Turning "Liberal Critics" into "Liberal-Conservatives"

*Kurt Sontheimer and the Re-coding of the
Political Culture in the Wake of the Student Revolt of "1968"*

Riccardo Bavaj
History, University of St Andrews

Abstract

The student revolt of the late 1960s had far-reaching repercussions in large parts of West German academia. This article sheds light on the group of liberal scholars who enjoyed a relative cohesiveness prior to "1968" and split up in the wake of the student revolt. The case of Kurt Sontheimer (1928-2005) offers an instructive example of the multifaceted process of a "liberal critic" turning into a liberal-conservative. While he initially welcomed the politicization of students and the democratization of universities, he became increasingly concerned about the stability of West Germany's political order and placed more and more emphasis on preserving, rather than changing the status quo. Sontheimer was a prime example of a liberal critic shifting and being shifted to the center-Right within a political culture that became increasingly polarized during the 1970s.

Keywords

Federal Republic of Germany; Kurt Sontheimer; 1968; liberalism; political culture; scholars; universities

*T*he student revolt of the late 1960s had far-reaching repercussions in large parts of West German academia. For many scholars it proved to be a crucial challenge that they could not avoid. Of course, a small minority of leftist scholars even supported some of the students' more radical demands.[1] Yet, many professors were less understanding. Indeed, conservative scholars were simply infuriated by what they considered a left-wing

extremist attempt to destroy the university as an institution and to over-throw the sociopolitical order.

One group, however, showed a profoundly ambiguous attitude towards the students' political commitment: the group of liberal scholars. They were often torn between sympathizing with the students' desire for more democracy on the one hand, and a deep skepticism towards anti liberal traits of a newly emerging "political romanticism" on the other. "Bloody liberals," after all, were amongst the prime targets of radical students. Liberal scholars had been proactive in the reform of universities since the beginning of the 1960s. They also showed a generally critical stance towards the state and the political culture[2] of the Federal Republic, which they considered in need of a thorough democratization. Hence, they were commonly known as liberal critics.[3] Initially, they welcomed students becoming engaged in politics, both inside and outside the university. Soon, however, they became increasingly concerned about the stability of West Germany's still fledgling political order and placed more and more emphasis on preserving rather than changing the status quo.

Of course, this response pattern did not apply to every liberal scholar. In fact, the group of liberal critics split up in the wake of the student revolt. They were part and parcel of a radical polarization of West Germany's political culture, provoked by a decisive leftward shift of the "political set of concepts"[4] and accompanied by a significant restructuring and politicization of the media and the public sphere.[5] The outcome was the formation of two hostile camps: the left-liberals (or social-liberals) on the one side, and the liberal-conservatives, disparagingly labeled neo-conservatives by their intellectual adversaries, on the other.

This article seeks to illuminate the transformation of liberal-critical scholars into liberal-conservative ones by examining one of the most prominent examples: Kurt Sontheimer (1928-2005). One of the few liberal-critical students of Arnold Bergstraesser's Freiburg School,[6] he belonged to the influential "second generation" of West German political scientists who were staunchly committed to the "science of democracy" (*Demokratiewissenschaft*).[7] Praised by liberal and left-wing scholars for his magisterial work on antidemocratic thought in the Weimar Republic (1962),[8] he was already part of the academic establishment by the time the student revolt broke out. Sontheimer had been working at the Free University (FU) in West Berlin since 1962 as a professor of political science at the well-known Otto Suhr Institute. He makes for a prime example of a liberal-critical scholar shifting and being shifted to the center-Right for various reasons: his close encounter with the student movement at one of

the epicenters of the revolt; his professional self-conception as a political scientist determined to influence West Germany's political culture; and his never-ending, almost obsessive reflection on the events of "1968."

First, this article offers a brief review of recent scholarship that engages with the reaction of liberal scholars to the revolt. It places particular emphasis on A. Dirk Moses' important book *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past*,[9] as this provides the first sophisticated analysis of the subject. Second, the article elucidates Sontheimer's stance towards the student protesters at the Free University from 1966 to 1969, before he moved to the Geschwister Scholl Institute at the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich. Finally, the article explores Sontheimer's transformation into a liberal-conservative against the backdrop of a significant polarization of West Germany's political culture in the aftermath of "1968."

Liberal Scholars and "1968:" A Review of Recent Scholarship

The reactions of liberal scholars to the student revolt, as well as the ensuing transformation of liberal critics into liberal-conservatives, have mostly been tackled only peripherally by researchers.[10] While Franz-Werner Kersting provided a first overview on the "discourse of disquiet," covering contemporary interpretations of "1968" that had been developed by scholars, publicists, and politicians of various political allegiances,[11] Jens Hacke examined the "liberal-conservative foundation of the Federal Republic" that was related closely to the way in which liberal scholars dealt with the challenge of "1968." Hacke focused on the so-called Ritter School, named after the Münster philosopher Joachim Ritter whose prominent disciples– Hermann Lübbe, Odo Marquard, and Robert Spaemann–elaborated a distinct political philosophy in response to the student movement. This intellectual circle of "secessionist liberals" was held together by what Lübbe called a "resistance to neo-Marxism" and the determined will to defend the status quo against revolutionary ambitions of all kind–particularly from the Left.[12]

Furthermore, recent accounts of "1968" reveal a striking renaissance of interpretative patterns that were established at the time. Both Wolfgang Kraushaar and Rüdiger Safranski, if in slightly different ways, draw on the oft-quoted thesis of a "romantic relapse," developed by the political scientist Richard Löwenthal (1908-1991).[13] One of the elder and most distinguished liberal critics who taught at the Free University Berlin, Löwenthal criticized the radical students for revivifying the "old affects of an anti lib-

eral and anti-Western romanticism." In his eyes, the revolt was an "unconscious continuation" of intellectual currents that had once helped to bring about the Nazi dictatorship.[14] An extreme example for the renaissance of older interpretations is Götz Aly's acerbic polemic. Himself a former activist, he makes use of the sharp response of prominent liberal professors such as Löwenthal and Ernst Fraenkel (1898-1975) in order to launch an attack on "sixty-eighters," who are presented as a left-wing totalitarian reincarnation of the Nazi "generation of 1933."[15]

The exact opposite of Aly's tract is the thought-provoking analysis offered by A. Dirk Moses. His *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* focuses on the generational unit of "forty-fivers" (born roughly between 1922 and 1932) whom he conceives as "the key generation of postwar [West] German intellectual history," a generation "uniquely committed to the new state as an emphatically republican project of reform."[16] Moses shows that many "forty-fivers" initially welcomed the student protest, but embarked on a counter-campaign once the revolt radicalized.[17] They moved from a "critical support for the West German state to its unqualified affirmation in the face of a perceived leftist onslaught." This move, Moses argues, was particularly indicative of the "Fraenkel school of liberalism," by which he means liberal political scientists and historians such as Kurt Sontheimer, Alexander Schwan (1931-1989), Karl Dietrich Bracher (born 1922), and Gerhard A. Ritter (born 1929).[18] All of them avowed advocates of Fraenkel's theory of "neopluralism," they were highly critical of the "German tradition" of authoritarian statism and figured prominently in the group of liberal critics.

