty that your text shocked me. It has not changed my attitude to you or to the problem in any way, but having read the article, I see that the situation is graver than I thought. I still think that one's only option is to put one's cards on the table, though of course you are limited in that respect as the courts are involved, and there you must fight tooth and nail to defend yourself. Nevertheless, I think it would help your just cause if you could find a way of indirectly indicating that you have distanced yourself from the article. [...] Out of threefold sol-

idarity based on democracy, our profession, and friendship, I feel compelled to help you, and I am constantly thinking about how I can best do this. Would you consider at some stage an “open letter” addressed to you? For publication in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*? Or the *Frankfurter Hefte*?¹⁰³

Dirks did not elaborate on his shock at Korn’s antisemitic article. Instead, he focused entirely on how Korn ought to handle this new crisis in public and in his legal action against Ziesel. Dirks and Korn, journalists of the same generation, had known each other well since the 1930s, and it would appear that a show of collegiality was Dirks’s priority. Korn was appreciative of Dirks’s advice, but replied that he did not wish to offer “Mr. Ziesel an exposed flank” ahead of his injunction appeal hearing.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, he wrote, he was hoping to put forward an interpretation of his article “that, legally, cannot and may not be associated with the dreadful things that took place during the so-called Final Solution.” In fact, Korn claimed, when he wrote his review of *Jud Süß*, he had “genuinely believed that with a few ambivalent phrases” he would be able to “provide an overall analysis of the film that would be helpful to those who were being persecuted” by creating the impression that everything had been finished long ago.¹⁰⁵

One month later, Korn’s article was mentioned in the press. After Korn wrote an article for the FAZ denouncing the desecration by neo-Nazis of a recently consecrated synagogue in Cologne over Christmas 1959, the *Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaftszeitung* quoted a few sentences from Korn’s *Das Reich* article.¹⁰⁶ In his response to the *Deutsche Zeitung*, Korn repeated the arguments he had made to Walter Dirks, claiming that his aim in writing the article had been to prevent even worse things from happening. This was followed by the publication of a reply from the *Deutsche Zeitung*’s editors along with letters to the editor, including an abridged one from Walter Dirks.¹⁰⁷ Though there were no other press reactions to Korn’s *Das Reich* article, the matter was now public knowledge. An angry Erich Welter rebuked Korn for having responded to the *Deutsche Zeitung*, opining that in doing so Korn had given its “hack” editor, Hans Hellwig, “a veneer of respectability.”¹⁰⁸ In the second *Frankfurter Hefte* issue of 1960, Walter Dirks addressed the scandal, publishing in full both Korn’s article on the desecration of the synagogue and Dirks’s own letter to the *Deutsche Zeitung*. Dirks maintained that his position was rooted in Christian compassion. He did not wish to defend or justify “those words from 1940,” but to demonstrate “solidarity with their author and with anyone who opposed

the Nazis yet nonetheless made some mistakes back then, for I know they now feel guilt and regret.” Dirks castigated journalists for losing all sense of proportion in “comparing a journalist who made one mistake to the moral authors of Nazi antisemitism.” Such “witch hunts” and “pharisaic attacks on those who were complicit” would only cement “our enmeshment in that guilt” rather than “freeing us from it,” he argued.¹⁰⁹

For Korn, Dirks’s support was “important and reassuring”:¹¹⁰

It was with great happiness that I read and reread your noble declaration of solidarity. Being so considered and helpful and accurate, it is exceptionally welcome and useful, particularly in the light of my upcoming legal disputes. The whole incident is extraordinarily illustrative of how, without me doing anything at all, a completely isolated text can suddenly fall under the shadow of Auschwitz and the years can roll back.¹¹¹

Dirks received another positive response to his article from Theodor W. Adorno, who felt compelled “to tell you that I agree with every word you wrote, right down to the smallest nuance.” He and Dirks would likely agree on a point that Dirks had not mentioned, probably for “strategic reasons,” Adorno added: “that the people behind these things are irredeemable Nazis who cannot bear the fact that Korn—a decent man to the core—is better than them, and so they vilify him for sins that they themselves committed.”¹¹² Adorno sent a copy of this letter to Korn in the hope that it would be the source of “a little cheer”: “And if you feel there is anything I could do in public to help you with this affair, please let me know. I have nothing substantive to add to what Dirks has already written; but perhaps my name could, god willing, exert some influence in abstracto.”¹¹³

In his letter of thanks, Korn wrote that the worst aspect of the whole affair was the “horrible moral ignominy.”¹¹⁴ He was probably aware that the FAZ editorial board was having difficulty deciding whether the newspaper should report on the outcome of his lawsuit or not. Dolf Sternberger, who believed that remaining silent would be “disastrous,” warned against “short-sighted loyalty to Korn.”¹¹⁵ One month later, however, Korn could breathe a sigh of relief. He wrote to Dirks with delight, “The battle is won for now! The Higher Regional Court of Munich has prohibited Ziesel from publishing eight malicious falsehoods, at least.” The appellate court, after adducing other articles by Korn to put his film review in *Das Reich* into perspective, had ruled that Korn could be referred to only as an “accessory to antisemitism.” With his nerves “fairly frayed,” Korn now needed some time to rest, he wrote.¹¹⁶

