

# The History of U.S. Information Control in Post-War Germany



# The History of U.S. Information Control in Post-War Germany:

*The Past Imperfect*

By

Erwin J. Warkentin

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This project generated considerable data. The names and information associated with those listed in the American Information Control Division's "Black, Grey, White Lists" had to be entered into a database for more thorough analysis. The 20,011 names that make up those lists are associated with a total of 227,152 data points. These were entered, checked, and rechecked by the following student research assistants: Amélie Aikman, Mira Okshevsky, David Vargas, Robyn Hannaford, Robyn Moffatt (Quinn), Amanda Molloy, James Parsons, Darcy Griffin, Lori Ramsay, Maria Mucahy, Holly Slade, Julie Skinner, and Theresa Powell. Special thanks to Tatiana Warkentin and John Hammell for reading and rereading the original typescript and questioning and/or correcting some rather tedious and fractured passages. Lastly, thank-you to Sylvia Warkentin for doing all of the above and sharing part of an administrative leave with the skeleton and inner-workings of this book.

## PREFACE

In 1991, I was a young Ph.D. candidate working on research for my dissertation at the Wolfgang Borchert Archive at the University of Hamburg. As I was looking through the display of Borchert's personal library, I came across a copy of Albrecht Haushofer's *Moabiter Sonette*. This, in and of itself, would not have been unusual. Borchert was a poet, had served time in the old Moabit prison in Berlin, and avidly read and collected books. However, I was always drawn to bibliographic information. In this case, it indicated that the edition I held in my hands was published by Blanvalet (Berlin) in 1946. More to the point, it noted that it had been published under license of OMGUS and the Information Control Division. Being concerned with how this was going to be recorded in my bibliography, having a supervisor, who strictly enforced the MLA rules, I began asking the archivists and librarians what this was and what this represented. At the time, no one seemed to know. Even Holger Pausch, my supervisor simply peered at me over his reading glasses and said, "Well, you seem to have a mystery. Go solve it." And so for the last 25 years I've been trying to solve that mystery.

In all honesty, it did not remain a mystery for particularly long. However, it was the details that were time consuming. During this time, as the Wall in Berlin had just come down and the Germanys became Germany, the documents relevant to the period began being declassified. That is, scholars began having access to the material that held the answers to my questions. The approximately 33,000 cubic feet of OMGUS material has ensured that a fuller revelation of post-war publishing and information control in Germany could be had. However, it would take time as I and other researchers waded through and analyzed what was available on the topic.

As work continued, it quickly became clear that all of the answers were not to be found at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), but that valuable insights into the question were also to be found at other locations, such as the former Public Records Office, now the National Archives, at Kew in England and the *Bundesarchiv* in Koblenz, Freiburg im Breisgau, and at the Berlin Document Center. Initial trawls

through the holdings quickly revealed “History I (1945-June 1946)” and the “Black, Gray, White List for Information Control Purposes (November 1946).” All of these promised that there was still more to be found. Over the years of returning to the archives a fuller picture revealed itself to the point of having a reasonably clear view of how the media was reconstituted in post-war Germany by the Americans in their zones of control and how that would have affected the media that eventual took root and developed there.

In 1945, the US occupation forces in Germany were tasked with curing what was called the “German malady.” They were asked to eradicate what was considered to be the fundamental flaw in the German character: militarism and the inclination to see themselves as a race superior to all others. This important task was handed over to the Information Control Division (ICD) of the Office of the Military Governor, US (OMGUS).

The ICD determined that the appropriate management of this “illness” was to feed the Germans in their Zone a steady diet of American democracy through the creation of a new cultural elite that would in turn become the gatekeepers of Germany’s new media.

This book is the first comprehensive overview of the activities of the ICD in Germany in the immediate post-war period. The ICD played a major role in the reconstruction of Germany’s media and its effects can still be felt today. This book is also the first to be based on the draft histories created by the Intelligence Branch of the ICD, which have never been published and are only available if one visits NARA and knows where to look. The publication of this book makes this vital information readily available for the first time and assists in more fully understanding how the US occupation changed Germany’s media and thus its cultural trajectory.

The most unique aspect of this work is its attention to how the US occupation utilized psychologists, psychiatrists, anthropologists, sociologists and other academics to vet potential candidates for media licenses in Germany. It also provides the first detailed historical overview of the activities and methods employed by the ICD and how they were able to get Germany’s media to comply with their wishes.

The following narrative takes the reader through the various steps of the process of becoming a literary publisher, newspaperman, magazine editor, radio programmer, or filmmaker in Germany and what requisite personality characteristics an individual needed to successfully pass through the comprehensive screening process administered by the ICD. Furthermore, it reveals how the American Military Government in

Germany used the establishment of new media empires in an attempt at the mass re-education of an entire nation along democratic lines. In addition, the appendices provide a wide-ranging overview of the cultural activities undertaken by the ICD in the US Zone of occupied Germany.