Undoubtedly, Moses offers a largely convincing, if somewhat brief account of their response to the student revolt, aptly revealing the ways in which the contemporary discourse on "1968" was cast in terms of the "Weimar syndrome"[19]–i.e., dramatized on the foil of particular views of Weimar's demise. His overarching argument, however, of an "underlying structure of political emotions"[20] that accounted for the logic of West Germany's political discourse seems rather questionable–especially regarding the group of liberal critics. For Moses, liberal political scientists such as Sontheimer and Bracher (to whom he repeatedly refers) belonged to the integrative republicans, who were one of the two groups supposedly structuring the political discourse in West Germany. While some criteria that constitute the political language of integrative republicanism did indeed match characteristic traits of liberal critics, their grounding in a particular "structure of political emotions" seems less clear.[21]

According to Moses, the language of integrative republicanism was rooted in a particular emotional reaction to the Nazi past. He calls this

kind of stigma management the "German German" way of coping with the loss of we-ness and the "moral contamination" of Germany. The "German Germans" still put basic trust in a polluted society and defended the viability of their collective identity by making the national past bearable through a variety of displacement strategies. They warded off the national stigma by denationalizing the causes of the Nazi catastrophe and ascribing them to non-German causes. Instead of trying to construct a political community "cleansed of national ideals and values," they favored a Federal Republic based on "positive cultural and intellectual continuities" and the rehabilitation of German traditions.[22]

As this article shows, there are problems with Moses' construction of a binary opposition within the "emotional and intellectual economy"[23] of "forty-fivers." In particular, the pattern of an intellectual and emotional dualism barely captures the group of liberal critics who seem to elude Moses' framework. While he defines German Germans or integrative republicans as those who were keen to "protect the integrity of the national ideal by ascribing the causes of the disaster to another source," he seems to neglect almost entirely that liberal critics such as Sontheimer and Bracher belonged to the staunchest advocates of the special path (*Sonderweg*) thesis that greatly emphasized fateful continuities in German intellectual history. Curiously, Sontheimer and Bracher's strong commitment to a thorough westernization of the Federal Republic is touched upon only very briefly. It was the flip side of the special path thesis and went hand-in-hand with direct experiences of American political culture.[24]

Moses' insinuation that Sontheimer and Bracher belonged to a group of intellectuals who were constructing stories that allowed their compatriots "to feel good about being German despite Nazism and the Holocaust,"[25] runs counter to what these liberal scholars actually wrote during the 1960s.[26] In fact, they would be portrayed more accurately through one of Moses' somewhat shifting descriptions of redemptive republicans (or "Non-German Germans"), whom he defines as those "who felt indignant about the crimes committed by Germans and ... sought to construct a political community cleansed of nationalist ideals and values."[27] For Moses, of course, Sontheimer and Bracher were still integrative republicans, if deeply troubled ones. Like redemptive republicans they were well aware of West Germany's "acute legitimacy dilemma" and "flagged the problem of unrepentant Nazis and authoritarian popular mentalities," but for all their critique they "affirmed the foundation of the state in 1949." Redemptive republicans, on the other hand, considered the "system as a whole ... irredeemably corrupt."[28] As Moses' analytical framework of binary dichotomies does not

allow for any middle ground or hybrid identities, he categorizes Sontheimer and Bracher as integrative republicans who merely forged an "alliance" with their redemptive counterparts during the early and mid 1960s.

This article argues that Moses' notion of an alliance between "leftist and liberal forty-fivers"[29] is misleading. It is based on the questionable assumption of a fundamental dichotomy of redemptive republicans, or Non-German Germans, on the one hand, and integrative republicans, or German Germans, on the other. This dichotomy neither allows for any gray areas (in the sense of certain intellectuals sharing *some* positions with *either* camp) nor for any transformations of the political identity of one and the same intellectual over time–once a German German, always a German German. Clearly, West Germany's political culture was more complex and fluid than this. In particular, it was the group of liberal critics that belied these strict dichotomies. A binary structure of "polarized political emotions"[30] is difficult to reconcile with a political spectrum far more differentiated than "Left" versus "Right."

In fact, Moses' way of drawing boundaries between integrative and redemptive republicans seems rather hazy in places. When he describes the latter as advocates of a new project and "a qualitatively different political and social system," it is not sufficiently clear what he means. Does he imply that redemptive republicans were anti liberal and anti-parliamentary radical democrats in favor of revolutionary socialism? Defined in these ways, redemptive republicans were nothing but the extreme Left and differed significantly from left-*liberals* who were committed to the Basic Law. This, of course, would contradict Moses' definition of redemptive republicans as radical *reformers* (not revolutionaries)–fully committed to the West (however defined), without reservation.[31] In fact, Sontheimer's like-minded colleague Christian Graf von Krockow makes a short appearance in Moses' book as a redemptive republican[32]–curiously on the basis of an article that both Sontheimer and Bracher endorsed repeatedly.[33]

Furthermore, the unspoken assumption of a decades-long existence of three *unchanging* political camps (leftists/non-conformists, liberals, and conservatives), partly merging with (alliance), or distancing themselves from each other, is problematic. The liberal camp, in particular, was far from stable. On the contrary, the group of liberal critics who enjoyed a relative cohesiveness prior to "1968" split up in the wake of the student revolt. Rather than making a case for the replacement of a "loose left-liberal alliance" through a "loose coalition of liberals and conservatives,"[34] it makes more sense to suggest a liberal secession[35] in the wake of "1968"–similar to the liberal schism[36] that took place in the U.S. at roughly the same

time. The case of Kurt Sontheimer offers an instructive example of this multifaceted process of a liberal critic turning into a liberal-conservative.

The Critical Rationality of "Academic Democratization" versus the Emotional Hubris of "Revolutionary Adventure:" Sontheimer and the Student Revolt at the Free University

Sontheimer was caught between all fronts. He did not belong to the great number of conservative professors who disapproved of student activism right from the start, nor was he part of the small camp of socialist professors who wholeheartedly supported it. At first, he explicitly welcomed the creation of "a more political atmosphere" at the Free University.[37] This was hardly surprising given his year-long commitment to a thorough university reform and his position as faculty representative for political education (*Beauftragter für politische Bildung*).

It was, in fact, in his capacity as representative for political education that Sontheimer became fully engaged in the confrontation between students and academics. The bone of contention was a resolution passed by the Academic Senate that banned all kinds of political events (talks, seminars, etc.) from university premises. The Senate had passed this resolution in the wake of student demonstrations in front of the America House in February 1966, which had caused an outcry among the population of West Berlin. Unsurprisingly, the Student Union protested against this resolution, wondering, for instance, why the FU had established a post for political education in the first place. In fact, Sontheimer had not been involved in the Senate's decision-making process and was equally irritated.