The 1960s: The Political Factions Form and the Controversy Dies Down

Ziesel's political stance in the Federal Republic's first decade—a stance that is evident in *Das verlorene Gewissen*—can be described as a mixture of Occidental and European ideology, radical anti-Bolshevism, and anti-liberalism. Ziesel shared his views with the hard right of German expellee organizations, the CSU, and the *Abendländische Akademie*, an organization dominated by conservative Catholics. Ziesel was not active within these groups, however, preferring to remain nonpartisan and retain his authorial independence. It was only toward the end of the 1950s that he began to become involved in loose associations.¹¹⁷ In 1958, the year his exposé caused such a sensation, he co-founded *Deutscher Kreis 58*, a right-wing conservative alliance against antinuclear organizations.¹¹⁸ The alliance's other co-founders were Walter Becher, a Sudeten German expellee official;¹¹⁹ August Freiherr von der Heydte, a CSU member, writer, and lawyer who was particularly influential within the Occidental movement, which comprised publications and organizations such as *Neues Abendland*, *Abendländische Aktion*, and the *Abendländische Akademie*;¹²⁰ the long-standing CSU Bundestag member Richard Jaeger; and Winfried Martini, a correspondent for *Christ und Welt*, *Rheinischer Merkur*, and *Die Welt*, who was seen by his contemporaries as a particularly ardent “Cold Warrior.” One year later the short-lived *Komitee zum Schutz der Bürger gegen Diffamierung durch die Linkspresse* (Committee for the Protection of Citizens from Defamation by the Left-Wing Press) was established by Ziesel together with Becher, Emil Franzel, a Sudeten German journalist and erstwhile editor-in-chief of *Neues Abendland*, and Hans Kapfinger, publisher of the *Passauer Neue Presse* and a close political ally of Franz Josef Strauß.¹²¹ This committee was established as a reaction to the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten*, a left-wing liberal association that had been in existence since 1956. While the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten* monitored right-wing activities, Ziesel's committee aimed to keep an eye on left-wing publications, with many of its attacks targeting the SZ.¹²² In 1960 Ziesel became one of the co-founders of the *Gesellschaft für freie Publizistik* (Society for Free Journalism), which brought together an array of former Nazi media officials, including Helmut Sündermann, the director of the far-right publishing company Druffel-Verlag and a former deputy to the Nazi press chief.¹²³ One year later, Franz Josef Strauß recruited the enterprising Ziesel to the CSU campaign team for the 1961 Bundestag election. Together with Hans Kapfinger, Ziesel spearheaded the campaign's vicious attacks on the SPD's candidate for chancellor, Willy

Brandt, painting him as a returned emigrant, born to unmarried parents.¹²⁴ In the following years, Ziesel cemented his advantageous ties with Strauß and his associates. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 1960s Ziesel's circle of acquaintances remained limited to Sudeten German expellees and Occidental CSU-affiliated groups in and around Munich.¹²⁵ He appears to have had very few direct ties to other conservative groups in the FRG, and his strident personality meant that he did not have many other friends.

This did not prevent Ziesel from continuing to gain the attention he desired throughout the FRG of the early 1960s with works such as *Der rote Rufmord* ("Red Defamation"), a no-holds-barred polemic against critics of the Federal Minister for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Victims of War, Theodor Oberländer. Documents found in the GDR had given rise to accusations that Oberländer, an *alter Kämpfer* of the Nazi movement and a participant in the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, had been involved in war crimes during the Second World War.¹²⁶ More lawsuits followed the publication of *Der rote Rufmord*. The most prominent plaintiff was the founder of *Der Spiegel*, Rudolf Augstein, who obtained an injunction because of the book's defamatory claim that, as the ruling put it, Augstein disguised himself

as a poor persecuted Jew who uses his newspaper to avenge the crimes perpetrated against him by the Germans. To strengthen this impression, Augstein sometimes uses the pseudonym Jens Daniel or, for editorial work, the name Moritz Pfeil, which accords the newspaper the prestige of employing two Jews as its star journalists.¹²⁷

As a right-wing polemicist, Ziesel continued to enjoy national media coverage. Indeed, in 1963 the magazine *Stern*, whose editors-in-chief believed that Ziesel could boost publicity and therefore sales, held meetings with him to discuss the possibility of his taking over a regular column from the fanatical anticommunist William S. Schlamm.¹²⁸

It was against this background that the rancorous controversies surrounding Ziesel's *Das verlorene Gewissen* entered their final round. The legal disputes may have been fierce, but, with the exception of the points made by Walter Dirks, there had been little real substance to the criticism of Ziesel. The problematic Nazi pasts of many highly respected journalists in the FRG had barely been mentioned in responses to his revelations. The debate surrounding Ziesel's book did not go beyond satisfaction at seeing opportunists being unmasked, on the one hand, and helpless denials and attempts to discredit Ziesel, on the other. Neither those directly involved nor the broader West German public seemed willing to reflect on and openly discuss the Nazi links or postwar

reorientation of a large proportion of West German journalists and authors—figures who now numbered among the Federal Republic's intellectual elite. It was for precisely this reason that the responses to Ziesel were so weak.

Hans Werner Richter failed to deliver the detailed response promised in his 1958 letter, and so, toward the end of 1960, there was a lively exchange of letters between Heinrich Böll and Hans Paeschke, editor of the magazine *Merkur*, who took Böll up on his offer to write an article about Ziesel: "Your Ziesel suggestion is very tempting. We have stayed silent throughout the Ziesel affair, our motto being, 'Only frost can keep dung from spreading.' From a certain distance, now that the madness has died down, one could use the Ziesel affair to say all manner of important things about a German symptomatology."¹²⁹ After Böll sent in his essay, Paeschke responded that the ideas needed "cleaning up."¹³⁰ It soon became apparent what Paeschke was intimating. Böll's essay mentioned the Nazi careers of the author Ernst Jünger and Friedrich Sieburg, a literary critic whom the FAZ presented as the antipode of Karl Korn. Paeschke accepted that "Sieburg cannot be eliminated, as the key premises of the stance you take on that dirty scoundrel Ziesel are bound up with the example of Sieburg. However, my grueling negotiations with my publisher mean that, for the time being, it will simply be impossible to make this kind of reference to Sieburg in *Merkur*."¹³¹

Böll's article was published in 1962 in *Die Zeit*, with all references to Jünger and Sieburg expunged. Böll does not appear to have been interested in writing a punchy polemic that portrayed Ziesel as a manipulator or in uncovering the truth behind Ziesel's distortions, and his curiously vague article does not mention Korn, Pechel, or the other figures whom Ziesel had attacked. On the one hand, Böll was critical of the "respectable" newspapers that had "coily or for reasons of taste" ignored Ziesel's book. On the other hand, though, he characterized Ziesel as untrustworthy, arguing that Ziesel had put a needle into "the wound that needs to be healed, but unfortunately, Ziesel and his needle are not as clean and pure as they purport to be." Böll concluded that all Ziesel was really interested in was himself, and that he, Böll, would remain skeptical until Ziesel also targeted those who praised his literary work: "The bad thing is that there are particles of truth in Ziesel's political arguments, but if one wants to find these particles, one also has to swallow a whole load of nonsense. His drastic simplifications have fascist tendencies [. . .]. Ziesel does not heal or resolve anything."¹³²