## ABBREVIATIONS

BDC:	Berlin Document Center
CIC:	Counterintelligence Corps
COSSAC:	Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander
CSDIC:	Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (British)
DISCC:	District Information Services Control Command
ETOUSA:	European Theater of Operations, United States of America
EUCOM:	United States European Command (March 15, 1947, to August 1, 1952)
ICD:	Information Control Division
ICS:	Information Control Services
ISCB:	Information Services Control Branch (British)
NSKOV:	Nationalsozialistische Kriegsoferversorgung
NSV:	Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt
OKW:	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
OMGUS:	Office of the Military Governor, United States
OSS:	Office of Strategic Services
OWI:	Office of War Information
PWD:	Psychological Warfare Division
PWE:	Political Warfare Executive
RKK:	Reichskulturkammer
RIAS:	Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor
SHAEF:	Supreme Headquarter Allied Expeditionary Force
UNRRA:	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency
USFET:	United States Forces European Theater
VVN:	Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes



## INTRODUCTION

The fundamental tension in West Germany's developing post-war information services was the American desire to create a revolution within the collective German "mind" and the Germans' resisting this by wanting to express themselves freely on any and every topic without having to answer to a foreign authority. The Americans sought to "cure," a term that will be clarified in the first chapter, the German people of the ideologies that had led them to Nazism. This was to be accomplished through active intervention, which involved everything from imprisoning German publishers whose material contravened OMGUS (Office of Military Governor U.S.) guidelines to the granting of confiscated media production facilities to those the Information Control Division (ICD) of OMGUS trusted to disseminate information they thought helpful in the re-education of the German people.

While we may not believe that the application of Freudian principles in the governing of an occupied people would be especially useful today, this formed the basis of how the ICD dealt with those who were to become Germany's media leaders. In fact, some British and American commentators went so far as to refer to the German mindset leading to the Second World War as a collective psychosis. The ICD leadership likened Germany's media and cultural apparatus to a form of superego that could control the baser instincts of Germany's id. The Germans, on the other hand, did not see things in quite so complex a manner, at least not those who hoped to operate Germany's newspapers, radio stations, publishing houses, theatres, and concert halls. They appeared to believe that, since the National Socialists were now gone, they could continue operating as they had before the Nazis had come to power, that the National Socialist years in Germany were a blip in time, a historical anomaly best forgotten.

These two positions are perhaps best summed up by the words of two individuals, who experienced the Second World War very differently, one an American war reporter and the other an actor and German soldier before May 8, 1945, and then a writer in the post-war period.

Martha Gellhorn was a rare female journalist, who covered the war from its prelude, she reported for *Collier's* magazine on the Spanish Civil War, to when the victorious Allies sat in judgment at Nuremberg. She had even stowed away on a landing craft as a stretcher bearer during the D-

Day landing and became the only woman to file her stories from the beaches of Normandy, while her husband, Ernest Hemmingway, waited on one of the offshore vessels for the fighting to pass beyond the beaches.<sup>1</sup>

Gellhorn continued to follow and comment on developments in Germany until well after the formal establishment of the two Germanys. In a 1964 article written for the *Atlantic Monthly*, she remained critical of Germany's mode of thinking, suggesting that it needed to change in a fundamental way, despite the best efforts of the American occupation:

In my opinion, there is no New Germany, only another Germany. Germany needs a revolution which it has not had and shows no signs of having; not a bloody, old-fashioned revolution, with firing squads and prisons, ending in one more dictatorship, but an interior revolution of the mind, the conscience.<sup>2</sup>

She clearly indicates that she did not believe that the Germans, 19 years after their unconditional surrender, had changed their *Weltanschauung* sufficiently to be considered a trustworthy, democratic ally of the West. In her view, the mission of the ICD had been a failure.

Some Germans, however, saw the problem quite differently. Wolfgang Borchert was one of the first big names in German post-war literature with the broadcast and then staging of his play *Draußen vor der Tür*. He was deeply affected by the activity of the British Information Services Division, which redacted and censored the radio version of the play, and then he came under the scrutiny of the American ICD, albeit indirectly at first since his radio drama was initially for broadcast in the British zone only. However, as its popularity quickly grew, the American occupation personnel ensured that his radio play was suitable for broadcast in the American sector. Moreover, American permission was eventually needed for him to travel to Switzerland for medical treatment due to his, by then, terminal illness.

Borchert himself refers to the Allies collectively and does not single any of the occupiers out as being better or worse than the other. When

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<sup>1</sup> In 1999, a year after her death, the Martha Gellhorn Prize for war reporting was established. She is considered by many to be one of the greatest war correspondents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the trustees of the Martha Gellhorn Prize it “is awarded to a journalist whose work has penetrated the established version of events and told and unpalatable truth that exposes established propaganda or ‘official drivel’, as Martha called it.”