He distributed a public statement that criticized the resolution as contradicting the university's obligation to foster political education (*politischer Bildungsauftrag*). The Senate, Sontheimer remarked, obviously refused to educate students democratically.[38] Fighting the politicization of the university by depoliticizing it administratively appeared nothing but reactionary to him.[39] It took until June 1966 to undo the contentious resolution. Sontheimer, however, was dismissed from his post immediately. Principal Hans-Joachim Lieber, though a fairly liberal-minded professor himself, had not been amused by Sontheimer's critical intervention.[40] When more than 3,000 students launched a sit-in at the Henry Ford Building on 22 and 23 June 1966, they not only demanded the democratization of the university's decision-making process, but they also called for Sontheimer's reinstatement as the representative for political education.[41]

Sontheimer, however, never took an unambiguous stance towards the student rebels. As the protests radicalized during the following year, not least in the wake of the killing of Benno Ohnesorg on 2 June 1967, he assumed a standpoint that was typical for many liberal critics. On the one hand, he was convinced of the need to reform and even had sympathies for the "Expropriate Springer!" campaign.[42] On the other hand, he was troubled by what he viewed as irrational and overly emotional strategies of provocation. The ambiguity of his position became particularly evident in a television discussion chaired by linguist Walter Jens, which took place in the large lecture theater of the FU shortly after Ohnesorg's death. Sontheimer made it clear to the audience of 2,000 students that, while sympathizing with their demands in principle, he could barely approve of some "genuinely crazy and wild things" that the revolt had entailed so far.[43]

What did he mean by "genuinely crazy and wild things"? He alluded in particular to an open discussion on university reform on 26 November 1966 where a student snatched the microphone away from Principal Lieber and caused him to leave the lecture theater. Also, he referred to a sit-in at the Henry Ford Building on 19 April 1967. That day, the students had been allowed to convene in the great lecture theater, but flocked into the entrance hall nearby–next to the Senate room where a meeting was held simultaneously. The student revolt, after all, was also a struggle for the mastery of space. It was not merely about transgressing boundaries and breaking rules with the aim to provoke, but it also aimed to raise the question of the ownership of space.[44]

For Sontheimer, however, the students' occupation of space on university premises was simply illegal. When Principal Lieber called the police to deal with the rebels, he did nothing but exercise his legal right (*Hausrecht*). Sontheimer certainly recognized the legitimacy of student demands in general, but those "crazy" examples of breaking rules (*Regelverletzungen*) appeared entirely senseless to him. Why occupy the entrance hall, when being allowed to use the great lecture theater? It would not make any difference for the content of the discussion, he argued. This sort of student action fell foul of Sontheimer's idea of common sense. It seemed, quite literally, "crazy."[45]

At the same time, he largely supported the students' claim for a democratization of universities. Liberal critics, after all, had been demanding a thorough "democratization of the state" for years.[46] In an article entitled "Academic Democratization" and published in the liberal weekly *Die Zeit* in March 1968, he even adopted the vocabulary of the New Left to express his great dissatisfaction with the universities' "traditional ideology

of covering things up" (*Verhüllungsideologie*). Contrary to his colleague Wilhelm Hennis (born 1923), Moses' prime example of an integrative republican,[47] who time and again made a case for drawing a clear line between the sphere of politics and the sphere of society,[48] Sontheimer propagated the validity of the democratic principle beyond the space of parliament within the realm of academia.[49] In his view, it was thanks to the unconventional methods and the direct action of the student rebels that stagnation in university politics had finally been overcome. Apparently, the act of practical reform could only be staged after a "radical overture."[50]

Alongside his colleague Alexander Schwan (another scion of the Freiburg School) he developed a reform scheme in order to democratize the decision-making process at the Otto Suhr Institute.[51] "To defend an anachronistic and dysfunctional structure," Sontheimer argued, was "sheer reaction"–"introverted radicalism."[52] Instead, Sontheimer and Schwan wanted to steer a middle course between "pure negationism and destruction" on the one hand and conservative stagnation and complacency on the other.[53] Yet, drafting a reform scheme was one thing; pushing it through the Academic Senate was a different matter altogether. The liberal reformers failed twice in their attempt to receive formal approval. Conservative professors dismissed the scheme as a "further" attempt to "streamline (*gleichschalten*) German universities," obviously using the Nazi past to delegitimize the reform initiative. They accused liberal professors such as Sontheimer and Schwan of promoting "antidemocratic tendencies hostile to scholarship" (*Förderung antidemokratischer und wissenschaftsfeindlicher Kräfte*) and of implementing an academic self government "perverted through politicization." It is no wonder that Sontheimer lamented the uncomfortable position of liberal professors, squeezed like a buffer between all sides. Amongst reform-minded colleagues and students alike, he feared, those salvos could only lead to a loss of trust in the "reforming power of reason."[54]

For Sontheimer, though, democratic reform did not mean primarily changing the way in which professors, assistant professors, and students were formally represented in various committees. A change of consciousness and mentality was far more important to him. Professors, he insisted, had to rid themselves of their authoritarian attitude.[55] In other words, he made a case for democratizing the forms of communication at West Germany's universities and, by extension, the political culture of the Federal Republic as a whole. This was typical of a liberal political scientist whose main interest lay in Germany's recent intellectual history. One of the key factors in Weimar's demise, Sontheimer thought, was the glaring mis-

match between its constitution and its fragmented political culture. He therefore considered the democratization of people's attitudes, values, and beliefs essential for the success of the Federal Republic.

To be sure, he soon realized that the extra-parliamentary opposition also comprised revolutionary "enemies of liberal, Western-style democracy." The ubiquitous call for democratization, after all, could mean different things. Yet, his criticism of the Bonn Republic was far more outspoken, as laid out in an account of "antidemocratic thought in the Federal Republic" that he added to a new edition of his Weimar classic in 1968. Within it, he argued that West Germany had transformed into a "petrified republic beholden to capitalist interests." The *Rechtsstaat* largely had degenerated into a means of preserving "deficiencies and weaknesses of the system," instead of fulfilling its proper goal, namely, to protect civil liberties. Against this background he attributed the student protest mainly to West Germany's "democratic omissions."[56]

Thus, the student movement appeared to be a "positive ... challenge" that provided a great opportunity for the democratic renewal of a "congealing democracy." Similar to what Moses regards as characteristic of redemptive republicans, Sontheimer hoped for a resurgence of the "open situation after 1945." At that time the "creeping social and economic restoration" had not yet stifled the chance to acquire a "consciousness of freedom."[57] Strikingly, Sontheimer's usage of the term restoration was reminiscent of the trenchant critiques advanced by Walter Dirks and Eugen Kogon, two prime examples of Moses' redemptive republicans. It also dovetailed with Bracher's criticism of the Federal Republic as an "order of Wilhelmine caliber." In March 1967, Bracher had criticized the persistence of a patriarchal order that he held responsible for the "uncertain condition of the political consciousness" in West Germany. The Federal Republic, it seemed, had still not aligned itself with Western values decidedly enough.[58]