Böll's article did not mark the end of the debate, but there was limited interest in the contributions that followed in subsequent years. In 1963 Ziesel sent Marion Dönhoff a photograph of her attendance at a family celebration with

Count Helldorff, chief of the Berlin SA in 1933. In the accompanying letter, Ziesel accused Dönhoff of deeming it right at the time “to ally yourself with a militant Nazi formation.” In addition, Ziesel claimed, there was evidence that Dönhoff had invited the Gauleiter of East Prussia, Erich Koch—“one of the most evil Nazi bigwigs”—to a charity party. Ziesel intended to mention this in his new book, he wrote, and would like an explanation.¹³³

To Ziesel’s surprise, Dönhoff announced that she would have both his letter and her reply published in *Die Zeit*. In her biting response, she noted the “loutish tone” of Ziesel’s letter and claimed that his motivations had “nothing to do with discovering the truth, and everything to do with intimidation.” In any case, Dönhoff pointed out, it had been her National Socialist relatives, and not she, who had invited Koch—Ziesel’s employer at the time—to the party in the photograph. Dönhoff concluded her letter by advising anyone who received a letter from Ziesel to reply with the following “magic formula”: “We have no comment and will hold you liable for any harm caused by your publication.”¹³⁴

The penultimate act in the legal battle between Ziesel and *Die Zeit*, which he had accused of “systematically defaming” him, played out in 1964. Ziesel claimed that with its “lying coverage” the weekly was becoming a “stooge for radical left-wing smear campaigns.”¹³⁵ The dispute was eventually resolved with a “nonaggression pact”—in other words, a “pact to refrain from mentioning each other.”¹³⁶ But by that stage Ziesel’s revelations had lost their power to shock. In one letter Hans Werner Richter advised Fritz J. Raddatz not to worry about Ziesel: “I wouldn’t get too worked up about Ziesel. I think this particular Austrian variety of fascism has had its day.”¹³⁷ While influential left-wing intellectuals of the mid-1960s onward did occasionally address the Nazi pasts of prominent contemporaries, they soon became more interested in structures of power and control within the Third Reich than in specific figures.

Ziesel was at the zenith of his career when he was appointed secretary-general of the Deutschland-Stiftung, an association founded in 1967 which presented awards named after its honorary president, Konrad Adenauer.¹³⁸ But the Deutschland-Stiftung represented only a minority on the conservative spectrum, those situated on the CDU’s extreme right. The association’s main organ, *Deutschland-Magazin*, which Ziesel edited from 1969 on, occasionally reached a circulation of 100,000, but it too was just one of many voices in the conservative media landscape. Ziesel’s shrill attacks on the “terror” spread by the left-wing commentariat and the “pornographic literati” failed to produce the sensation created by his Nazi revelations in the late 1950s;¹³⁹ read only by his right-wing conservative followers, Ziesel’s writing no longer triggered wide public debates.¹⁴⁰ Ziesel unintentionally garnered a degree of media attention

one final time when he accompanied Helmut Kohl on a state visit to Israel in early 1984. The Israeli ambassador in Bonn objected to Ziesel, an “ex-Nazi,” entering Israel, claiming that Ziesel—who had been allowed to fly there in the chancellor’s plane—had inveigled his way into the visiting party by “circumventing and misleading” officials.¹⁴¹ However, this registered as just one of several unfortunate incidents during Kohl’s less than successful visit.

The methods Ziesel used to uncover the pasts of prominent writers have long outlived him, as attested by the numerous publications that have since appeared concerning the Nazi links, whether proven or merely alleged, of liberal and Social Democratic journalists and writers such as Werner Höfer, Fritz Säger, Walter Jens, and Günter Grass. Long after Ziesel’s death in 2001, sensationalist revelations about the biographies of writers and journalists who supported the Nazis in their younger years continued to attract considerable public attention, particularly in the cases of those figures who, without ever addressing their involvement with the Nazi regime, went on to join the Federal Republic’s opinion-forming elite. Ziesel’s approach has entered the arsenal of effective strategies for exposing such figures.

Notes

1. See Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, *Deutsche Kulturgeschichte: Die Bundesrepublik von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Hanser, 2009), 208–10, which includes references to the research literature on this subject.

2. See Christina von Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise: Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit 1945–1973* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006).

3. Armin Mohler, *Tendenzwende für Fortgeschrittene* (Munich: Criticon-Verl., 1978), 155.

4. Quoted in Konrad Jarausch, “Der nationale Tabubruch: Wissenschaft, Öffentlichkeit und Politik in der Fischer-Kontroverse,” in Martin Sabrow, Ralph Jessen and Klaus Große Kracht, eds., *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte: Große Kontroversen seit 1945*, (Munich: Verlag C.H.Beck, 2003), 20–40, here 23. See also Christoph Cornelißen, *Gerhard Ritter: Geschichtswissenschaft und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2001), 597–99.

5. See Carl Schmitt, “Im Vorraum der Macht,” *Die Zeit*, July 29, 1954. The publication of this particular article caused turmoil among the newspaper’s editorial staff, however, and led to the temporary resignation of Marion Dönhoff. See Axel Schildt, “Immer mit der Zeit: Der Weg der Wochenzeitung DIE ZEIT durch die Bonner Republik—eine Skizze,” in Christian Haase and Axel Schildt, eds., *DIE ZEIT und die Bonner Republik: Eine meinungsbildende Wochenzeitung zwischen Wiederbewaffnung und Wiedervereinigung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), 9–27, here 20–21. Other examples can be found in Kai Burkhardt, ed., *Carl Schmitt und die Öffentlichkeit: Briefwechsel mit Journalisten, Publizisten und Verlegern aus den Jahren 1923–1983* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2013); Reinhard Mehring, “Der esoterische Diskurspartisan: Carl Schmitt in der Bundesrepublik,” in Thomas Kroll and Tilman Reitz,

eds., *Intellektuelle in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Verschiebungen im politischen Feld der 1960er und 1970er Jahre* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 232–48.