<sup>2</sup> Martha Gellhorn, “Is there a New Germany?” *The Atlantic Monthly February* 213, 2 (February) 1964, p. 69.



asked to comment in an interview with a Swiss newspaper on the freedom of the press in Germany, his observation was brief and to the point:

So lange die Zigarettenstummel fremder Militärmächte auf der Straße liegen (damit will ich nichts gegen die Zigaretten gesagt haben) und so lange ich 16-seitige Fragebogen ausfüllen muß, um in einer Zeitschrift gedruckt zu werden, so lange ist es sinnlos, über Demokratie und persönliche Freiheit zu diskutieren.<sup>3</sup>

Borchert felt that real personal freedom did not exist for Germans, regardless of the occupation zone within which one happened to find oneself. His assessment suggested a control mechanism that was too stifling of open discussion and that Germans should not be infantilized by a process that was meant to create a mature media. Considering the contents of various Allied documents, both classified and public, Borchert was not too far from the truth when he made this comment.

Did the necessary revolution of the mind ever take place? Was the American mission to cure the German psychosis after the Second World War an undertaking that failed? If one looks at the problem of it being fixed quickly, then one must answer in the negative. How could the German *Weltanschauung*, as will be outlined later, be changes in so short a time? As one reads through the volumes that were published in the two decades after the war, one is left with the distinct suspicion that little had changed in the German “mind” as a result of the post-war occupation. In book after book, article after article, the conclusion seems to be a negative one, with the post-war denazification and reconstruction process failing, and Germany being left as psychologically crippled as commentators, who will be discussed in subsequent chapters, suggest it had been in the centuries leading up to the National Socialists taking power. In the view of the early observers, Germany simply could not be brought up to the ideal standards set by its American occupiers and those charged with administering the prescribed cure.

However, if one takes a longer view, one that accounts for a changing of the guard, then a much different picture emerges. The average age of those licensed by the ICD, according to the ICD “Black, Grey, White

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<sup>3</sup> Wolfgang Borchert in a 1947 interview in Basel quoted in Peter Rühmkorf’s *Wolfgang Borchert* p. 162. Author’s translation: As long as there are the cigarette butts of foreign powers lying in the streets (with this I don’t want to say anything bad about the cigarettes) and as long as I must fill out 16-page questionnaires, just to get a story published in a magazine, as long as that’s the case, it’s pointless to discuss democracy and personal freedom.

List,”<sup>4</sup> for positions involving editorial control of a media outlet was approximately 42-years with the median age being about 43. This would mean that it would take approximately 25 years for the majority of this initial group of licensees to retire, bringing the real time for change in the German media to the late 1960s or early 1970s. It is then, with the new generation of media people taking the reins of Germany’s radio and television broadcasters, newspapers, and publishing houses, that the residual effects of this experiment in social engineering would be felt.

This book tenders a new starting point from which to approach the problem of how the media developed in the early years of America’s occupation of their zone of control in West Germany and their sector of Berlin. While every division within OMGUS was involved in the reorientation process in some way, it was the ICD’s task to deal directly with the collective German psyche, Germany’s *superego*, and “cure” what has often been referred to as the “German problem.”

Until now scholars have most often relied on the testimony and judgment of those involved in applying “the cure.” Scholars like Harold Hurwitz, Saul Padover, and John Gimbel wrote extensively about the US Military Government’s efforts to reorient the German people. They were, however, not just academics coldly looking at the events of the period, but also employed by the US occupation forces to build a new, better, and less threatening Germany based on Anglo-American concepts of democracy and freedom and help Germany shed the accoutrements of hyper-nationalism that had led it down its destructive path. They were writing about a Germany that was still in the process of coming out of a fog of repressed memories of what the reality of the Third Reich was.

In the late 1980s, the government archives in the United States and the United Kingdom began the process of declassifying documents related to the occupation of Germany. While the availability of American documents is rudimentary to a history of the ICD in Germany, the British sources also play a major role in understanding the period. Since the British and American forces worked closely together during the war, forming a single Psychological Warfare Division, and continued to exchange information even after they were separated into their own zones of occupation, the British sources often illuminate the activities of OMGUS and the ICD by 1) providing minutes to meetings between US and British Military Government officials that may be missing from the American archives, 2) the British and the Americans as a matter of course exchanged information

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 4 for an explanation of the purpose of the lists and how media personnel were vetted by the ICD.

in regard to the banning of particular individuals and works in their sectors amongst other things, and 3) the British PWE, PWD, and ISCB officials would often have internal debates and discussions and would generate reports on American policies and studies regarding the activities and effectiveness of the American ICD. These British materials often illuminate the motives and practices of the American occupation.

