



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

WIKIPEDIA

Catechism debate

The **Catechism Debate**, also known as *Historikerstreit* 2.0, is a debate about German Holocaust remembrance initiated by Australian historian A. Dirk Moses with his 2021 essay "The German Catechism".^{[1][2][3]} In the debate, Moses challenges the uniqueness of the Holocaust.^[2] In May through August of 2021, scholars reacted to Moses's thesis in the New Fascism Syllabus in a series of reflections curated by Jennifer V. Evans.^[4]

The German Catechism, as it is outlined in Dirk Moses' article includes these five credal beliefs:^[5]

- 1. The Holocaust is unique because it was the unlimited *Vernichtung der Juden um der Vernichtung willen* (exterminating the Jews for the sake of extermination itself) distinguished from the limited and pragmatic aims of other genocides. It is the first time in history that a state had set out to destroy a people solely on ideological grounds.
- 2. It was thus a *Zivilisationsbruch* (civilizational rupture) and represents a break with the moral foundation of the nation.
- 3. Germany has a special responsibility to Jews in Germany, and a special loyalty to Israel: "*Die Sicherheit Israels ist Teil der Staatsräson unseres Landes*" (Israel's security is part of Germany's reason of state).
- 4. Antisemitism is a distinct prejudice—and was a distinctly German one. It should not be confused with racism.
- 5. Anti-Zionism is antisemitism.

Moses argues that going through a process of internalizing and confronting Holocaust exceptionalism was an important phase in the politics of memory in post-Nazi Germany that arose from historiographic, presentational and cultural breakthroughs in the 1980's, especially in the United States and eventually migrated into German consciousness in the 21st century.^[5] However, according to Moses' argument, this way of situating the Nazi Final Solution in relation to other genocides and mass-violence has become an impediment to thinking and investing in global justice and security because it makes slippery distinctions between what happened in the death camps and what happened in--for example--the colonies of the Global South during the period of European and American imperialism, what happened to Native Americans under the regime of manifest destiny, and can be an impediment to thinking clearly about the problems which now confront us in the Israel-Palestine conflict.^[5]

A variety of responses have registered in the discussion that arose in the wake of this proposal.

References

1. Rothberg, Michael (2022). "Lived multidirectionality: " Historikerstreit 2.0 " and the politics of Holocaust memory". *Memory Studies*. **15** (6): 1316–1329. doi:10.1177/17506980221133511 (https://doi.org/10.1177%2F17506980221133511). S2CID 254151697 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:254151697).
2. Stone, Dan (4 January 2022). "Paranoia and the Perils of Misreading" (https://www.fairobserver.com/region/europe/dan-stone-holocaust-dirk-moses-german-news-germany-jewish-history-world-news-73492/). *Fair Observer*. Retrieved 22 March 2022.
3.
 - Klävers, Steffen (2022). "Paradigm Shifts – Critical Reflections on the Historikerstreit 2.0, the Catechism-Debate, and their Precursors". *Society*. **59** (1): 16–24. doi:10.1007/s12115-022-00677-0 (https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs12115-022-00677-0). S2CID 246833240 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:246833240).
 - Volk, Sabine (2021). "Patriotic History in Postcolonial Germany, Thirty Years After "Reunification" " (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14623528.2021.1968151?journalCode=cjgr20). *Journal of Genocide Research*. **24** (2): 276–287. doi:10.1080/14623528.2021.1968151 (https://doi.org/10.1080%2F14623528.2021.1968151). ISSN 1462-3528 (https://search.worldcat.org/issn/1462-3528). S2CID 239074743 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:239074743).
 - Spencer, Philip (2022). "Thinking about the Holocaust, Genocide and Antisemitism Today: On the Limitations of a New, Anti-Imperialist Revisionism". *Society*. **59** (1): 12–15. doi:10.1007/s12115-022-00668-1 (https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs12115-022-00668-1). ISSN 1936-4725 (https://search.worldcat.org/issn/1936-4725). S2CID 246603598 (https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:246603598).
 - Rothberg, Michael (24 July 2021). "We Need to Re-center the New Historikerstreit" (https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2021-07/dealing-with-the-holocaust-historikerstreit-controversy-genocide-english). *Die Zeit*. Retrieved 2022-08-22.
 - Cronin, Joseph. "The Future of Holocaust Studies in Light of the 'Catechism Debate': Reflections from an Observer" (https://ghil.hypotheses.org/599). *German Historical Institute London Blog*. Retrieved 24 March 2022.
4. "The Catechism Debate Archive" (http://newfascismsyllabus.com/category/opinions/the-catechism-debate/). *New Fascism Syllabus blog*. Retrieved 11 April 2022.
5. Moses, A. Dirk. "The German Catechism" (https://newfascismsyllabus.com/opinions/the-catechism-debate/the-german-catechism/).

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Catechism_debate&oldid=1260931370"