6. See Lutz Hachmeister, *Heideggers Testament: Der Philosoph, der Spiegel und die SS* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 2014).

7. See Kurt Ziesel, *Das verlorene Gewissen: Hinter den Kulissen der Presse, der Literatur und ihrer Machträger von heute* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1957); all quotations are from the second printing of January 1958, which is identical to the original edition.

8. On Ziesel's biography, see Hans-Dieter Bamberg, *Die Deutschland-Stiftung e.V.: Studien über Kräfte der "demokratischen Mitte" und des Konservatismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1978), 353–55. Stefan Busch offers an insightful analysis of Ziesel's standing in German literary history: see his "Und gestern, da hörte uns Deutschland." *NS-Autoren in der Bundesrepublik: Kontinuität und Diskontinuität bei Friedrich Griese, Werner Beumelburg, Eberhard Wolfgang Möller und Kurt Ziesel* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998), 209–11. In the following discussion, all quotes and details regarding Ziesel's career in the Third Reich are taken from these two works. See also Hans Sarkowicz and Alf Mentzner, *Schriftsteller im Nationalsozialismus: Ein Lexikon* (Berlin: Insel Verlag, 2011), 637–39.

9. Busch, *NS-Autoren in der Bundesrepublik*, 212.

10. *Ibid.*, 246.

11. Monacensia. Literaturarchiv und Bibliothek München (hereafter: Monacensia), Nachlass (personal papers, hereafter: NL) Max Steff, MSt B 105, Letter from Kurt Desch to Max Steff, November 9, 1951.

12. E. P. (Eric A. Peschler), "Die falschen Europäer," *Michael*, August 23, 1953.

13. See Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 134.

14. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 225, Explanation from Max Steff, February 10, 1958.

15. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 480, Letter from Hermann Kasack to Walburga Rucker, May 16, 1955. Walburga Rucker had first met Ziesel by chance on a trip. Ziesel himself wrote that Rucker had initially wanted to introduce him to Munich's literary circles, but she subsequently heard negative reports about him; see Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 54–56.

16. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 480, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Max Steff, May 23, 1955. Ziesel enclosed a letter from Walter von Molo to Rucker warmly defending Ziesel, who had been a friend of von Molo's since 1933.

17. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 480, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Max Steff, May 23, 1955.

18. Kurt Ziesel, *Die verratene Demokratie*, 2nd ed. (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1961),

25. On the interpretation of *Daniel in der Löwengrube*, see Busch, *NS-Autoren in der Bundesrepublik*, 269–71.

19. One of the few exceptions was a rave review by J. O. Zöller, which indirectly confirms the novel's hidden antisemitism. According to Zöller, *Daniel in der Löwengrube* was inspired by a passage in Ernst Jünger's memoir *Strahlungen* about the Jewish policemen, who ordered to arrest Jews in the ghettos, also imprisoned German and Polish gentiles. Zöller wrote that Ziesel had created "an epic tale of the Jewish people and the German people,"

peoples who had suffered “under the same yoke.” See J. O. Zöller, “Erkenntnis und Einkehr,” *Neues Abendland* 7, no. 11 (November 1952): 701–2.

20. See Kurt Ziesel, *Das Leben verläßt uns nicht* (Stuttgart: Verlag Deutsche Volksbücher, 1954), *Und was bleibt ist der Mensch* (Stuttgart: Verlag Deutsche Volksbücher, 1954), *Die goldenen Tage: Roman der Insel Rhodos* (Stuttgart: Verlag Deutsche Volksbücher, 1954), *Solange wir lieben: Roman* (Stuttgart: Stuttgarter Hausbücherei, 1957). See also Busch, *NS-Autoren in der Bundesrepublik*, 230–32, esp. 285.

21. Bamberg, *Deutschland-Stiftung*, 364.

22. Quoted in *ibid.* (*Salzburger Volksblatt*, March 6, 1959).

23. See the documentation of these quotations from the *Europäischer Kulturdienst*, the *Deutsche Zeitung* (Stuttgart), and the right-wing Catholic *Deutsche Tagespost* (Würzburg) in *ibid.*, 365, 368.

24. See Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, 4th ed. (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2011), 195.

25. See Ziesel, *Gewissen*. For further details on J. F. Lehmanns Verlag, which was tainted by its involvement with the Third Reich and published works by several former Nazi writers, see Sigrid Stöckel, ed., *Die “rechte” Nation und ihr Verleger: Politik und Popularisierung im J. F. Lehmanns Verlag 1890–1979* (Heidelberg: J. F. Lehmanns, 2002).

26. Kurt P. Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika: German Nationalism since 1945*, vol. 1 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), 563.

27. Heidrun Ehrke-Rotermund and Erwin Rotermund, *Zwischenreiche und Gegenwelten: Texte und Vorstudien zur “verdeckten Schreibweise” im “Dritten Reich”* (Munich: Fink, 1999), 25–27, analyze Pechel’s *Deutsche Rundschau* texts as examples of the “covert writing style” of the time.

28. See Sven Hanuschek, *Geschichte des bundesdeutschen PEN-Zentrums von 1951 bis 1990* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004), 45.

29. See Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive: Der Kongreß für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), 308–10.