While there are still a few documents unavailable for scrutiny, researchers can now begin to formulate a comprehensive picture of the how the media was controlled in the immediate post-war period in the American zone of occupation. The sheer volume of material produced during the occupation by the various incarnations of what eventually became OMGUS has ensured that much of the material remains untouched and unanalysed. It is the goal of this book to present and examine some of the more significant documentary evidence produced during this early period. In doing so, it will provide an important context within which one can begin to understand how Germany's media was changed by the US occupation and those termed "the Professors" by the Military Governors of the *Zone* in Germany.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PROBLEM

### **Defining the German Problem**

More than 70 years ago the victorious Allies set themselves the task of curing the psychological/political malady of the Germans. The idea that Germany as a society was in some way “sick” had been advocated by many in the United States and Great Britain for years before Hitler was even in a position to dream of what a Germany under his control might look like. Though one might be tempted to consider this to be a phenomenon that grew out of the Second World War and the Holocaust, metaphors referring to Germany as being a problem or “sick” predate the First World War. The cure was to take the form of what Ralph Willett termed “the colonization of the German subconscious,”<sup>1</sup> a subconscious that was determined by its media and those who controlled not only German information services but also its cultural and entertainment industries as well.

Those who sought to cure Germany’s malady did so by diagnosing and then prescribing a cure that was based largely on Freudian psychoanalysis. One need only read the preliminary studies and one quickly comes to the conclusion that Germany was to be treated after its capitulation as if it were on a Freudian analyst’s couch. Studies by the leading advisors to what was to become the British and American Military Governments in post-war Germany, such as “A Report on Our Problem in Germany” in the American sector<sup>2</sup> and “The Future of Germany,” which was based on the previously noted American study, in the British sector,<sup>3</sup> point to Freudian theory as the basis to solving the “German Problem.” It is thus acceptable, even if these approaches are no longer current in trying to understand a

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Willett, *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 12.

<sup>2</sup> “A Report on Our Problem in Germany” RG 260-390-42-16-5 Box 69. From here on referred to as “A Report on Our Problem in Germany.”

<sup>3</sup> “The Future of Germany.” National Archives (Kew), FO 1049/72. From here on referred to as “The Future of Germany.”

nation's psyche, to understand and frame the American approach to dealing with Germany's post-war media in this way.

In the years leading up to the First World War, politicians and scholars in Great Britain made reference to the so-called "German Problem," though not always articulated in psychological terms. The seeds of viewing the German Empire with suspicion were sown in Benjamin Disraeli's February 9, 1871 speech to the British House of Commons, where he pointed out that the new Germany, with its new Emperor having been crowned on January 18, 1871, was Britain's greatest threat: "The war represents the German revolution...a greater political event than the French Revolution of last century. The balance of power has been entirely destroyed, and the country which suffers most, and feels the effects of this great change most, is England."<sup>4</sup> In speaking out as he did, Disraeli voiced the sentiments of those in Britain who saw the newly unified Germany as a threat to Britain's Empire and economic might. Later, after a meeting with Otto von Bismarck at the Berlin Congress of 1878, Disraeli did change his position towards Germany, and can largely be credited for the generally positive view most of the British had of Bismarck. However, the genie was out of the bottle and the view that Germany was a threat, and in some way inherently evil, lay latent in the British mind until it reached its fevered pitch in 1914. It was at this point that British thinking begins to allude to the "German Problem" as being philosophically or even psychologically based. Charles Sarolea, in *The Anglo-German Problem*, opines that the cause of German militarism and "perverted nationalism" lay in the Germans' Nietzschean "will to power."<sup>5</sup>

One of the most vociferous of those claiming that Germany, as a nation, suffered from a collective psychosis was Lord Robert Vansittart of Great Britain. Vansittart was Principal Private Secretary to Prime Ministers Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald from 1928 to 1930 and from 1930 to 1938 he was Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, which saw him supervising Britain's diplomatic service. In 1938, due to his opposition to the strategy of appeasing German demands, he was "promoted" to the post of Chief Diplomatic Advisor to His Majesty's Government," a post that was relatively meaningless and intended to nullify his opposition to government policy, though, in reality, it gave him greater freedom to criticize appeasement. Vansittart published a prodigious number of articles in newspapers on the topic of the "German Problem."

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<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, (Hansard) *Parliamentary Debates*, Ser. III, vol. cciv, February-March 1871, Speech of February 9, 1871, 81-82.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Sarolea, *The Anglo-German Problem* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1913), 351.