Sontheimer and Bracher's unwavering commitment to a thorough westernization of the Federal Republic obviously reflected their view of Germany's fateful "special path," but it also fed on their direct experience with Western democracy. Sontheimer went to the University of Kansas as a visiting student in 1951/1952, the very years in which the generously funded program of cultural exchange between the Federal Republic and the United States reached its climax.[59] Bracher participated in a postdoctoral program at Harvard University, where he became acquainted with Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and Carl J. Friedrich. American universities fostered a transfer of knowledge and circulation of ideas on which many

"forty-fivers" could draw when reorienting themselves after the collapse of the Nazi dictatorship. Both Sontheimer and Bracher were driven by a self-declared generational mission to help liberal democratic ideas take root in West Germany's political culture—a mission that, prior to "1968," appeared to be endangered by the Right, not the Left. In particular, they referred to the electoral successes of the National Democratic Party (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, NPD). Perhaps more importantly though, they referred to a general "restorative, national turn in public opinion," a "renaissance of authoritarian state ideology."[60] Hence, they wondered whether Bonn would become Weimar after all.[61]

Sontheimer's stance towards the radical Left, however, became increasingly critical. As he pointed out in 1969, he found it particularly worrisome that student radicalism, especially since the demise of the extra-parliamentary opposition from June 1968 onwards, gradually had lost its "critical impetus" and adopted "completely irrational," "desperado-like traits." In particular he criticized a "fatally totalitarian concept of politics" that betrayed disturbing similarities between left-wing and right-wing radicalism. To be sure, he still praised the student movement for counteracting the petrification and manipulation of the parliamentary system. He conceded that the provocative way of unsettling the dominant rules of state and society fulfilled a "fairly sensible function" (*begrenzt sinnvolle Funktion*). Yet, for Sontheimer, who had always been slightly at odds with the "new methods and forms" of student protest, the violent nature of student activism and the radicalization of the clarion call for democratization gradually undermined the substantial rationality of student protest.[62]

He became increasingly concerned about the hysterical atmosphere that the student revolt helped produce at the Free University. He himself was not just verbally attacked ("bloody liberal"), but also pelted with paint bombs. To find his office devastated by radicals made for another "shock experience." As a consequence, he became less prepared to listen to students' concerns. For example, he suddenly left a discussion on the contentious emergency laws (*Notstandsgesetze*) by stating that he would rather go play tennis than participating in this "stupid" meeting any longer—a sentence that SDS members would still remember decades later.[63]

By 1969, Sontheimer was criticizing student radicals for increasingly provoking the establishment for the mere sake of provocation: legitimate protest had degenerated into revolutionary adventure. Student activism had unduly emotionalized the atmosphere in universities. Instead of pursuing any rational cause, radical students seemed to indulge in "revolutionary ... shock-phraseology." Caught up in the illiberal "romantic desire

for a new man," they appeared to have lost touch with critical rationality. Worse still, they indirectly helped strengthen authoritarian forces and caused a harmful polarization of West Germany's political culture.[64]

After "1968:" The Polarization of West Germany's Political Culture and Sontheimer's Metamorphosis into a Liberal-Conservative

One of the striking examples of the political polarization that followed "1968" was the decomposition of the group of liberal critics. Sontheimer became part of an emerging camp of liberal-conservatives who were frequently labeled neo-conservatives by their intellectual rivals. Indeed, it was the highest authority of Moses' redemptive republicans, Jürgen Habermas (born 1929), who issued Sontheimer a membership card for the brand new "club" of neo-conservatives. In the introduction to a widely read volume, *The Intellectual Situation of the Times*, published as number 1,000 of edition suhrkamp in 1979, the social philosopher fiercely criticized the "professorial pamphlets of the new right." He explicitly referred to the "rosy picture" (*Sonntagsgemälde*) painted by Sontheimer's new book *The Uncertain Republic*.[65] Along with other "philosophers of order" (*Ordnungsphilosophen*) such as Hermann Lübbe (born 1926), Erwin K. Scheuch (1928-2003), and Hans Maier (born 1931), Sontheimer was supposed to be one of the neo-conservative soldiers engaged in "paramilitary combat on the front of a semantic civil war."[66]

It was hardly surprising that the standard bearer of critical theory included Sontheimer in the group of neo-conservatives. After all, it was the former liberal critic who in 1976 had launched one of the most infamous attacks on the New Left's political thought. Sontheimer had entitled his polemic "The Misery of our Intellectuals"–a direct reference to Julien Benda's famous reckoning with the "treason" of early twentieth-century right-wing intellectuals.[67] Sontheimer's critique did much to bolster his newly acquired image as a "reactionary renegade"[68] and guardian of an inherently corrupt system. "The Misery of our Intellectuals," the "counterpart"[69] to his acclaimed Weimar study, was part of a broader backlash that included the attacks of other "neo-conservative" scholars. Many of them, though with the notable exception of Sontheimer,[70] were members of the Federation for Freedom of Scholarship (*Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft*) that had been founded in 1970. The federation set out to repel the left-wing politicization of West Germany's universities. It wanted to fight the "ene-

mies of [the] democratic state," as founding-member Richard Löwenthal proclaimed.[71] In the very year Sontheimer's book came out, Lübbe published his critique *Our Silent Cultural Revolution*, to be followed by *Terminus Terror* (a collection of articles) two years later.[72] Löwenthal wrote several essays critically engaging with the revolt's legacy,[73] and Bracher offered a critical assessment of the New Left in his *Age of Ideology*.[74]

All these scholars agreed on the harmful effects caused by the student revolt regarding the "intellectual foundations of our liberal republic," as Sontheimer put it. These foundations, he maintained, had been attacked and eroded by "left-wing theory." While liberal democracy in interwar Germany had been primarily attacked by the Right, it was now challenged by an intellectual movement situated on "the left of [practical] reason."[75] Weimar's shadows, it seemed, were hanging over the Federal Republic darker than ever before.[76] This time, however, it was not authoritarian tendencies in German intellectual history, but left-wing actualizations of romantic-utopian thought that deeply worried the advocate of the special path thesis.

A cultural crisis haunted the Federal Republic—this was Sontheimer's alarming verdict, shared with many liberal-conservatives in the 1970s. Löwenthal, for instance, devoted an entire collection of essays to a cultural crisis that troubled "the West" in general, but West Germany in particular (because of the Weimar experience and the Nazi past). Löwenthal worried that the young generation especially had lost its faith in "Western values."[77] Self-declared exponents of Western values such as Löwenthal and Sontheimer felt very much on the defensive. This was typical of liberal-conservative scholars in the aftermath of "1968" and indicated the shift of their position in an "academic field" (Pierre Bourdieu) that was integral part of a significant re-coding of West Germany's political culture.