30. See the revealing selection of texts in Rudolf Pechel, *Deutsche Gegenwart: Aufsätze und Vorträge 1945–1952* (Darmstadt: Stichnote, 1953), and the older study by Rosemarie Schäfer, *Rudolf Pechel und die “Deutsche Rundschau” 1946–1961: Zeitgeschehen und Zeitgeschichte im Spiegel einer konservativen politischen Zeitschrift. Eine Studie zur konservativen Publizistik in Deutschland nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (PhD diss., University of Göttingen, 1975). On the construction of a “resistance” based on an orientation toward the West that lasted well into the postwar era, see Alexander Gallus, “Von der ‘Konservativen Revolution’ zur westdeutschen Demokratie: Rudolf Pechels *Deutsche Rundschau* und die Wandlungen des Konservatismus (1919–1961),” in Tilman Mayer, ed., *Medienmacht und Öffentlichkeit in der Ära Adenauer* (Bonn: Bouvier, 2009), 62–84; Claudia Kemper, “Rudolf Pechels intellektuelle Grundposition als Widerstand ‘mit dem Rücken zur Wand,’” in Alexander Gallus and Axel Schildt, eds., *Rückblickend in die Zukunft: Politische Öffentlichkeit und intellektuelle Positionen in Deutschland um 1950 und um 1930* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011), 164–80.

31. See Schäfer, *Rudolf Pechel*, 209–11.

32. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 17.
33. This text is not included in Rudolf Pechel's essay collection, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Der Kampf einer Zeitschrift für Freiheit und Recht 1932–1942* (Wiesenheim: Droemersch Verlaganstalt, 1948). Pechel's "cultural" antisemitism, which was also evident in some of his other texts, went hand in hand with his support of the Young Conservative coalition members of the Hitler cabinet. Led by Franz von Papen and Edgar Julius Jung, these Young Conservatives were "neutralized" in 1934. See Volker Mauersberger, *Rudolf Pechel und die "Deutsche Rundschau": Eine Studie zur konservativ-revolutionären Publizistik in der Weimarer Republik (1918–1933)* (Bremen: Schünemann Universitätsverlag, 1971).
34. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 127.
35. Ibid., 102.
36. Ibid.
37. See Ernst Loewy, *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich und seine Dichtung: Eine Dokumentation* (Frankfurt a. M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1990), 161–63; Uwe-K. Ketelsen, *Literatur und Drittes Reich* (Scherfeld: SH-Verlag, 1992), 172–74; Eva Horn, "Literatur und Krieg," in Wilhelm Haefs, ed., *Nationalsozialismus und Exil 1933–1945 (Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur, vol. 9)* (Munich: Hanser, 2009), 287–309; and Sarkowicz and Mentzner, *Schriftsteller im Nationalsozialismus*.
38. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 17.
39. See Hans Friedrich Blunck, "Blunck stellt klar," *Die Zeit*, May 15, 1957, and Blunck's memoirs: *Unwegsamen Zeiten* (Mannheim: Kessler, 1952).
40. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 27.
41. Ibid., 29.
42. See *ibid.*, 31.
43. The Grünwalder Kreis was founded in 1956 by Hans Werner Richter, who envisaged that this new organization would concentrate on political activism while *Gruppe 47* devoted itself to literary criticism. The most important activities of the Grünwalder Kreis were performed by the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten*, which explicitly focused on the dangers posed by the right. The "club," which had its own news service, existed until the early 1960s. See Dominik Geppert, "Alternativen zum Adenauerstaat: Der Grünwalder Kreis und der Gründungskonsens der Bundesrepublik," in Michael Hochgeschwender, ed., *Epoche im Widerspruch: Ideelle und kulturelle Umbrüche der Adenauerzeit* (Bonn: Bouvier, 2011), 141–52.
44. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 34.
45. Ibid., 111.
46. Ibid., 112.
47. Cited in *ibid.*, 113; not italicized in the original. The antisemitism running through Abendroth's texts has been a topic of much discussion in recent years.
48. Ibid., 115.
49. Ziesel's invectives against Kasack and Edschmid, both of whom had fallen out of favor in 1933, were grossly exaggerated. Under the Nazis, Edschmid's books had been burned, while Kasack had lost his job in radio (and therefore his main source of income). See Sarkowicz and Mentzner, *Schriftsteller im Nationalsozialismus*, 218–20, 373–75. Ziesel's

attack on the Darmstadt-based academy also indirectly implicated Pechel, who had been its president in the early 1950s.

50. See Kurt Ziesel, *Die Geister scheiden sich: Dokumente zum Echo auf das Buch "Das verlorene Gewissen." Eine Auswahl aus über 3 000 in- und ausländischen Pressestimmen und aus Tausenden von Briefen an den Verfasser. Die Reaktion der Betroffenen* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1959).

51. The table of contents describes this part of the book as "a selection of excerpts from thousands of letters to the author and the publisher."

52. Ziesel, *Geister*, 21 (Letters from Franz Josef Strauß to Kurt Ziesel, February 18, May 9, and May 30, 1958).

53. *Ibid.*, 30.

54. *Ibid.*, 30–31, here 31.

55. *Ibid.*, 31–32, here 31.

56. *Ibid.*, 34 (letter dated February 24, 1958).

57. See Kai-Uwe Scholz, "Hiller und Ziesel, oder 'Zu allererst antikonservativ?'," in Rüdiger Schütt and Wolfgang Beutin, eds., *Zu allererst antikonservativ: Kurt Hiller (1885–1972)* (Hamburg: Edition FliCHKraft, 1998), 132–53. On Hiller's biography, see Daniel Münzner, *Kurt Hiller: Der Intellektuelle als Außenseiter* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015).

58. Ziesel, *Geister*, 25 (undated letter).

59. *Ibid.*, 200 (letter dated March 3, 1958).

60. Kurt Hiller Gesellschaft, Neuss (hereafter: KHG), Süddeutsche Zeitung folder, Letter from Kurt Hiller to Werner Friedmann, April 1, 1958.

61. KHG, Süddeutsche Zeitung folder, Letter from Werner Friedmann to Kurt Hiller, July 22, 1958.

62. KHG, Süddeutsche Zeitung folder, Letter from Kurt Hiller to Werner Friedmann, July 23, 1958.

63. KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, Letter from Kurt Hiller to Kurt Ziesel, February 15, 1958.

64. KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Kurt Hiller, May 7, 1958; see also Kurt Hiller, *Rote Ritter: Erlebnisse mit deutschen Kommunisten* (Gelsenkirchen: Ruhr Verlag, 1951; new ed., West Berlin, 1980). An interesting aspect of this publication's tortuous history is the fact that Pechel recommended Hiller to the publisher Ruhr Verlag in Gelsenkirchen, only for the latter to subsequently become embroiled in permanent disputes with Hiller.

65. KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Kurt Hiller, November 13, 1958.

66. KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Kurt Hiller, March 14, 1961.

67. See Alexander Gallus, "Zeitschriftenporträt: 'konkret,'" *Jahrbuch Extremismus & Demokratie* 13 (2001): 227–49; Frederik Obermaier, *Sex, Kommerz und Revolution: Vom Aufstieg und Untergang der Zeitschrift "konkret" (1957–1973)* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2011).

68. Kurt Ziesel, "Den Schmutz beim Namen nennen," *konkret*, nos. 3 and 5 (1958); this quote appears at the start of the article.

69. Review of Ziesel's *Das verlorene Gewissen* in *konkret*, no. 5 (1958); in no. 7 (1958), Ziesel's *Krieg und Dichtung* (1940) is described as "agitational Nazi literature."

70. See Ziesel, *Geister*, 76.
71. See *ibid.*, 78–80 (letter dated February 22, 1958).
72. *Ibid.*, 142.
73. See *ibid.*, 170 (letter dated October 19, 1958).
74. *Ibid.*, 176–1979, here 176 (letter dated February 14, 1958), 166 (letter dated December 12, 1957).
75. *Ibid.*, 179–82, here 181 (letter dated June 11, 1958 and June 18, 1958).
76. *Kultur*, which served for a while as a mouthpiece for *Gruppe 47*, was published monthly in newspaper format between 1952 and 1962, with each issue featuring a different subtitle. Its final publisher was the Munich-based Kurt Desch.
77. Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin (hereafter: AdK), Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3665, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Hans Werner Richter, February 11, 1958.
78. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3665, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Hans Werner Richter, February 26, 1958.
79. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3670, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Kurt Ziesel, March 4, 1958. See also Busch, *NS-Autoren*, 222–23.
80. Richter is referring here to the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten*; see also footnote 43.
81. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3442–43, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Jürgen Eggebrecht, March 2, 1958.
82. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3666–67, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Erich Kuby, March 4, 1958.
83. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3669, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Rudolf Pechel, March 4, 1958.
84. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3669, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Rudolf Pechel, March 10, 1958.
85. Monacensia, NL Max Stefl, MSt B 225, Letters from Max Stefl to Kurt Ziesel, February 29, 1960, and April 9, 1960.
86. Quoted in Ziesel, *Geister*, 184.
87. Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter: BArchK), NL Rudolf Pechel, II/7, Letter from Rudolf Pechel to Wolfdietrich Schnurre, April 10, 1960.
88. BArchK, NL Rudolf Pechel, I/73, Letter from Rudolf Pechel to Theodor Heuss, May 25, 1959.
89. BArchK, NL Rudolf Pechel, II/78, Letter from RA Werner Hennemann to Rudolf Pechel, November 25, 1960. This file contains other documents on the legal dispute with Ziesel.
90. See Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 41, 114–15, 165–66.
91. See Karl Korn's own account in *Lange Lehrzeit: Ein deutsches Leben* (Munich: Societäts-Verlag, 1979), 260–62.
92. See Heike Görtemaker, *Ein deutsches Leben: Die Geschichte der Margret Boveri, 1900–1975* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2005), 286–88. Boveri became involved in the Ziesel affair after making a sworn statement in support of Korn. This prompted her to conduct her own research into Berlin's journalistic landscape during the Third Reich, a landscape that had

been portrayed so critically. See Peter de Mendelssohn, *Zeitungsstadt Berlin: Menschen und Mächte in der Geschichte der deutschen Presse* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1959), and Margret Boveri, *Wir lügen alle: Eine Hauptstadtzeitung unter Hitler* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter-Verlag, 1965).

93. Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach (hereafter: DLA), A: Karl Korn, Letter from Margret Boveri to Karl Korn, November 15, 1958.

94. The quote from the letter from Korn to Heuss, August 1, 1959 (no. 216, 581–82, here 581), and Heuss's reply, August 5, 1959 (no. 217, 582–83), are published in Theodor Heuss, *Der Bundespräsident: Briefe 1954–1959*, Ernst Wolfgang Becker, Martin Vogt, and Wolfram Werner, eds. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013). On Heuss's contributions to *Das Reich*, see Reiner Burger, *Theodor Heuss als Journalist: Beobachter und Interpret von vier Epochen deutscher Geschichte* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1999), 329–31. Goebbels's antisemitic editorials were always published on the first page of *Das Reich* from December 1940 onward, while Heuss's final article for the newspaper appeared on February 2, 1941.

95. "Die Legende vom Reich," *Europäischer Kulturdienst* 8, no. 8 (1959); see also letter dated August 1, 1959, no. 216, in Heuss, *Bundespräsident*, 581. In another article for *Europäischer Kulturdienst*, Ziesel tackled Heuss's work for *Das Reich*. This article was then discussed in two issues of *Reichsruf*, the central organ of the Deutsche Reichspartei, a forerunner of today's far-right National Democratic Party (NDPD, *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*); see Kurt Ziesel, "Heuss: 'Unbewältigte Vergangenheit,'" *Reichsruf*, January 30, 1960, and February 6, 1960. Heuss sent a long response to the editor-in-chief of *Reichsruf*, Adolf von Thadden, which was subsequently published in *Reichsruf*, February 20, 1960. See letter from Heuss to von Thadden, February 8, 1960, no. 31, in Theodor Heuss, *Privatier und Elder Statesman: Briefe 1959–1963*, ed. Frieder Günther (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 161–68.

96. DLA, A: Kasimir Edschmid, Letter from Kasimir Edschmid to Karl Korn, October 27, 1959. Two years later Edschmid, who was a target of Ziesel's allegations himself, received a letter of support from Rudolf Krämer-Badoni containing arguments almost identical to those Edschmid had put forward to Korn: DLA, A: Kasimir Edschmid, Letter from Rudolf Krämer-Badoni to Kasimir Edschmid, December 7, 1961.