He was, however, not alone in his antagonism. His American counterpart in describing Germany as psychologically diseased was Henry Morgenthau Jr. He was the American Secretary of the Treasury from January 1, 1934, until July 22, 1945, and advocated that Germany be turned into an agrarian society with little or no industry after World War II. It should be noted that Morgenthau's image and name were used in the Nazi hate-film *Der ewige Jude* as a representative of the international conspiracy of Jewish bankers. For him, the war against Nazi Germany was a fairly personal issue, since he appears to have been specifically targeted by Goebbels' propaganda ministry as an enemy of National Socialism and thus Germany.

Morgenthau's view of Germany, however, developed well in advance of World War II. Already towards the end of the World War I, in a October 19, 1918, editorial appearing in *The New York Times*, Morgenthau is said to have "expressed his belief that the mental attitude of the German people could be changed for the better, but that it would take a nervous shock in the form of a crushing military defeat to do it" and refers to the necessity of Germany's mentality "[being] restored to a condition of health."<sup>6</sup>

There have been other terms used to describe the so-called German malady. Saul Padover, writing after World War II, describes the German problem in slightly different terms. He designates the problem as "Germanism" or "Prussianism," which he uses interchangeably.<sup>7</sup> He goes on to equate Germanism or Prussianism with what he describes as Nazi-fascism indicating the following commonalities:

1. Hostility to democracy (shared power)
2. Reliance on authoritarianism
3. Respect for force and acceptance of military virtues
4. Belief in German superiority, cultural or racial

Padover goes even further than this in suggesting that all Germans have these traits and that even the anti-Nazis subscribed to some or all of these Germanic virtues.<sup>8</sup>

It was the British propaganda of World War I, some of which was specifically targeted at the United States, that helped change American

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<sup>6</sup> "Morgenthau Would Chasten Germany," *The New York Times*, October 19, 1918, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Saul Padover, "The Failure of the Reeducation of Germany," *The Dilemma of Postwar Germany*, Comp. Julia E. Johnsen (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1948), 180-192.

<sup>8</sup> Saul Padover, "The Failure of the Reeducation of Germany," 181.

attitudes toward Germany and the German people. Between 1914 and 1918 the American press was flooded with British propaganda of the “Prussian Ogre,” the “Bloated Hun,” and the “Cadaver Conversion Factory.”<sup>9</sup> Though the Americans realized after the war that they had been manipulated by British propaganda, for the most part, the image of the German being in some way a mentally defective monster remained as a latent memory. It was thus on this basis that the American efforts to deal with Germany after World War II were built. Of course, all of these stereotypes were then proven to be pale imitations of what the Nazis had undertaken in Germany.

Though opinions regarding Germany’s psychological health were occasionally expressed throughout the period leading up to September 1939 and in the early part of the war, it is in 1943, when Germany’s defeat begins to appear imminent, that serious attention is focused on Germany and its “collective psychosis.” This is the case not only in the news media but also in books addressing the issue at that time. It was through these publications that the various schools of thought on how to “cure” Germany were trying to find the necessary leverage to convince the American elites of what ailed Germany and how to cure it.

Over time, the way in which the German psyche was portrayed became extreme and the cure more sensational. It was during this period that Louis Nizer wrote *What to do with Germany*. Nizer was a renowned English-born American lawyer, who, in his youth, “won a Government citation for his patriotic speeches during Liberty Loan drives in World War I.”<sup>10</sup> While he himself did not advocate the extreme “cure” that some did—he saw the occupation of Germany as being more like taking the German people into “protective custody.”<sup>11</sup> He also provided an outline of some of the approaches to Germany that had gained traction in the United States. He refers to these as medicines without a cure: extermination and sterilization, selective breeding, political dismemberment, and compulsory migration.<sup>12</sup>

It was not only the Americans and the British who saw the Germans as a psychologically afflicted nation. Gerhart Seger, a social democrat, who fled Germany after having been held at the Oranienburg concentration

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<sup>9</sup> Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003), 179-180.

<sup>10</sup> Eric Pace, “Obituary [Louis Nizer],” *The New York Times*, November 11, 1994, B7.

<sup>11</sup> Louis Nizer, *What to do with Germany* (Chicago: Ziff Davis Publishing Company, 1944), 92.

<sup>12</sup> Nizer, *What to do with Germany*, 3-11.

camp in 1933,<sup>13</sup> and Siegfried Marck,<sup>14</sup> a social democratic journalist and academic born in Breslau, who fled Germany in 1933, added their opinions and solutions. They conclude that:

Knowledge of the psychological structure of neurotic individuals helps us to understand the complications of a people's spirit. The German mixture of contrasting neurotic complexes is explained by her history, which, unlike that of other nations, shows frequently alternating upward and downward trends. Periods of utter collapse interrupt those of highest power. The problem, To be or not to be? appears again and again in the course of her history with the accompanying alternative: Everything or Nothing. In individual psychology we would surmise that the neurotic person "arranges" these typical situations, but it is questionable whether such a definition is applicable to the relationship between the character and the destiny of a whole nation. We can rely on sober facts, however, when we contemplate the psychological effect of historical events upon the character of a people. Nietzsche once said that all Germans are born Hegelians, always in the making, never influenced by the happenings of today, but rather by those of the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow.<sup>15</sup>

While they did not suggest that the collective German psyche was terminally diseased, they could not have done so without impugning their own position; they suggest that the German approach to outsiders was neurotic.