Thus, Sontheimer's transformation into a liberal-conservative was both positional and substantive.[78] It was *positional* insofar as the leftward shift in political culture moved liberal scholars like Sontheimer to the center-Right. In other words, the rise of the New Left had created new spaces within the relational fabric of West Germany's political culture and thereby also repositioned those scholars who barely modified their political view. In this respect, it was mainly a matter of replacing one political denomination with another: positions once referred to as liberal came to be deemed (neo-) conservative or liberal-conservative. Obviously, the dynamics of mutual perceptions and polarizing pigeonholing fostered the re-coding of the political culture.

At the same time, Sontheimer's metamorphosis was *substantive* because he actually did modify his political thought to an extent. He became an

"apologist of the status quo," as his son, the left-wing journalist Michael Sontheimer, put it.[79] He became a staunch guardian of the state, which he felt was in dire need of support. Time and again, he made a case for loving the "unloved Republic," trying to emulate his idol Thomas Mann who in his famous speech on the German Republic from 1922 had tried to win over the youth to Germany's first democracy.[80] He became increasingly concerned about the stability of institutions—including, of course, the university. The clashes with student protesters and doctrinaire *K-Gruppen* (communist cadres) amounted to highly emotional, at times, even traumatic experiences that aroused a great anxiety about the stability of the sociopolitical order.

To be sure, his political thought continued to be imbued by the principles of Fraenkel's neopluralism—still oriented towards political freedom and a socially egalitarian welfare state. Indeed, he himself denied drifting to the right,[81] preserving instead his liberal standpoint "with a penchant for common-sense argumentation."[82] No doubt Sontheimer still adhered to the key tenets of "consensus liberalism"[83] with which he had become familiar after World War II, not least during his time as a visiting student in the United States.[84] Yet, he increasingly drew upon "conservative arguments for *cautious* reform"[85] grounded in practical reason and common sense. Preservation became the dictate of the moment.

Sontheimer's transformation into an apologist of the status quo, of course, also can be attributed to a change of the status quo itself. Obviously, the German "special path ideology" of authoritarian statism was less of a problem in the 1970s than ten or twenty years earlier. Even more important, the Federal Republic had passed the democratic litmus test of a peaceful change of government with the *Machtwechsel* in 1969. Critical-turned-conservative liberals began to trust state authorities. The legitimacy dilemma, so well explored in Moses' book, became less acute.[86]

Sontheimer had worked for the Social Democratic election initiative in 1969 and became an official party member shortly afterwards. In fact, contrary to Lübbe, Hennis, and Schwan, he never left the Social Democrats. Apparently, the SPD offered enough room for maneuver to the self-declared "man of the equilibrium" who, according to one of his favorite quotations from Thomas Mann, "instinctively [leant] towards the left when the vessel [was] on the verge of capsizing to the right, and vice versa."[87] At the same time, he frequently published political essays in the Christian-Democratic journal *Die politische Meinung* edited by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Sontheimer became part of the liberal-conservative *Tendenzwende* that gathered momentum in the years following 1973/1974.[88] While not partici-

pating in the important congress of the same name,[89] he shared some principal objectives with prominent *Tendenzwende* intellectuals such as Lübbe, Maier, and Schwan, actively contributing to the pertinent *Mut zur Erziehung* Congress held in 1978.[90] Sontheimer became preoccupied with one objective in particular: to win back those who had become caught up in "left-wing theory," to win them back for the idea of "legitimate democracy"–for the values of "Western civilization."[91] He therefore attacked the "sixty-eighters" in numerous books and articles. The more vociferously the growing number of avowed "sixty-eighters" conveyed the blissful image of "1968" as the Federal Republic's "inner foundation,"[92] the more strongly did he feel the need to oppose the "change of ... political consciousness"[93] and the challenge to West Germany's "anti-totalitarian consensus."[94]

Sontheimer even flagellated himself for once sympathizing with the student movement. He felt embarrassed that he was deemed to be one of those professors who once welcomed the student revolt. In an interesting exercise of retrospective self-examination he tried to make sense of his initial commitment to the students' cause. Partly, he resorted to common displacement strategies and claimed not to have recognized what was actually going on. It was somewhat like "watching a movie," he remarked during a television discussion with Rudi Dutschke and Daniel Cohn-Bendit in June 1978: "I was not really part of it."[95] In his book *The Uncertain Republic*, however, suitably published on the Federal Republic's thirtieth anniversary, he plausibly argued that liberal scholars like himself could hardly have taken a clear oppositional stance on the rebellious students from the very beginning. They themselves, after all, had been criticizing democratic shortcomings for years. Moreover, it was they who helped politicize students during the 1960s in the first place. In a sense, they had to deal with the unintended products of their own educational laboratory. At first, Sontheimer explained, the politicized students appeared to be the harbingers of a much-needed democratization–in the liberal sense of the word. Liberal scholars like him hoped for an adequate reversal of West Germany's post 1949 "restoration." Sooner or later, though, they realized that the student movement included "radical, illiberal elements" geared towards a democratized society that was very different from their own visions of the future.[96]

Since German unification Sontheimer denied that the "sixty-eighters" had left any viable political legacy at all.[97] In 2001, he maintained that it was not because of, but despite the student revolt that the Federal Republic had become a "normal and lively Western democracy."[98] The "magical date"[99] of "1968" became almost an obsession for Sontheimer. Like many

other liberal-conservatives he persistently engaged with the student revolt. "1968" became a decisive moment of defining who he was, and to which group, i.e., political tendency, he belonged. As "1968" gave birth to the formation of liberal-conservative scholars, so it transformed Sontheimer into one of their foremost representatives. He was a prime example of a liberal critic shifting and being shifted to the center-Right within a political culture that became increasingly polarized during the 1970s, leaving its mark on the formation of political front lines well into the 1990s and beyond.

RICCARDO BAVAJ is Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of St Andrews, UK. He has published widely on twentieth-century German history, including *Die Ambivalenz der Moderne im Nationalsozialismus: Eine Bilanz der Forschung* (Munich, 2003); *Von links gegen Weimar: Linkes antiparlamentarisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik* (Bonn, 2005); and "Memorialising Socialist Contradictions: A 'Think-Mark' for Rosa Luxemburg in the New Berlin," forthcoming in *Memorialisation in Germany since 1945*, eds., Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (Basingstoke and New York, 2009). He is currently working on West European and American scholars and their response to the student revolts of "1968."