97. BArchK, NL Ernst Niekisch, 22 c, Letter from Ernst Niekisch to Karl Korn, November 25, 1959.

98. BArchK, NL Ernst Niekisch, 22 c, Letter from Karl Korn to Ernst Niekisch, November 25, 1959.

99. On the subsequent development of the lawsuits against Ziesel, see Marcus M. Payk, *Der Geist der Demokratie: Intellektuelle Orientierungsversuche im Feuilleton der frühen Bundesrepublik. Karl Korn und Peter de Mendelssohn* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008), 319–21.

100. See "Der Streit Karl Korn–Kurt Ziesel," *Die Welt*, October 13, 1959.

101. Karl Korn, "Der Hofjude: Veit Harlans Film 'Jud Süß' im Ufa-Palast am Zoo," *Das Reich*, September 29, 1940.

102. Letter from Heuss to Korn, October 28, 1959, no. 9, in Heuss, *Privatier und Elder Statesman*, 114–15.

103. Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn-Bad Godesberg (hereafter: AdsD), NL Walter Dirks, 120 A, Letter from Walter Dirks to Karl Korn, November 9, 1959.

104. BArchK, NL Ernst Niekisch, 22 c, J. F. Lehmanns Verlag press release of October 22, 1959, on the Munich Regional Court's ruling of October 12, 1959.

105. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 120 A, Letter from Karl Korn to Walter Dirks, November 19, 1959.

106. Payk, *Geist*, 320. At the time the *Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaftszeitung*, a Stuttgart-based newspaper that was initially issued twice weekly but had become a daily by the late 1950s, was trying to make a name for itself as the legitimate successor to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. There was therefore "bitter rivalry" between it and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ). On the rivalry between the two newspapers, see "Deutsche Zeitung: Schillernde Feder," *Der Spiegel*, January 20, 1960.

107. See Karl Korn, "Die Untat in Köln," FAZ, December 28, 1959; "Moralische Urheber," *Deutsche Zeitung*, December 30, 1959; and "Karl Korn's verdeckter Widerstand" (letters to the editor), *Deutsche Zeitung*, January 8, 1960. On January 8, 1960, Korn thanked Dirks for his letter: AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 123 A.

108. Letter from Erich Welter to Karl Korn, January 9, 1960, quoted in Payk, *Geist*, 321.

109. Walter Dirks, "Wie wir unsere Vergangenheit bewältigen: Bericht in fremder, eigener und allgemeiner Sache," *Frankfurter Hefte* 15, no. 2 (February 1960): 81–84. Dirks made a similar point in a letter to the editor of the *Deutsche Zeitung* dated April 25, 1960: "I simply cannot support the intransigent manner in which you tie Mr. Korn to a sin he committed almost twenty years ago. However, I agree with you on the principle that nothing can be hidden if we are to achieve the clarification we need." AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 122 A.

110. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 123 A, Letter from Karl Korn to Walter Dirks, January 21, 1960.

111. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 123 A, Letter from Karl Korn to Walter Dirks, February 12, 1960.

112. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 122, Letter from Theodor W. Adorno to Walter Dirks, February 15, 1960, and Walter Dirks to Theodor W. Adorno, February 23, 1960.

113. AdK, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Letter from Theodor W. Adorno to Karl Korn, February 15, 1960.

114. AdK, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Letter from Karl Korn to Theodor W. Adorno, February 22, 1960.

115. DLA, A: Dolf Sternberger, Letter from Dolf Sternberger to Benno Reifenberg, February 21, 1960.

116. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 123 A, Letter from Karl Korn to Walter Dirks, March 28, 1960. Enclosed with the letter is a detailed report, written by Korn and addressed to the Hessian minister of education and cultural affairs, Ernst Schütte, on the outcome of the lawsuit. During this court case Ziesel had again received the support of Kurt Hiller, who characterized Korn's article as a "completely obvious piece of Jew-baiting, pure Hitlerism, though admittedly not in the pornographic-thuggish style of Streicher, but rather pogromism with a coat of varnish, cultivated Goebbels-German, poisonous pink": KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, letter from Hiller to Ziesel, December 5, 1959; letters from Ziesel to Hiller, December 9, 1959, and March 30, 1960.

117. On the historical background to these types of informal organizations, which were common at the time, see Marcus M. Payk, "Antikommunistische Mobilisierung und konservative Revolte: William S. Schlamm, Winfried Martini und der 'Kalte Bürgerkrieg' in der westdeutschen Publizistik der späten 1950er Jahre," in Thomas Lindenberger, ed., *Massenmedien im Kalten Krieg: Akteure, Bilder, Resonanzen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006), 111–37.

118. See Kurt Hirsch, *Rechts von der Union: Personen, Organisationen, Parteien seit 1945. Ein Lexikon* (Munich: Knesbeck & Schuler, 1989), 60.

119. Walter Becher (1912–2005) was one of the most influential Sudeten German expellee officials. From 1956 to 1958 he was chairman of the far-right Witikobund, a "community of like-minded individuals" (*Gesinnungsgemeinschaft*), most of them former Nazi functionaries seeking to control the Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft (Sudeten German Homeland Association). In the late 1950s Becher promoted a conservative alliance known as the "National-Demokratische Union." In 1967 he joined the CSU, and in 1968 he became the spokesman of the Landsmannschaft. Research on the Nazi pasts of expellee officials began too late; for interim conclusions, see Michael Schwartz (in cooperation with Michael Buddrus, Martin Holler, and Alexander Post), *Funktionäre mit Vergangenheit: Das Gründungspräsidium des Bundes der Vertriebenen und das "Dritte Reich"* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2013).

120. On von der Heydte's biography, see Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung (1920–1970)* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005), 63–65. On the Occidental movement, see Axel Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika: Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), 21–23.

121. See "Wer war Dr. W.B.?!," *Der Spiegel*, June 3, 1959.

122. On the Grünwalder Kreis and the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten*, see footnote 43. It is unclear when Ziesel (code name Zöllner) began working as an informer for the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (Federal Intelligence Service). See Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, *Undercover: Der BND und die deutschen Journalisten* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1998), 245–46, and idem, *Geheimdienst, Politik und Medien: Meinungsmache Undercover* (Berlin: Homilius, 2004), 105, 266–67.

