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Observations on "The Spiritual Situation of the Age": Contemporary German Perspectives (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)

Jürgen Habermas

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The essays in this collection provide an unusually intense portrait of a society and an age. They offer penetrating insights into past and present developments in Germany, shedding new light on that society and our own.In mid 1978, German philosopher Jürgen Habermas invited a group of colleagues (chosen on the basis of an "informed arbitrariness") to contribute to volume 1000 of the edition suhrkamp, a series that had helped focus the intellectual revival of the German left in the postwar period. His suggested reference point for the volume was Karl Jaspers's eerily prophetic 1931 essay on "The Spiritual Situation of the Age," which appeared just two years before Hitler's assumption of power.Habermas's invitation invoked a rich set of original reflections on current political, social, cultural, religious, and intellectual life. Thomas McCarthy and Andrew Buchwalter have selected 13 of these essays with the original introduction by Habermas for inclusion in this book. The essays have been divided into five parts: Perspectives on Politics and Society (Wolf-Dieter Narr, Claus Offe, Ulrich Preuss); Perspectives on Culture and Religion (Karl Heinz Bohrer, Dorothee Sölle, Johann Baptist Metz); Perspectives on the Geisteswissenschaften (Jürgen Moltmann, Peter Burger, Hans-Ulrich Wehler); Perspectives on German Affairs (Hans Mommsen, Albrecht Wellmer, Horst Ehmke); Unconcluding Reflections (Dieter Wellershoff).This book is eighth in the series Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought, edited by Thomas McCarthy.

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