Notes

1. Neither "Old" nor "New" Left, of course, took a completely unambiguous stance towards student activism. One may only think of the striking uneasiness amongst leftist scholars such as Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Jürgen Habermas.
2. For the term political culture see Karl Rohe, "Politische Kultur und ihre Analyse," *Historische Zeitschrift* 250 (1990): 321-346; Dietmar Schirmer, *Mythos, Heilshoffnung, Modernität* (Opladen, 1992); see also Thomas Mergel, "Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte der Politik," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002): 574-606.
3. See Kai Hermann, "Liberale und Revolutionäre," in *Revolution gegen den Staat?*, ed., Hans Dollinger (Bern, Munich, and Vienna, 1968), 168-175, here 168.
4. Jürgen Habermas, "Einleitung," in *Stichworte zur "Geistigen Situation der Zeit:" Vol. 1*, ed., Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt/Main, 1979), 7-35, here 21.
5. See most recently Christina von Hodenberg, "Der Kampf um die Redaktionen," in *Wo "1968" liegt: Reform und Revolte in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, eds., Christina von Hodenberg and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen, 2006), 139-163; Christina von Hodenberg, "Mass Media and the Generation of Conflict," *Contemporary European History* 15 (2006): 367-395.
6. Horst Schmitt, *Politikwissenschaft und freiheitliche Demokratie: Eine Studie zum "politischen Forschungsprogramm" der "Freiburger Schule" 1954-1970* (Baden-Baden, 1995); for a

condensed version see also Horst Schmitt, "Die Freiburger Schule 1954-1970: Politikwissenschaft in 'Sorge um den neuen deutschen Staat'," in *Schulen der deutschen Politikwissenschaft*, eds., Wilhelm Bleek and Hans J. Lietzmann (Opladen, 1999), 213-243.

7. For a biographical sketch see Wilhelm Bleek, "Kurt Sontheimer: Politikwissenschaft als öffentlicher Beruf," in *Macht, Freiheit, Demokratie: Vol. 2*, eds., Hans Karl Rupp and Thomas Noetzel (Marburg, 1991), 27-43; for an updated and abridged version see also the obituary: "Politikwissenschaft als öffentlicher Beruf: Zum Tod von Kurt Sontheimer (1928–2005)," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 46 (2005): 324-325.

8. Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1962); for a recent appraisal see Riccardo Bavaj, "Hybris und Gleichgewicht: Weimars 'antidemokratisches Denken' und Kurt Sontheimers freiheitlich-demokratische Mission," *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 3 (2006): 315-321.

9. A. Dirk Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (Cambridge, 2007).

10. See most recently Riccardo Bavaj, "Verunsicherte Demokratisierer: 'Liberal-kritische' Hochschullehrer und die Studentenrevolte von 1967/68," in *Streit um den Staat: Intellektuelle Debatten in der Bundesrepublik 1960-1980*, eds., Dominik Geppert and Jens Hacke (Göttingen, 2008), 151-168; Riccardo Bavaj, "Deutscher Staat und westliche Demokratie: Karl Dietrich Bracher und Erwin K. Scheuch zur Zeit der Studentenrevolte von 1967/68," *Geschichte im Westen* 23 (2008): 149-171.

11. Franz-Werner Kersting, "'Unruhediskurs:' Zeitgenössische Deutungen der 68er-Bewegung," in *Demokratisierung und gesellschaftlicher Aufbruch*, eds., Matthias Frese, Julia Paulus, and Karl Teppe (Paderborn, 2003), 715-740.

12. Jens Hacke, *Philosophie der Bürgerlichkeit: Die liberalkonservative Begründung der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen, 2006), 94-100; see also Jens Hacke, "Katalysator der Verständigung über die Bundesrepublik: Anmerkungen zum politischen Denken nach 68," *vorgänge* 47, no. 1, (2008): 4-12; and the review article by Friedrich Kießling, "Westernisierung, Internationalisierung, Bürgerlichkeit? Zu einigen jüngeren Arbeiten der Ideengeschichte der alten Bundesrepublik," *Historische Zeitschrift* 287 (2008): 363-389, here especially 365-374; see also the instructive analyses by Wolfgang H. Lorig, *Neokonservatives Denken in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Opladen, 1988) and Jerry Z. Muller, "German Neo-Conservatism, ca. 1968-1985," in *German Ideologies since 1945*, ed., Jan-Werner Müller (New York and Basingstoke, 2003), 161-184.

13. Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Achtundsechzig: Eine Bilanz* (Berlin, 2008), 258-268; Rüdiger Safranski, *Romantik: Eine deutsche Affäre* (Munich, 2007), 384-392.

14. Richard Löwenthal, *Der romantische Rückfall* (Stuttgart, 1970), 8, 13.

15. Götz Aly, *Unser Kampf: 1968–ein irritierter Blick zurück* (Frankfurt/Main, 2008); for a critique of Aly's tract and an attempt to historicise Fraenkel and Löwenthal's reaction to the student rebellion see Riccardo Bavaj, "Das Trauma von '1968:' Liberale Hochschullehrer in Westdeutschland und Frankreich," *Totalitarismus und Demokratie* 6, no. 1, (forthcoming, 2009).

16. Moses (see note 9), 12, 51, 54; see also A. Dirk Moses, "The Forty-Fivers: A Generation Between Fascism and Democracy," *German Politics and Society* 17, no. 1, (1999): 94-126; for a further discussion of the "forty-fivers" see Christina von Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise: Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit 1945-1973* (Göttingen, 2006) and Riccardo Bavaj, "'68er' versus '45er:' Anmerkungen zu einer 'Generationsrevolte'," in *Graue Theorie: Die Kategorien Alter und Geschlecht in der Forschung*, eds., Heike Hartung et al. (Cologne, 2007), 53-76. The term was originally coined by Joachim Kaiser, "Phasenverschiebung und Einschnitte in der kulturellen Entwicklung," in *Zäsuren nach 1945*, ed., Martin Broszat (Munich, 1990), 69-74.

17. Moses (see note 9), 13.

18. Ibid., 188, 200.

19. Ibid., 48-49; see also A. Dirk Moses, "The 'Weimar Syndrome' in the Federal Republic of Germany," in *Leben, Tod und Entscheidung*, eds., Stephan Loos and Holger Zaborowski (Berlin, 2003), 187-207.

20. Moses (see note 9), 31-37.

21. Ibid., 38. Moses claims that "in the years of cognitive and emotional reorientation after the war, members of this generation adopted competing conceptions of republican democracy ... that resolved their adolescent identity crises." Ibid., 54.

22. Ibid., 28-29, 35, 37, 40, 57, 71-72; see also A. Dirk Moses, "The Non-German German and the German German: Dilemmas of Identity after the Holocaust," *New German Critique* 34, no. 2, (2007): 45-94; A. Dirk Moses, "Stigma and Sacrifice in the Federal Republic of Germany," *History and Memory* 19, no. 2, (2007): 139-180.

23. Moses (see note 9), 51.

24. Indeed, it is one of the weaknesses of Moses' book that the striking transnational influence on the political formation of West German intellectuals (not least the liberal critics) is largely neglected in favor of a perspective that seems much too narrowly focussed on the national framework. While he repeatedly refers to Wilhelm Hennis' rejection of American social science as an example for a *thwarted* intellectual cross-border transfer, it would have been illuminating to examine some of the numerous successful examples. For transatlantic perspectives on cultural and intellectual transfer see for instance Arnd Bauerkämper, Konrad H. Jarausch, and Marcus M. Payk, eds., *Demokratiewunder: Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970* (Göttingen, 2005).