123. See Peter Dudek and Hans-Gerd Jaschke, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des Rechtsextremismus in der Bundesrepublik: Zur Tradition einer besonderen politischen Kultur*, vol. 1 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984), 47–49.

124. See Daniela Münkler, *Willy Brandt und die "Vierte Gewalt": Politik und Massenmedien in den 50er bis 70er Jahren* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2005), 126–28.

125. The Sudeten Germans officially received the patronage (*Schirmherrschaft*) of the Bavarian state in 1962. For the period around 1960 see K. Erik Franzen, *Der vierte Stamm Bayerns: Die Schirmherrschaft über die Sudetendeutschen 1954–1974* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), 280–82.

126. See Kurt Ziesel, *Der rote Rufmord: Eine Dokumentation zum Kalten Krieg* (Tübingen: Schlichtenmayer, 1961). Ziesel wrote this book in collaboration with Oberländer; on the latter's biography, see Philipp-Christian Wachs, *Der Fall Oberländer (1905–1998): Ein Lehrstück deutscher Geschichte* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2000).

127. Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, NL Gerd Bucerius, 527 a, Landgericht Hamburg (Hamburg Regional Court), July 17, 1961 (file no. 15 Q 316/61). Bucerius obtained a similar ruling from the Hamburg Regional Court, July 26, 1961 (file no. 15 Q 302/61).

128. See Hermann Schreiber, *Henri Nannen: Drei Leben* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1999), 86. On the ideological and conceptual affinities between Schlamm and Ziesel, see Susanne Peters, *William S. Schlamm: Ideologischer Grenzgänger im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft verlag, 2013), 474–75.

129. DLA, D: Merkur, Letter from Hans Paeschke to Heinrich Böll, November 10, 1960.

130. Paeschke had passed Böll's manuscript for review to Hans Egon Holthusen, who found it "not great, rather confused," and recommended that the "largely baseless invective against Jünger" be removed: DLA, D: Merkur, Letter from Hans Egon Holthusen to Hans Paeschke, July 16, 1961.

131. DLA, D: Merkur, Letter from Hans Paeschke to Heinrich Böll, July 2, 1961. Paeschke's decision was informed by tough negotiations on releasing *Merkur* from its contract with DVA, its publisher at the time. One year later the magazine was taken over by the Cologne-based publisher Kiepenheuer & Witsch, which continued to publish it until 1968.

132. Heinrich Böll, "Der Schriftsteller und Zeitkritiker Kurt Ziesel: Versuch eines Beitrages zur sogenannten Bewältigung der Vergangenheit," *Die Zeit*, March 16, 1962. On the row, see also Kurt Ziesel, *Die Meinungsmacher: Spiegel, Zeit, Stern & Co*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Universitas, 1988), 215–17.

133. See Kurt Ziesel, *Der deutsche Selbstmord: Diktatur der Meinungsmacher* (Recklinghausen: Kommunalverlag, 1965), 309; in this book, *Der Spiegel* is the main target of Ziesel's attacks, while the Nazi past no longer plays the central role.

134. Marion Dönhoff, "Antwort an Ziesel: Ein Briefwechsel, der für sich selber spricht," *Die Zeit*, August 9, 1963. Dönhoff's description of (Erich) Koch as Ziesel's employer refers to the latter's time in Königsberg, where he spent a short stint working as an editor for the *Preußische Zeitung*, which was answerable to the Gauleiter. On February 21, 1964, the far-right *Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung* deployed the same strategy of visual confrontation when it published photographs of the editor-in-chief of *Die Zeit*, Josef Müller-Marein, with the Luftwaffe heroes Mölders and Galland. Alongside the photos the newspaper published an antisemitic quote from Müller-Marein which, it was argued, made his current position untenable. The *Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung* was subsequently forced to print a correction stating that it was uncertain whether the person posing with the pilots was actually Müller-Marein: see *Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung*, April 24, 1964.

135. Marion Dönhoff Stiftung, NL Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, F 0537, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to the legal division of *Die Zeit*, August 14, 1964.

136. The internal legal deliberations are documented in *ibid.*; see also Karl-Heinz Janßen, *Die Zeit in der ZEIT: 50 Jahre einer Wochenzeitung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1995), 204–6.

137. Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Fritz J. Raddatz, January 17, 1964, in Hans Werner Richter, *Briefe*, ed. Sabine Cofalla (Munich: Hanser, 1997), 494.

138. The first award for journalism was presented to Armin Mohler in 1967, the year the foundation was established. On the Deutschland-Stiftung, see Bamberg's detailed examination in *Deutschland-Stiftung*.

139. In a highly criticized ruling of 1969, the Higher Regional Court of Munich granted Ziesel the right to describe Günter Grass as “the author of the nastiest pornographic filth and scurrilous attacks on the Catholic Church”: see the West German PEN Center’s statement of August 1, 1969, in AdK, Archiv PEN West, 92. J. F. Lehmanns Verlag “documented” this trial in a publication reviewed by Gert Heidenreich: see Heidenreich, “Parteipropaganda als Dokumentation: Wie ein Schriftsteller zum Ferkel erklärt wird,” *Die Zeit*, June 13, 1969. Ziesel subsequently threatened to sue *Die Zeit*, claiming that the publication of Heidenreich’s article had breached their “pact to refrain from mentioning each other”: documents in Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, NL Gerd Bucerius, 527 b.

140. For a selection of Ziesel’s texts from the 1970s and 1980s, see Ziesel, *Wider den Zeitgeist: Die Demokratie auf dem Prüfstand* (Herford: Busse Seewald, 1992).

141. See the article on this incident in the culture pages of the FAZ, February 10, 1984. Kohl congratulated Ziesel on his sixty-fifth birthday in 1976 and continued to send his best wishes on subsequent milestone birthdays. Kohl also sent birthday wishes to other prominent conservatives such as Franz Josef Strauß, Karl Carstens, and Axel Springer.