The foundational premise of those who believed that Germany as a society was in some way mentally ill, according to Walter Dorn, was that the "deep-seated German disease that had been more than a century in the process of incubation" needed to be cured and that all Germans had been so deeply infected with National Socialism that one could only consider all of them as guilty of having waged war against democracy.<sup>16</sup> He concludes

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<sup>13</sup> In the United States Seger was an editor for a number of German newspapers and a much sought after speaker on the National Socialist regime.

<sup>14</sup> Marck helped in the war effort in his capacity as an advisor and strongly influenced post-war policy in the United States toward Germany. He had a lengthy correspondence with Thomas Mann from 1939 to 1957. In a speech delivered to the annual congress of the Nazi Party on 13 September 1935, Goebbels mentions Marck as a member of the "General Congress of the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet of Germany" that met on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1918, with Marck representing the Army department.

<sup>15</sup> Gerhard Seger and Siegfried Marck, *Germany: To Be or Not to Be?* New York: The Rand School Press, 1943), 15-16.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in Walter Dorn, "The Debate over American Occupation Policy in Germany, 1944-45" *Political Science Quarterly* 72 (1957): 485.



that Vansittart believed that the only cure could be a thorough *Umbildung* of the German psyche as the result of a lengthy occupation.<sup>17</sup>

There were, however, also those who took a more conciliatory approach to what was to be done with Germany after the war. For example, Harold Hurwitz outlines a middle ground, which nevertheless included many of the tough measures suggested by Vansittart and Morgenthau. Others, however, like Ralph Franklin Keeling, condemned any sort of hardline approach towards the German people. He simply saw “the Allied program to re-educate the Germans [as] a case of one deluded group trying to disillusion another.”<sup>18</sup> Keeling represented what John Gimbel described as America’s eventual policy in Germany, which was to impose on Germany what was in America’s national interest, which was not necessarily the re-education or the democratization of Germany.<sup>19</sup> In this case, the interest, at least by 1947, was America protecting itself against the Soviet Union, by ensuring that the expected future battle would be fought in the buffer region of middle Europe.

The initial American approach, dubbed the Morgenthau Plan, would have seen Germany turned into an agrarian society, though this interpretation of Morgenthau’s intentions has recently been challenged.<sup>20</sup> It was eventually decided, as Morgenthau lost influence in Washington and the American commanders on the ground in Germany began to agitate for a less drastic approach, that the re-education process became more surgical and targeted. Moreover, it was quickly realized that tensions between the Soviet Union and their erstwhile allies were escalating and that Germany needed to be more than an agrarian state to serve as an effective buffer between east and west.

While this seems to have been a rather abrupt about-face in terms of the American policy in Germany, there was a considerable body of knowledge that had been accumulated during the war regarding a less overtly aggressive approach to reinventing Germany. Hoping to have found the solution to the “German Problem,” the United States, together

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<sup>17</sup> Cited in Dorn 485. In this case the term *Umbildung* is used in the English text and carries the sense of re-education and reshaping.

<sup>18</sup> Ralph Franklin Keeling, *Gruesome Harvest: The Costly Attempt to Exterminate the German People* (Chicago: Institute of American Economics, 1947), 132.

<sup>19</sup> John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany. Politics and the Military 1945-1949*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968), 321.

<sup>20</sup> Michaela Hönicke, “‘Prevent World War III.’ An Historiographical Appraisal of Morgenthau’s Programme for Germany,” *The Roosevelt Years: New Perspectives on American History, 1933-1945*. Eds. Robert A. Garson and Stuart S. Kidd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) 155-172.

with Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and France, not only set about disarming Germany materially but psychologically. There was to be a complete laying bare of the German psyche, with the offending constituents being removed or rendered impotent.