25. Moses (see note 9), 73.

26. On Bracher see Bavaj, "Deutscher Staat" (see note 10).

27. Moses (see note 9), 105. Contrary to what Moses implies, liberal critics such as Sontheimer and Bracher always thought that "nefarious continuities from the Nazi period needed to be addressed." Ibid., 50.

28. Ibid., 47, 115.

29. Ibid., 161-162.

30. Ibid., 54.

31. Ibid., 64, 115, 169, 171. My own emphasis.

32. Ibid., 181-182.

33. Christian Graf von Krockow, "Staatsideologie oder demokratisches Bewusstsein: Die deutsche Alternative," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 6 (1965): 118-131.

34. Moses (see note 9), 188.

35. Hacke, *Philosophie der Bürgerlichkeit* (see note 12), 25.

36. Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives* (New York, 1979), 48.

37. Kurt Sontheimer, "Student Opposition in Western Germany," *Government and Opposition* 3, no. 1, (1968): 49-67, here 67.

38. Kurt Sontheimer, "Erklärung," in Jens Hager, *Die Rebellen von Berlin: Studentenpolitik an der Freien Universität*, eds., Hartmut Häußermann, Niels Kadritzke and Knut Nevermann (Cologne and Berlin, 1967), 80-81, here 80.

39. Kurt Sontheimer, "Studenten auf Kollisionskurs," *Merkur* 25, no. 232, (Juli 1967): 701-711, here 705.

40. James F. Tent, *Freie Universität Berlin 1948-1988: Eine deutsche Hochschule im Zeitgeschehen* (Berlin, 1988), 333-334.

41. Siegward Lönnendonker and Tilman Fichter, *Hochschule im Umbruch: Part 4: Die Krise (1964-1967)* (Berlin, 1975), 102-103.

42. Sontheimer (see note 39), 706.

43. Kurt Sontheimer in "Fernsehdiskussion im Dritten Programm vom 14. Juni im Auditorium Maximum der Freien Universität Berlin zum Thema 'Studenten an der FU–Zur Behandlung einer Minderheit'," in Knut Nevermann, *der 2. juni 1967: Studenten zwischen Notstand und Demokratie: Dokumente zu den Ereignissen anlässlich des*

Schah-Besuchs, ed., Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften (Cologne, 1967): 115-136, here 132; for an abridged version see *Die Zeit*, 23 June 1967, 17-18.

44. For a chronology of these events see Lönnendonker and Fichter (see note 41), 126, 155-156.

45. Sontheimer (see note 43), 132.

46. Karl Dietrich Bracher, "Staatsbegriff und Demokratie in Deutschland (1967)," in Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Das deutsche Dilemma: Leidenswege der politischen Emanzipation* (Munich, 1971), 11-40, here 37.

47. Moses (see note 9), 74-104.

48. Wilhelm Hennis, "Demokratisierung: Zur Problematik eines Begriffs (1970)," in *Politikwissenschaft und politisches Denken: Politikwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen II*, ed., Wilhelm Hennis (Tübingen, 2000), 194-227; for a recent appraisal of Hennis see the illuminating intellectual biography by Stephan Schlak, *Wilhelm Hennis: Szenen einer Ideengeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Munich, 2008), especially 152-162.

49. Kurt Sontheimer, "Akademische Demokratisierung," *Die Zeit*, 15 March 1968, 17-18.

50. Ibid., 17-18.

51. For the reform scheme and a documentation of the whole reform process see "Der dornige Weg der Reform," in *Reform als Alternative*, eds., Alexander Schwan and Kurt Sontheimer (Cologne and Opladen, 1969), 152-173.

52. Sontheimer (see note 49), 17.

53. Alexander Schwan and Kurt Sontheimer, "Vorwort," in *Reform als Alternative* (see note 51), 5-7, here 6; see also Alexander Schwan, "Macht Demokratisierung die Universität unregierbar?," *Frankfurter Hefte* 25 (1970), 259-267.

54. Kurt Sontheimer, "Freiheit, die die Ordinarien meinen: Reformiert darf werden, doch ändern darf sich nichts," *Die Zeit*, 19 July 1968, re-printed in *Reform als Alternative* (see note 51), 166-170. The statement of the Philosophical Faculty (passed with 31 to 12 votes) can be found in *Reform als Alternative*, 165-166; for the Senate's refusal see the two documents in ibid., 158-160, 163-164. In October 1968, however, West Berlin's House of Representatives granted the permission to implement the reform scheme even without the Senate's approval. See Werner Skuhr, "Das Reformexperiment am Otto-Suhr-Institut," in *Reform als Alternative*, 74-83.

55. Sontheimer (see note 49), 18; see also Kurt Sontheimer, "Die Demokratisierung der Universität," in *Reform als Alternative* (see note 51), 63-73.

56. Kurt Sontheimer, "Antidemokratisches Denken in der Bundesrepublik," in Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik: Studienausgabe mit Ergänzungsteil* (enlarged ed. Munich, 1968), 317-347, here 321, 341, 346.

57. Ibid., 321, 345.

58. Karl Dietrich Bracher, "Wird Bonn doch Weimar?," *Der Spiegel*, 12/1967, 60-68, here 68.

59. See Karl-Heinz Füssel, *Deutsch-amerikanischer Kulturaustausch im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/Main, 2004), 180, 197.

60. Sontheimer (see note 56), 342, 344-346.

61. Bracher (see note 58).

62. Kurt Sontheimer, "Gefahr von rechts–Gefahr von links (1969)," in Kurt Sontheimer, *Deutschland zwischen Demokratie und Antidemokratie* (Munich, 1971), 172-205, here 194, 197, 199, 202; Kurt Sontheimer in *Protest der Jugend*, eds., Hermann Glaser and Axel Silenius (Frankfurt/Main, 1968), 97-98.

63. Michael Sontheimer, "Kurt Sontheimer und die 68er," http://www.gsi.uni-muenchen.de/aktuell/docs/sontheimerbeitrag.pdf, [3-4]. This was a speech delivered on a symposium held in memory of Kurt Sontheimer in the Munich Geschwister Scholl Institute on 30 November 2005.

64. Sontheimer, "Gefahr" (see note 62), 185, 195-198; Sontheimer in *Protest der Jugend* (see note 62), 97-98; Sontheimer (see note 39), 708-709, 711.

65. Kurt Sontheimer, *Die verunsicherte Republik* (Munich, 1979).

66. Habermas, "Einleitung" (see note 4), 17-19, 21-22; for a rejoinder see Kurt Sontheimer, "Die Verführung der Republik: Habermas oder die intellektuelle Verantwortung," *Die politische Meinung* 24, no. 187, (1979): 34-41; for a critical comment see Gerd Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt* (Frankfurt/Main, 2002), 27-28.

