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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910454508103321 |
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| Titolo | Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi past [[electronic resource]] : the politics of amnesty and integration // Norbert Frei ; translated by Joel Golb |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | New York, : Columbia University Press, 2002 |
| ISBN | 1-281-81749-X 9786613791702 0-231-50790-9 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (496 p.) |
| Altri autori (Persone) | GolbJoel SternFritz |
| Disciplina | 940.53/144/0943 |
| Soggetti | Denazification Electronic books. Germany (West) Politics and government Germany Politics and government 1945-1990 |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Description based upon print version of record. |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references (p. 417-459) and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | Front matter -- CONTENTS -- FOREWORD -- INTRODUCTION -- PART I. A Legislation for the Past -- PART II. A Past-Political Obsession: The Problem of the War Criminals -- PART III. Fixing Past-Political Limits: Judicial Norms and Allied Intervention -- CONCLUSION -- POSTSCRIPT FOR THE AMERICAN EDITION -- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- SOURCES AND LITERATURE -- INDEX |
| Sommario/riassunto | Of all the aspects of recovery in postwar Germany perhaps none was as critical or as complicated as the matter of dealing with Nazi criminals, and, more broadly, with the Nazi past. While on the international stage German officials spoke with contrition of their nation's burden of guilt, at home questions of responsibility and retribution were not so clear. In this masterful examination of Germany under Adenauer, Norbert Frei shows that, beginning in 1949, the West German government dramatically reversed the denazification policies of the immediate postwar period and initiated a new "Vergangenheitspolitik," or "policy for the past," which has had enormous consequences reaching into the |

present. Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past chronicles how amnesty laws for Nazi officials were passed unanimously and civil servants who had been dismissed in 1945 were reinstated liberally-and how a massive popular outcry led to the release of war criminals who had been condemned by the Allies. These measures and movements represented more than just the rehabilitation of particular individuals. Frei argues that the amnesty process delegitimized the previous political expurgation administered by the Allies and, on a deeper level, served to satisfy the collective psychic needs of a society longing for a clean break with the unparalleled political and moral catastrophe it had undergone in the 1940's. Thus the era of Adenauer devolved into a scandal-ridden period of reintegration at any cost. Frei's work brilliantly and chillingly explores how the collective will of the German people, expressed through mass allegiance to new consensus-oriented democratic parties, cast off responsibility for the horrors of the war and Holocaust, effectively silencing engagement with the enormities of the Nazi past.