There were, however, some who spoke out against the American approach to curing Germany's ills. They argued that there was nothing special about the German people and that the Germans posed no greater threat to peace than anyone else, especially now that they had lost their lands to the east of the Oder-Neisse line. This is the position held by Wolfgang Friedmann, who had been born in Germany and had studied law there and had indeed become a lawyer and a judge before fleeing the Nazi in 1934. Furthermore, he thought that the American approach was far too complex. In his words, it was "incapable of execution."<sup>21</sup> The overriding consideration for him was that the categorization of 70 million people into guilty and innocent was a sheer practical impossibility.<sup>22</sup>

Though Friedmann offered a thoroughly pragmatic approach to dealing with Germany, he did so from a psychological perspective. The main obstacle to a successful "cure" in his view was the "complete separation between the moral standards of a citizen in his private life and the moral standards of the same citizen as a member of the nation and his duty to the state."<sup>23</sup> From this, three important principles emerge from the practices of the ICD: there was a need to distinguish between active and nominal Nazis; there was a necessity to transfer the judgment to German anti-Nazis, who understood the German system; there needed to be a concession of justice to utility. In the case of this last point, that meant the temporary retention of certain officials who are indispensable to the running of the economy.<sup>24</sup> The result of this was that certain confirmed Nazis would need to be kept in place until such time that they could be replaced.

### **Disunity among the Allies**

Though the Allies had, at least on paper, decided on a unified effort, it soon became apparent that their ideological differences, mistrust, and desire to assert their own will on postwar Europe ensured that they would

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<sup>21</sup> Wolfgang Friedmann, *The Allied Military Government of Germany* (London: Stevens, 1947) 114. He was a professor at Columbia University from 1955 to 1972.

<sup>22</sup> Friedmann, *The Allied Military Government of Germany*, 121.

<sup>23</sup> Friedmann, *The Allied Military Government of Germany*, 225.

<sup>24</sup> Friedmann, *The Allied Military Government of Germany*, 114.

take separate paths in trying to establish a new Germany. The Soviet Union pursued a path that was not particularly subtle but was very quick in implementation and in many ways quite effective. This caused great concern among the British and American occupiers, who felt that they could easily lose the war for the German mind in 1945. France, on the other hand, had suffered the longest under German occupation and was more concerned with its own physical welfare. It proved to have little interest in curing Germany of its ills and concentrated on removing what wealth was left in Germany for its own benefit and paid little attention to capturing the German soul. So much so, in fact, that the French zone became known in postwar Allied circles as a haven for former Nazis and fellow travelers. As Theodor Eschenburg describes it, in the French zone, denazification was firmly subordinated to France's dual policy of building up her power at the cost of Germany and seeking security from any future German threats. Only in Württemberg-Hohenzollern, this for a time gained a reputation as "the Eldorado of tolerance" for ex-Nazis, did the French, under American pressure, conduct a rigorous and effective denazification policy.<sup>25</sup>

All of this left the British and the Americans to pursue a loosely unified effort, which on the surface appeared to move in lock step; however, even under rudimentary examination, real differences in their approach are evident. The British took the tack of political warfare. If they managed to put the right gentlemen into places of appropriate authority, then the problem would solve itself. This was made clear in a letter from Major General Lethbridge, Head of the Intelligence Group of the Control Commission for Germany (British Element), on February 8, 1946 to C.E. Steel, a close personal friend of the General, of the Political Division in Berlin. Here they trade ideas about the establishment of the German Personnel Research Branch in Bad Oeynhausen.<sup>26</sup> Lethbridge goes so far as to say that he sees the German concepts of democracy, though they may differ from those of the British, as completely valid and that the evaluation of applicants had little to do with what the individual might say and more to do with how it is said.<sup>27</sup> The system being established by the British was to follow their own administrative system in which the elected officials

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<sup>25</sup> Theodor Eschenburg, *Jahre der Besatzung (1945-1949)*, Vol. 1. *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschlands* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983), 18.

<sup>26</sup> FO 1049/535, National Archives, London. Lethbridge refers to Steel in the letter informally as "Kit" and signs off as "Tubby" and Steel reciprocates by addressing the General as "Tubby" in these communications.

<sup>27</sup> Lethbridge, "Letter to C.E. Steel," February 21, 1946, FO 1049/535, National Archives, Kew.

were in some ways governed by, and captives of, their bureaucratic apparatus. The Americans, ironically, were to attempt Vansittart's more thorough *Umbildung* of Germany, which began on a psychological *niveau* and involved a high level of social engineering.

Both the Americans and British relied to a great extent on civilians to operate their reorientation programs. This caused greater difficulty for the American occupation forces than for the British. The British were quite comfortable in having a mixture of civilians and military people working together in a command structure that tended to be a hybrid of military and civilian most of the time, with a civilian life of service following a stint in the military. This was a result of many of the individuals, whether civilian or military, having attended the same "public" schools and universities and simply knowing one another. This is clearly illustrated in the above-noted exchange between Lethbridge and Steel. The positive effect was that the British had a greater uniformity in the application of occupation policy.