67. Kurt Sontheimer, *Das Elend unserer Intellektuellen: Linke Theorie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Hamburg, 1976); see also Kurt Sontheimer, "Die Veränderungen des politischen Bewusstseins durch die studentische Protestbewegung," *Merkur* 30, no. 332, (1976): 267-279–this is an abridged version of the first chapter from Sontheimer, *Elend unserer Intellektuellen*, 29-65.

68. Kurt Sontheimer, "Die Macht vor dem Tribunal der Intellektuellen (1988)," in Kurt Sontheimer, *Von Deutschlands Republik: Politische Essays* (Stuttgart, 1991), 163-200, here 191; see also Kurt Sontheimer, *So war Deutschland nie* (Munich, 1999), 133; and Michael Sontheimer (see note 63).

69. Sontheimer, *Elend unserer Intellektuellen* (see note 67), 13.

70. Arguably, Sontheimer remained aloof from the Federation for Freedom of Scholarship because he did not want to be identified with an association seemingly opposed to any democratization of the university. See for instance the revealing discussion between Sontheimer and Hennis in "Demokratisierung: Colloquium über einen umstrittenen Begriff," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 18/71, 1/5/1971, 3-30; see also Kurt Sontheimer, "Verstohlener Konservatismus," *Merkur* 25 (1971): 700-703, here 702.

71 Richard Löwenthal, "Das ist die Abdankung der Demokratie," in *Gegen Elfenbeinturm und Kaderschmiede*, eds., Hans Maier and Michael Zöller (Cologne, 1970): 57-61, here 57.

72. Hermann Lübbe, *Unsere stille Kulturrevolution* (Zurich, 1976); Hermann Lübbe, *Endstation Terror: Rückblick auf lange Märsche* (Stuttgart, 1978); see also Hermann Lübbe, *Hochschulreform und Gegenaufklärung: Analysen, Postulate, Polemik zur aktuellen Hochschul- und Wissenschaftspolitik* (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1972).

73. Richard Löwenthal, *Gesellschaftswandel und Kulturkrise* (Frankfurt/Main, 1979).

74. Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Zeit der Ideologien* (Stuttgart, 1982).

75. Sontheimer, *Elend unserer Intellektuellen* (see note 67), 15; still more moderate in tone is Kurt Sontheimer, "Die Studentenrebellion und ihre Auswirkungen: Neue Ordnungen haben die Situation an den Universitäten bisher nicht pazifizieren können," in *25 Jahre Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Wandel und Bewährung einer Demokratie: Ein politisches Lesebuch*, eds., Pitt Severin and Hartmut Jetter (Vienna, Munich, and Zurich, 1974), 237-240, here 240.

76. Kurt Sontheimer, "Zwei deutsche Republiken und ihre Intellektuellen: Die Rolle der Intelligenz in Weimar und Bonn," *Merkur* 36 (1982): 1062-1071.

77. Löwenthal (see note 73), 15; see also the review by Kurt Sontheimer, "Aus Sorge um die Demokratie: Richard Löwenthals überzeugende Zeitdiagnose," *Die Zeit*, 4 January 1980, 13; see furthermore Kurt Sontheimer, "Ist unsere Demokratie überfordert?," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 1977, B 50, 3-12; Kurt Sontheimer, *Zeitenwende? Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland zwischen alter und alternativer Politik* (Hamburg, 1983), especially 133-142.

78. See the helpful analytical distinction made by Muller (see note 12), 162-164.

79. Michael Sontheimer (see note 63).

80. Kurt Sontheimer, "Die ungeliebte Republik," in *Reden auf die Republik*, ed. Roderich Klett (Stuttgart, 1979), 15-20, here 20; see also Sontheimer's intellectual biography of his favorite writer: *Thomas Mann und die Deutschen* (new ed. Munich, 2002, first published 1961). In 1991 he pointed out that his engagement with Thomas Mann's political thought belonged to the "most pertinent lessons" in his own intellectual biography. Kurt Sontheimer, "Vorwort," in Kurt Sontheimer, *Von Deutschlands Republik* (see note 68), 7-8, here 7.

81. Sontheimer, *Elend unserer Intellektuellen* (see note 67), 14.

82. Sontheimer (see note 66), 39.

83. See Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich, 1998), especially 68-86.

84. "For me," he remarked in 1978, "the central ideological content ... is liberalism." "Die Linke lebt–ein Fernseh-Dialog: Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Rudi Dutschke, Günther Nenning, Kurt Sontheimer und Mathias Walden diskutieren am 13./14. Juni 1978 im öster-reichischen Fernsehen drei Stunden und zwölf Minuten über den Mai 68 und die Folgen," in Rudi Dutschke, *Die Revolte: Wurzeln und Spuren eines Aufbruchs*, eds. Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz, Jürgen Miermeister and Jürgen Treulieb (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1983), 264-313, here 297-298.

85. Muller (see note 12), 162. My own emphasis.

86. For the significance of the *Machtwechsel* see also Sontheimer, "Verstohlener Konser-vatismus" (see note 70), 701.

87. Sontheimer, *Elend unserer Intellektuellen* (see note 67), 9, 13; see also the obituary by Iring Fetscher, "Die Stimme des Gleichgewichts," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17 May 2005, 14.

88. See Axel Schildt, "'Die Kräfte der Gegenreform sind auf breiter Front angetreten:' Zur konservativen Tendenzwende in den Siebzigerjahren," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 44 (2004): 449-478.

89. *Tendenzwende? Zur geistigen Situation der Bundesrepublik* (Stuttgart, 1975).

90. *Mut zur Erziehung: Beiträge zu einem Forum am 9./10. Januar 1978 im Wissenschaftszentrum Bonn-Bad Godesberg* (Stuttgart, 1978).

91. "Die Linke lebt" (see note 84), 297-298; see also Sontheimer, "Zwei deutsche Republiken und ihre Intellektuellen" (see note 76), 1069-1070.

92. See Riccardo Bavaj, "Die 68er-Bewegung," in *Deutschland–ein Land ohne revolutionäre Traditionen?*, eds., Riccardo Bavaj and Florentine Fritzen (Frankfurt/Main, 2005), 121-135.

93. Sontheimer, *Elend unserer Intellektuellen* (see note 67), 56.

94. Kurt Sontheimer, "Deutschland und der Westen (1991)," in *Von Deutschlands Republik* (see note 68), 64-81, here 76-78.

95. "Die Linke lebt" (see note 84), 297-298.

96. Sontheimer, *Verunsicherte Republik* (see note 65), 82.

97. Kurt Sontheimer, "68er: Eine skeptische Bilanz," *Die politische Meinung* 39, no. 3, (1994): 64-66, here 65-66.

98. Kurt Sontheimer, "Gegen den Mythos der 68er," *Die Zeit*, 8 February 2001, 34.

99. Claus Leggewie, "A Laboratory of Postindustrial Society," in *1968: The World Trans-formed*, eds., Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (Cambridge, 1998), 277-294, here 277.