The Americans tended to keep the command structure formal and military, whether it involved civilians or not. That is, the officers running the programs were either career or long-term military men. They often did not understand what it was their so-called "professors" were trying to accomplish. In fact, they reflected the attitude of their Military Governor, Lucius Clay, who in his memoirs of his time spent as the American Military Governor in Germany, remarked, "We had much advice from those who profess to know the so-called German mind. If it did exist, we never found it; German minds seemed to us to be remarkably like those elsewhere."<sup>28</sup> As opposed to the British military occupation forces, in the American Military Government apparatus, there was a considerable disconnect between the practical, goal-oriented military officers in charge of enforcing regulations and the seemingly lax approach their civilian underlings exhibited. For this reason, one might at times note a certain dissonance between the ideal found in official policy and what was being done on the ground by individual officers charged with administering a program in a relatively remote part of Germany.

## **The Transformation to Information Control**

Approximately two months after the war ended in Europe the Anglo-American Psychological Warfare Division and the British Political Warfare Executive were re-designated as Information Control Division in

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<sup>28</sup> Lucius Clay, *Decision in Germany* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1950), 281.

the American sector and the Information Services Division in the British zone of control. Because the wartime units were not disbanded after the cessation of hostilities in Germany but were simply re-tasked into their peacetime role with the entirety of the staff becoming part of the Military Government, they carried their wartime approach to German re-education with them into the postwar phase. While the following study will concentrate on the American efforts, recourse will occasionally be taken to the British effort for illustrative purposes.

The American Psychological Warfare Division was re-designated the Information Control Division on 13 July 1945. With this, the official effort to cure the German malady began in earnest. There was, however, one further complication. Saul Padover, who was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Psychological Warfare Division from 1944 to 1945, notes that the Russians and Americans had an additional issue in dealing with the Germans that the British and the French did not, which had nothing to do with the policies and procedures implemented during the occupation, but was the result of a deeply ingrained German attitude towards the America and Russia/Soviet Union. He notes:

As a rule, Germans regard the British and the French as more or less on the same *Kultur* level as them, and the Russians and the Americans as considerably below them. These opinions are deep-rooted and widespread and are not necessarily connected with the politics of Nazism; they are part of the national folklore of Germany. Consequently, they complicate the whole problem of re-education.<sup>29</sup>

This imbalance between how the Germans saw the Americans, as non-equals, might have led to considerable difficulties. The potential for German obstinacy was not realized, even though the average German continued to look down on what they considered to be an inferior American culture. The Germans at this point were thoroughly beaten and in no position to resist. They simply could not deny the victors anything for which they asked.

### **The Inner Workings of the German Psyche**

In a 1943 panel discussion for the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Horace Kallen observed, “The convalescence of the bled and broken world into a healthy new one will be determined largely by how its medicine-

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<sup>29</sup> Padover “The Failure of the Reeducation of Germany,” 180.

men interpret the German national character.”<sup>30</sup> What these comments emphasize is the trust that the American policymakers, or at least those who had some influence on the policymakers, had in the psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists that made up the various think tanks that provided the OWI,<sup>31</sup> OSS,<sup>32</sup> and the PWD with their analysis of the collective German psyche. It was individuals from these academic and medical disciplines, who would have a tremendous impact on how the initial policies towards Germany and the Germans were formulated. Though, as already indicated in the comments by Lucius Clay, some would rely on their own instincts and direct experience rather than the opinions of the “professors.”

Throughout World War II the Americans made numerous attempts at understanding what made Germany and the Germans tick as a nation. The most important of these, “Future of Germany. Report of a Conference on Germany after the War,” was completed in 1944.<sup>33</sup> Though it was initially classified as secret and only circulated among the upper echelons of those in charge of the Anglo-American war effort, it was later published under the same name. It attempted to render an understanding of what it called the “regularities in German national character” as well as offer “some specific applications of the regularities in German national character.” It also gave consideration to how controlled institutional change in a conquered Germany might be achieved and possible reactions of the American people to such an approach.

The study was taken quite seriously, and echoes of its findings can be found in many of the directives issued from the various divisions of OMGUS. More significantly, the sentiments expressed in the final report reverberate in the field reports that were sent to their respective divisions. The “Future of Germany” formed the basis of not only how the American occupiers viewed and treated the Germans, but played a significant role in shaping the British reaction to the Germans as well. In February 1945, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Dicks, a psychiatrist who handled many important and delicate issues related to psychological warfare for the

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<sup>30</sup> Horace M. Kallen, “What Shall We do with Germany?” *Saturday Review of Literature* 26, May 29, 1943), 4.

<sup>31</sup> Office of War Information. It was established on June 13, 1942 by executive order and served to coordinate information released regarding the war. This included news releases, radio broadcasts and movies among other things.

<sup>32</sup> Office of Strategic Services. The approximate equivalent of the British Special Operations Executive and precursor to the CIA.

<sup>33</sup> National Archives (Kew), FO 1049/72. From here on referred to as “The Future of Germany.”